

CONCLUSION

IS ONE RELIGION AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

IS ONE CHURCH AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

IS ONE GOD AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

IS ONE DENOMINATION AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

IS ONE PRESBYTERIAN AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

IS ONE BAPTIST AS GOOD AS ANOTHER?

Many honest and sincere people believe that one church is as good as another, and there are many who believe all religions are good and God will save us all. There are many who claim to use the Bible as the source of their faith and believe that we can be saved from any church. There are many churches and many religions as we have seen in our study. Catholics and Protestants are divided and subdivided by names, doctrines, creeds, form of organization, or worship style.

However, there are still some people who do not believe that one religion or church is as good as some other. They have noticed that conflicting creeds, practices, and organizations are not in harmony with the Bible and cannot be justified by scripture. It is a fact that, both from the Bible and from history, it can be shown that the church of Jesus Christ was established several centuries before Catholic churches or Protestant churches were established and divided by various creeds, doctrines, practices, and organizational structures.

Is one church as good as another? How can we answer this when **Jesus Christ has only established** one church? This is recorded in the New Testament. Jesus has only one church! We are either in it or we are not. Jesus said in Matthew 16:18 *“Upon this rock I will build my church.”* He did not offer options and denominations but only one church. This is the universal body of Christ, and the Lord adds to His *“church daily such as should he saved.”* Acts 2:38 and following. Those who accepted the terms of salvation enjoyed the remission of sins and the Lord added them to His church. (The church)

He did not add them to the church of their choice. There was no choice. Today as people obey the same gospel, they are not added to a denomination but to the original, the only church of Christ. In 1 Corinthians 12: and verse 13 we read, *“For by one spirit are we all baptized into one body.”* (Only one, the same one all Christians have been baptized into for over 2000 years.) Ephesians 2:16... *“What He (Christ) might reconcile both unto God in one body on the cross.”* This united both Jew and Gentile into Himself, *‘in one body.’* Ephesians 4:4, *“There is one body, and one spirit...one Lord. One faith, one baptism.”*

The same passage that says there is one Lord and one faith shows us that there is only one body. Christ is the head, the body is the church, and Christians are the members. The church is not divided into parts, denominations, or parties, but there is one church universal; those who the Lord added to His church.

We cannot be in Christ and out of His church. The whole church is united in Christ as one body. All are to be united to the one Lord, hold to the same faith, believe and practice the same gospel, and worship in the same way. This is the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17.

Unity can never be attained in the religious world as long as people believe that ‘one church is as good as another’, or that a person can be saved by joining...any church. Unity can only occur among those who obey

the same gospel and practice those things taught in the New Testament by Christ and his apostles, in the same manner as the apostles practiced.

Every denomination has a human founder and most have a human head. There are headquarters in various cities of denominations, teaching different doctrines, with different organizational structures, and various forms of worship. Denominations divide and confuse people. One contradicts another.

The Lord's church is undenominational, non-denominational, and anti-denominational, neither Catholic or Protestant. It is just what it was years ago in the first century, and the conditions of salvation are the same.

Is one church as good as another? Is one religion as good as another? The Bible answers this question as an emphatic 'no'. The church that Jesus gave His blood for is far superior to every denomination, and every other religion.

There has, in every age been those who would not follow God's way, or wish to distort His way.

Remember that third party in the garden of Eden. Today there are those who use religion for political gain. There are those who use religion to motivate others to perform acts of terror among their own people and people of other nations. What kind of people would commit such violent acts against innocent, unsuspecting people? Why would people fly airplanes into ships and buildings? They are called religious fanatics. They believe that their god, either the emperor deity, or Allah, or some other deity, will give them a reward for killing others. There are Muslims active today following their brand of religion in what they call 'Holy War.' They have little regard for human life, even their own. They wait for ideal opportunities to attack and inflict casualties. There is another kind of religious terrorism that has been going on for centuries. Churches torn apart by groups of people who do not want to follow God's way, but desire conquest and control of churches. They appear to have little concern for what God's word requires, but rather create their own denominational ideas and creeds, and interpretations of **scripture**. They want to change the church to be like **some** religious neighbors, or to some ideal or pattern that makes them feel good. In the process of changing the church to their own image, they destroy works that have accomplished much good for many years, and have followed God's path while doing these works. They divide congregations, devour church resources, and steal buildings from the faithful to satisfy their personal idea of what religion should be. Like the Muslim terrorist, these religious terrorists are devious in their methods, sowing discontent, and gaining control of others. Once they believe they are strong enough and have their 'leaders in place' they make their move. It does not matter how many are hurt in the takeover. The Apostle Paul gave warning that these things would happen when he spoke to the Elders at Ephesus as recorded in Acts 20: 28-32, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over which the Holy Ghost has made you shepherds, to feed the church of God, which He has purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also, of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch..."* This is not new... Solomon about 3000 years ago stated that God hates those who sow discord among the brethren as recorded in Proverbs 6:16-19.

CAN ONE CHURCH EVOLVE INTO MANY?

Do we remember what Jude 3 says? Repeated again: *"You should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."* And remember Ephesians 4:4, *"there is one body. and one. spirit, even as you are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

There are many other religions and variations of Christianity which are not reviewed here. They all exist outside of the requirements of the scriptures as we have just read. It is not necessary to review all variations because they do nothing to bring us closer to the truth, but rather tend to further confuse the line of God's dealings with man and the establishment of His church.

It is difficult in this generation for people to seek truth, as they have been led to believe that 'truth is relative' and the 'point of view' and 'ethnic myths' should be considered in determining what is. Some teach that there is no truth. The attack on truth has also resulted in eliminating standards in the classroom. Who can determine that one student's work is better than another's?

Without a standard for truth, anything can mean almost anything else you want it to mean. War is peace, freedom is slavery, and fairness and merit mean bigotry. Criticism of anything can be considered censorship.

There has to be a standard for what is true. There are things unquestionably true. Could you do business if mathematical tables did not work out the same every time? Would it be all right with you if you bought two loaves of bread for a dollar a piece and the merchant said you needed to pay him six dollars? No, you would pay two dollars plus any fixed amount of taxes, and both you and the merchant would **agree** that this was the true and correct amount for the transaction. If your child was vomiting, delirious, and running a dangerously high fever, (if it is true that there is a point at which a fever can be known to be dangerous) you would rush the child to a medical facility. If, at this facility three doctors were available to examine your child. Suppose the first Doctor says, *"Your child has viral meningitis and must be put into isolation and treated immediately with antibiotics or he will die before the day is over."* The next Doctor says, *"Your child has 24 hour flu and just needs a shot to bring the fever down. I suggest you take him home and try not to worry anymore."* The third Doctor comments, *"Well, there are two different ideas about your son's illness and who am I to say who is right?" I suggest that we be guided by love and respect each other's opinion."* What would your reaction be to an absurd situation as this? Would you be satisfied with a 'solution' like this if the life of your child was at stake? Would you insist on learning what the truth of your child's condition is? Would you want to be sure that the proper treatment is given to find the path to healing and restored health? Would you put a premium on finding and knowing the truth? Would you be content to grant each Doctor his opinion and let everyone just walk away while **your** child lay in critical condition, and possibly dying? **We** put a premium on knowing the truth in medicine, in engineering, mathematics, and other pursuits where error can cost lives, or much destruction. There can be little second guessing in the design of an airplane, ship, automobile, or sky scraper. Why would it be any less important to find the truth when it comes to spiritual questions, and matters of religion?

We have to learn the truth. The truth in mathematics is in a Mathematics book. The truth in religion is, as we have followed from the beginning, in God's Word as recorded in the Holy Bible. If man wants the truth, we must go where the truth is. God sent truth to man with an expectation that man would understand it and follow it. The only truth that can save our souls from eternal damnation is found in the Holy Bible. Jesus said that all men could know the truth. The church is said to be the *"pillar and ground of the truth."* The Bible presupposes both the existence of objective truth and man's ability to find it, and know it.

If the Bible is not the Word of God what else do we have to give us direction for life? What else do we have to give us hope of eternal life with God? What other book claims to be the Word of God that gives us a look at beginnings of things and the end of things on the earth? What other book gives us an insight into the mysteries of God and the powers of evil in the universe?

Faith in the authority of the scriptures is supported by physical evidences in history, archaeology, and science. The prophecies recorded in the Old Testament hundreds of years before they were fulfilled are numerous, and

were fulfilled accurately. The scripture written by over forty persons over many centuries, in various countries and cultures, still provide a complete story without contradiction. Without the scriptures as the foundation of the truth people interpret their own feelings as religious authority, and claim that God revealed Himself to them in these experiences. With variations, this is found in Calvinism, Pentecostals, Joseph Smith, Mohammed, and other charismatics. Emotions are the foundation of many of these religions, and they do not connect to the Gospel story from the beginning to end.

People need to think for themselves in matters of religion. It is not safe to follow what friends or relatives believe or teach, without checking the facts. There is a phenomenon called 'group think'. Why does an entire family get into a car and travel to town when only one member of the family wants to go? Why does a company begin a new business policy when people working for this company do not believe in the policy, but a manager has noted that many other businesses have adopted this policy. Most people are not even aware that 'group think' is occurring. Many other people are afraid to speak their minds and don't want to appear as an 'outsider' from the group or are insecure about taking a contrary position.

The result is that 'group think' often causes people to agree to do things just because others are doing it, not because they have checked the facts or understand why they do things. What God said is important, not what a group of friends or relatives have said!

If a person is seeking the truth in the denominational world, he would be confused. When seeking or questioning any doctrine, "forget everything you have ever read, or been taught, and read and study the Bible for yourself, and God will show you what truth is, and what is not. Read and study searching for the truth without believing you already know what is true. **Clear** your mind and **start** over and do **not try to make the scripture fit any certain doctrine. It makes a tremendous difference in your** understanding. In I Corinthians 8:2 it reads, "*if any man thinks he knows anything he knows nothing yet as he ought to know.*"

One of the apostasies which have developed since the reformation and the rise of denominations is the teaching that salvation occurs before baptism. Evangelicals and Calvinists have developed this idea to justify infant baptism, pouring instead of immersion, baptism for membership, and saved by faith 'only' doctrines. Catholics have performed infant baptism from about 1200 AD. The New Testament teaching on baptism is very plain. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18-20, "*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore and teach all nation. baptizing them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you...*" In Mark 16:15-16 it is recorded this way, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned.*" Peter speaking in Acts 2:38 stated the reason for baptism, for the remission of sins." And Phillip demonstrated the method while teaching the Ethiopian Eunuch when the Eunuch expressed belief in Jesus Christ as Son of God in Acts 8:38 "*they went both into the water, both Phillip and the Eunuch and he baptized him.*" Acts 8:12 tells us when they were baptized. "When they believed Phillip preaching the things concerning the Kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women." Romans 6: 1-6 shows the parallel to the death, burial . and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Galatians 3:27 says "*For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*" Just as in mark 16:16 when Jesus said, "*he that believeth not shall be damned*" it would be assumed that they that didn't believe refused baptism, here in Galatians 3 we can assume that those not baptized have not put on Christ. Ephesians 4:5 says there is only '*one Lord, one faith, one baptism.*' That would exclude all others also. **Is one baptism as good as another?** Colossians 2:12 speaks of baptism as a burial. "Buried with Him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with Him through faith of the operation Of God, who raised Him from the dead." Peter made it very plain that baptism is in the plan. 1 Peter 3:21 when comparing Noah being saved by water explains that "*The like figure whereunto even baptism does also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of*

a good conscience toward God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.’ How much more plain and simple could it be?

Over the years, doctrines and worship of God, which were clearly shown to us in the scriptures, are being replaced by doctrines and worship ideas that are designed to please man rather than to please God who is the object of worship.

Rich Halverson, a long-time chaplain to the United States Senate, said, *“In the beginning the church was a fellowship of men and women centering on the living Christ. Then it moved to Greece where it became a philosophy. Then it moved to Rome where it became an institution. Next it moved to Europe where it became a culture. Now it has moved to North America where it has become an Enterprise.”* Christianity has led many people to use it to seek power or monetary reward to a greater degree over the centuries. People have changed their view of Christianity, but Christianity has never changed. The exact words recorded by the Apostles which taught and guided the early church are the same now. The gospel of Jesus Christ has never changed since the day it was introduced as the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies. The message has not changed; people's belief systems and teachings of men have changed frequently. Christianity has not moved, people have moved away from its original teaching and provided their own. Only the straight and narrow way leads to life. Jesus said it in Matthew 7:13-14, *“Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is thy gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go thereat: because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth to life, and few there be that find it.”*

IS MAN'S DOCTRINE AS GOOD AS THE DOCTRINES TAUGHT BY JESUS AND HIS APOSTLES?

Remember that third party in the Garden of Eden. He is still active. Matthew 15:9, *“But in vain do they worship me teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”* 1 Peter 5:8, *“Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.”*

Everyone must choose a religion, or choose none, but they **will make a choice.**

IS ONE CHOICE AS GOOD AS ANOTHER? GO teach!

What do we need to know after we have chosen to follow Jesus and have given our life to God and were baptized into Christ?

We know that Jesus has purchased us with His own blood, built His Church and is the Head of His church. Refer to Acts 20:28, Matthew 16:18 and Ephesians 5:23. The New Testament tells of the new law which He has given personally and thru the inspired words printed by His apostles and disciples.

He is the foundation and “the rock” on which His church has been founded. He began fulfilling prophecies in Jerusalem (Isaiah 2: 2-3) in the time period prophesied (Daniel 2: 31-45) around A.D. 33 in Jerusalem.

Romans 16:16 has the name Church of Christ, and this fits what Jesus said as recorded in Matthew 16:18 “I will build My church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Acts 2: 47 tells us that those baptized would be added to the Lord’s church. The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved!

His church has been described as a Kingdom (Matthew 6:19 and Colossians 1:18) This body, His church. Ephesians 1:22 -23 tells us He is the head of His church which is His body, the church. The church is also called the church of God) 1 Corinthians 1:2, and called the House of God in 1 Timothy “15.

Baptized believers (Mark 16:16) both men or women (Acts 8:12) who have been baptized and repented of sin (Acts 2:38) professing Jesus as Christ (Romans 10:9-10) and were obedient in being buried in water, 'baptized' (Romans 6:1-6 / Colossians 2:12)) are added to His church membership. These have come from every nation. Acts 1:34-35)

The congregations of the Lord's church are to worship each first day of the week, (Sunday) (Acts 20:7) in spirit and in truth. (John 4:24) Each congregation is independent. (Acts 14:23) Obligated to Jesus our Lord and Savior. (1 Peter 5:1-4) Ruled by Elders, also called shepherds, pastors, bishops, or presbyters. Served by deacons. (1 Timothy 3:8-13) Taught by teachers (Hebrews 5:12-14) and preachers (Romans 10:13-15) and served by each member differing according to the talents given and the opportunities to show mercy and kindness, or to teach. (Romans 12:4-8)

Worship will include **Praying**, (Acts 2:42) 1 Corinthians 14:15) **singing**, (Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16) musical instruments, although used in the former covenant, have not been authorized here in the New Testament church. The Lord's supper is taken to remember the sacrifice and death of our Lord on the cross which was done by His sacrifice on our behalf in forgiveness of sin. And preaching and teaching is for our edification and to praise and honor our creator. The worship should teach us all to take the gospel to the lost world (Mark 16:15 and Matthew 8:19-20) To rescue fallen Christians. (James 5:19-20) To help the poor or weak, (Galatians 6:10) and learn more of the word of God. (2 Timothy 2:15)

All of God's word is valuable for our understanding of why God made this earth and put humans on it. The Old Testament tells of God's ways of dealing with mankind, and tells us of his power and purposes. The New Testament tells us of our salvation and the Kingdom of God in this age and how we must prepare for the afterlife in Paradise part of Hades, then Heaven, and how to avoid the alternative punishment in Hades and in hell with the evil and his fallen angels.

There are two Gospels told in the New Testament. The first is the good news that the kingdom of God is coming, in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The remaining books and letters are the Gospel that (Good News) that the kingdom has come, and the law of Christ is to be followed.

No human creeds, disciplines, or catechisms, are needed when teaching and preaching only from what the Bible / New Testament has for us to obediently follow. Jude verse 3 and 4, *"Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the Saints." "For certain men have crept in unnoticed, who long ago were marked out for condemnation, ungodly men, who turn the grace of our God into lewdness and deny the only Lord God, and our Lord, Jesus Christ."* **No man-made additions or exceptions** are needed.

Members are called "saints" (1 Corinthians 1:2) They are referred to as 'Brethren.'" Acts 15:22-23. Members are often just called "members" and also the title 'Christian.'" Acts 11:26 & 26:28, and 1 Peter 4:16. They are called "Children of God in Romans 8:16. And in one occasion referred to as priests. Peter 2:9. This is true as we conduct our worship to God in Christ, following the patterns of the items of worship shown to us in the what the early New Testament churches were told to do, and did do.

The only true church of the New Testament is not a denomination, nor does it sprout demonization's from the works and ideas taught by men over the course of time, including the 'Reformation" or the "Restoration" times, with men trying to return to the Gospel way. It is the Lord's church and He has only one church! Jesus established His church hundreds of years before any denominations existed. He compared religions of men to plants and said; Every plant, which My heavenly Father has not planted, shall be rooted up. (Matthew 15:13)

Jesus also said as recorded in Matthew 15: 9, "**But in vain do they worship Me. teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.**"

Our conclusion that the only church belonging to our Lord is the church which He, using the apostles and disciples putting in writing had established. Once for all. (Jude 3 and 4)

Shall we examine ourselves in the faith?

Does your religion go back to Jerusalem, founded in AD 33 (Date + or -?)

Do the laws of your religion come from the New Testament laws, only?

Is your church a fulfillment of prophecy?

Did it begin with Power as in Acts chapter 1 and 2?

Does your religion have a biblical name? With each church (congregation) an independent church, and part of the 'body of Christ.

Romans 10: 17 "*So then faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God*" John 8: 24 "*I said therefore unto you, that you will die in your sins: for if you believe not that I am He, you shall die in your sins,*" Belief and faith are critical and necessary. Repentance must occur. Acts 17: 30, "*Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, (winked at) but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*"

Do you profess Jesus to be the Son of God? Acts 8: 35-39, "*Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water, And the eunuch said, "See, here is water, what hinders me from being baptized?" Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said I believe that Jesus is the Son of God." So, he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip when they came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit caught Philip away, so the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing."*

Baptism, (immersion) for the remission of sins is required. Acts 22:16, And now, why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, **calling on the name of the Lord.**" Baptism is not for joining the Lord's church, it is for remission of sins (forgiveness). 1 Peter 3:21- "baptism now saves us." We did not join the church for Acts 2:47 says "the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

John 16: 33, "These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation (trouble) but be of good cheer. I have overcome the world.

Revelation 2:10, "Do not fear any of these things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested and you will have tribulation ten days. **BE Faithful until death.** And I will give you the crown if life.

James 1:2 and 4, **My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into divers (many temptations). *Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh Patience. But let patience have her perfect work, that you may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.***

KEEP THE FAITH, BUT ALSO GIVE IT AWAY!

AND THE DEVIL WON'T WIN!

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RELEVANT SCRIPTURES

2 TIMOTHY 3: 16-17 "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

EPHESIANS 2:2 "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: "

EPHESIANS 6: 12 "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.

1 COR. 10: 1-13 Vs 10; "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same things, and that there be no divisions among you: but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement."

2 COR. 6: 14-17 " Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"---Vs 17 "Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean: and I will receive you."

EPH. 5: 11 "and have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove (expose) them."

GAL 1: 6-8 "I marvel that you are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel. Which is not another: but there are some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ But though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed."

GAL 1: 9-12 "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preaches any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men. (still continued to please men) I should not be the servant of Christ. But I **certify** you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after men. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by revelation of Jesus Christ.

MT. 15: 6b-9 "Thus have you made the commandments of God of none effect by your tradition. You hypocrites,

well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, (IS. 29:13) This people draw nigh unto me with their mouth, and honor me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

REV.22:18-19 "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: and if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book"

JUDE 3 "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you , and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered **unto the saints**"

1 JN.5: 20-21 "And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know Him that is true, and we are in Him that is true, even in His son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols." Amen.

MT. 7: 14 "Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it. • Heb. 1: 1-2 "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom

He made the worlds."