

The Grace Apparatus for Perception (GAP)

These studies are designed for believers in Jesus Christ only. If you have exercised faith in Christ, then you are in the right place. If you have not, then you need to heed the words of our Lord, Who said, “For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son, so that every [one] believing [or, trusting] in Him shall not perish, but shall be have eternal life! For God did not send His Son into the world so that He should judge the world, but so that the world shall be saved through Him. The one believing [or, trusting] in Him is not judged, but the one not believing has already been judged, because he has not believed in the Name of the only-begotten [or, uniquely-born] Son of God.” (John 3:16–18). “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life! No one comes to the Father except through [or, by means of] Me!” (John 14:6).

Every study of the Word of God ought to be preceded by a naming of your sins to God. This restores you to fellowship with God (1John 1:8–10). If we acknowledge our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1John 1:9). If there are people around, you would name these sins silently. If there is no one around, then it does not matter if you name them silently or whether you speak aloud.

Topics		
The Concept of the Grace Apparatus for Perception	Ephesians 3:16–19	1Corinthians 2:11–16
How does the unbeliever understand the gospel of Jesus Christ?	Summing up the doctrine of GAP	Other resources
Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)		Theological Terms from the Doctrine of GAP

Preface: Believers grow spiritually by the intake of Bible doctrine. **Grow by means of grace and by means of knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ** is a mandate from God, given in the imperative mood in 2Peter 3:18. This happens a bit at a time. There are no other methods by which Christians grow. We do not grow by attending a church that has all of the programs we like (lots of singing, a nursery, a young people’s group, etc.). We grow in a church that may be tiny, medium or large, but from which pulpit the Word of God is taught regularly—not in 15 minute chunks thrice a week, but an hour 4x a week or more. We may sing hymns, but they should enforce what we know or help to teach us doctrine. There are a lot of things that we might do at church, but the primary focus of a church is to see that its members **Grow by means of grace and by means of knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ**. Grace is the system by which God made it possible for all believers to grow (R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase, the *grace apparatus for perception*, or *GAP*).

What is covered below is a very basic approach to the concept of GAP.

This doctrine comes out of **Genesis 22** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)) and from lesson #244 of the **Basic Exegesis Series** ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)). This is a summary of this doctrine. R. B. Thieme, Jr. coined the phrase and developed the doctrine originally.

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

1. The terminology comes from R. B. Thieme, Jr., and it means that there is a grace means by which all believers may understand Bible doctrine. The basic idea is, all believers grow spiritually through the understanding of Bible doctrine. A believer with an I.Q. of 150 does not have any advantage over the believer who has an I.Q. of 90. This will be backed up with Scripture, but R. B. Thieme, Jr. Ministries also puts out a booklet on a particular person, **Laura Kay Tapping**, who showed this to be true.
2. That we are to grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ is a mandate from the Bible. This is not an option; and this is not just one way of many ways for a believer to grow. Just as there is only one way to be saved, there is only one Savior; similarly, there is only one way to grow and there is only one Word of Truth, the Bible, to be learned. 2Peter 3:18
3. Understanding Bible doctrine is much different from human understanding, which is not the basis of spiritual understanding or spiritual growth. 1Cor. 2:1, 8–9
4. At salvation, we are regenerated by the Holy Spirit, which results in our becoming trichotomous, having a soul, spirit and body. Titus 3:5 1Thess. 5:23
5. It is the soul which allows us to understand the things of man; the human spirit which allows us to understand the things of God. 1Cor. 2:10–12 Eph. 3:16
6. Spiritual growth can only take place when we are filled with the Holy Spirit; so, therefore, we must be in fellowship when learning spiritual things. 1Cor. 11:31 1John 1:9
7. Being filled with the Spirit is a mandate for the Christian life. Eph. 5:18
8. It is God's desire that everyone be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth. 1Tim. 2:4
9. One of the passages grace apparatus for perception is based upon is Eph. 3:16–19 (this is a prayer, written by Paul to the Ephesians) **That God would give you, according to [the norm or standard of] the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with inherent power by His Spirit in the inner man; so that Christ may dwell [or, be at home] in your hearts by means of faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge, that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.** Let's look at this prayer phrase-by-phrase:
 - 1) **That God would give you, according to [the norm or standard of] the riches of His glory,...** God has *an abundance of or a wealth of* glory. One of the reasons that we are left on earth after salvation is to glorify Him. Now, given your sorry Christian life and mine, that seems pretty much impossible, but that is our Christian duty and purpose. We reveal, from day-to-day, God's character and essence in us, despite our great imperfections and failings. God actually gives this opportunity to us again and again, every single day of our lives. However, only the mature believer truly glorifies Jesus Christ. Let me draw an analogy here: we all understand, to some degree, the father and son relationship. If a son goes out there, and is educated or builds up his own business or behaves like a decent human being, he does his father proud. Such a man glorifies his father. Now, as a child of 7 in a school play or singing some song at a pageant, there is some pride in that, but not a lot. Mostly, that is just cute. But when a son reaches adulthood and begins to apply the principles of life which he has learned at home, that is when a son can potentially glorify his father. As believers in Jesus Christ, we glorify God in the same way. Once we reach adulthood, that is when we begin to glorify Him. You no doubt know some 30 or 40 year-

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

old men who act like children, and everything is about them, and they are selfish and lazy. Such a man is an embarrassment to his father. Some believers reach spiritual adulthood and some do not, but we all have the potential to do so, and this potential is based upon the grace apparatus for perception.

- 2) **...to be strengthened with inherent power by His Spirit in the inner man;...** We are *strengthened* or *empowered* (passive voice) with *dúnamis* (δύναμις) [pronounced *DOO-nahm-iss*], which means *power, ability, able, capable; inherent power, power residing in a thing by virtue of its nature*. Strong's #1411. So this power, which we receive, is an inherent power or a power which resides within us. This is done by means of God's Spirit in the inner man. So, again, this process works within us. Notice that there is no legalism here. This does not happen because you used to be immoral and now you are moral. That is a good thing, but the result of growth and not the means of growth (and becoming moral might be the result of social pressure or self-will as well—as some people turn toward God simply because they are disgusted with themselves). This *inner man* refers to the human spirit, and **being strengthened with inherent power in the inner man**, refers to this spiritual growth that occurs within us. The Holy Spirit is instrumental in making this happen. The Holy Spirit teaches our human spirit; and the Holy Spirit allows the grace apparatus for perception to function when we are in fellowship.
- 3) **...so that Christ may dwell in your hearts by means of faith;...** This is one of the mysteries of the Church Age, where Jesus Christ indwells us. *To dwell* is the Greek verb *katoikéō* (κατοικέω) [pronounced *kah-toy-KEH-oh*], which means *to live, to reside*; this is a word which usually refers to one's semi-permanent dwelling. Thayer definitions: 1) *to dwell, settle*; 1a) *metaphorically divine powers, influences, etc., are said to dwell in his soul, to pervade, prompt, govern it*; 2) *to dwell in, inhabit*; 2a) *God is said to dwell in the temple, i.e. to be always present for worshippers*. Notice how this is used *metaphorically divine powers, influences, etc., are said to dwell in his soul, to pervade, prompt, govern it*. This is exactly what we are talking about, something which occurs on this inside. Strong's #2730. This is done by means of faith, which is the Greek word *pistis* (πίστις) [pronounced *PIHS-tihs*], and *pistis* refers to *having faith or confidence in something*, but it also refers to *that which you have faith and confidence in*. In the latter sense, this is one of the many synonyms in the Bible for *Bible doctrine*. Strong's #4102. Therefore, **Christ makes Himself at home in your inner being by means of exercising faith in Bible doctrine**. Spiritual information in the Bible is of no use to you. Spiritual information which you hear and reject is of no use to you. You must hear it, you must understand it (grace apparatus for perception) and then you must *believe* it. If you find yourself rejecting half of what your pastor says, then you are in the wrong church (or, you are negative toward doctrine). If you are not growing spiritually, then you are in the wrong church. If you cannot look back over a period of, say, 5 years, and be able to note unmistakable spiritual growth, then you are in the wrong church or you are just not doing it right.
- 4) **...that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; and to know the love of Christ, which surpasses knowledge,...** This is a long section, so we will break it up into further sub-points:
 - (1) *Being rooted* is the perfect passive participle of *rhizoō* (ρίζω) [pronounced *hrid-ZOH-o*], which means, *to cause to strike root, to strengthen with roots, to render firm, to fix, establish, cause a person or a thing to be thoroughly grounded*. Thayer definitions

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

only. Strong's #4492. A plant without a strong root system is easily harmed. It is the root system which goes deep into the ground, in all directions, which pulls in nutrients for the plant.

- (2) *Grounded* is the perfect passive participle of *themelioō* (θεμελιόω) [pronounced *them-el-ee-OH-oh*], which means, 1) *to lay the foundation, to found*; 2) *to make stable, establish*. Thayer definitions only. Strong's #2311. Again, notice how all of this is *foundational*; there is strength and power and nourishment in the foundation or in the roots. Perfect tense in the Greek refers generally to a past action with present continuing results. Passive means that we do not actually build this root system ourselves, but this is done for us, when we learn Bible doctrine.
- (3) *In love* is often used throughout the New Testament for being in fellowship (we find it used in this manner throughout John's first epistle). No spiritual growth occurs out of fellowship.
- (4) *Be able* is the aorist active subjunctive of Verb *exischuō* (ἐξισχύω) [pronounced *ex-is-KHOO-oh*], which means, *to be eminently able, able, to have full strength*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #1840. The subjunctive mood means that we have this power, we have this ability, but we may not choose to use it. The iterative aorist indicates that there are points in time throughout our lives when we are *able* (when we are filled with the Spirit and growing—more specifically, taking in the food needed to grow).
- (5) *To comprehend* is the aorist middle infinitive of Verb *katalambanō* (καταλαμβάνω) [pronounced *kat-al-am-BAHN-oh*], which means, 1) *to lay hold of*; 1a) *to lay hold of so as to make one's own, to obtain, attain to, to make one's own, to take into one's self, appropriate*; 1b) *to seize upon, take possession of*; 1b1) *of evils overtaking one, of the last day overtaking the wicked with destruction, of a demon about to torment one*; 1b2) *in a good sense, of Christ by his holy power and influence laying hold of the human mind and will, in order to prompt and govern it*; 1c) *to detect, catch*; 1d) *to lay hold of with the mind*; 1d1) *to understand, perceive, learn, comprehend*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #2638. Comprehension is related to spiritual growth.
- (6) We are able *to comprehend with all the saints*. This is not something which is reserved for believers who have I.Q.'s of 110 or higher; this is for every believer. If you understand the gospel enough to believe in Jesus Christ, then you can learn in the classroom of the local church and build upon that session after session, and apply that to your life, with all other believers.
- (7) Then we have: *...what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*. These are categories of doctrine wherein we store information. If you deal with a lot of paperwork and you are organized, then you separate this paperwork into different drawers, into different files or different containers. Doctrine is much the same way. We begin with basic categories of doctrine (*the breadth, and length, and depth, and height*), and then we place more and more information into the categories. *Breadth* refers to doctrines concerning Jesus Christ and His death on the cross, along with the essence of God. *Length* refers to dispensational teaching, so that we know what has been in the past and what will be found in the future; as well as to the progressive plan of God for our lives. *Depth* refers to advanced doctrines; and *height* refers to all information related to the Angelic Conflict. As we learn more and more in the Christian life, we are able to file these doctrines into these various drawers.

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

- (8) You are able to, with all the saints, comprehend the *love of Christ*; which refers to the plan of God, which begins at the cross, which represents the love of Christ, as well as His justice and His righteousness. If Jesus chose not to go to the cross, then we would have no relationship with God. Jesus chooses to do this out of love for us and God the Father chose this plan out of love for us. John 15:13 1John 4:10
- (9) This goes *beyond or exceeds or transcends knowledge*. There are several words for *knowledge* in the Bible, but there are two which are pertinent to this context: *gnosis* and *epignosis*. What we have here is *gnôsis* (γνῶσις) [pronounced *GNOH-sis*] which can refer to *human knowledge, general intelligence, human understanding*. This understanding depends upon the context. Strong's #1108. There is another word called *epignôsis* (ἐπίγνωσις) [pronounced *ehp-IHG-noh-sis*], which means, 1) *precise and correct knowledge* 1a) used in the NT of *the knowledge of things ethical and divine*; this is a word which refers to *over and above knowledge*. *Epignosis* is *over-and-above knowledge*. When in contrast with *gnôsis*, this is *divine knowledge or knowledge of Bible doctrine*. Strong's #1922. *Epignôsis* is the word that we find in 1Tim. 2:3b-4 *God our Savior...desires all people to be saved and to come to the [full] knowledge of the truth.*
- 5) *...that you might be filled with all the fullness of God.* The word *that* can refer to a result clause or to a purpose clause, and the purpose of taking in Bible doctrine is so that we *might be filled with all the fullness of God*. Grace apparatus for perception, the very process that we are describing, is the way that it occurs. We are not filled with all the fulness of God by learning a holy language and then repeating it at the right intervals; we are not filled with the fulness of God by finding certain people in the church and then imitating their personalities (I have seen this happen even in good doctrinal churches). We are not filled with the fullness of God by turning our lives around and becoming more moral. That is a good thing, but it may or may not indicate spiritual growth.
10. The second extended passage on this topic is 1Cor. 2:11-16 *For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him? So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God. But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God. These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.*
- 1) *For who among men knows the things of a man except the spirit of man within him?* When we are born again, we receive a human spirit, which has been shut down or has been non-operational for the entirety of our lives, due to the function of the sin nature. We understand our fellow man by means of our soul; and we understand God by means of our human spirit. The terms *soul* and *spirit* can be used both technically and non-technically throughout the Bible. Technically, the soul is what is inside of us which allows us to know the things of man; technically, the human spirit is what is inside of us which allows us to know the things of God. The *spirit of man* here is the non-technical use, and it refers to the human soul. We know this, because it is qualified: *the spirit of man*.
- 2) *So also no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God.* It is the Holy Spirit, Who is given to all believers at salvation, which guides us into all truth (John 16:13 1Cor. 12:13). The Holy Spirit makes the human spirit operational and allows for the flow of Bible doctrine

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

from the teaching of the pastor-teacher to the human spirit of the believer. It is the Holy Spirit Who is the co-Author of the Word of God and Who teaches us through the pastor-teacher (which is the primary means of growth for the believer). If we were supposed to grow by simply reading our Bibles, then there would be no need for the spiritual gift of pastor-teacher nor would there be any need to have a local church, which is designed to be the classroom which allows for spiritual growth. The apostle John speaks of the superiority of face to face teaching over written material. 2John 12. Paul clearly taught this as well in 1Thess. 2:17-18 3:2,10.

- 3) **But we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit from God, so that we might know the things that are freely given to us by God.** The spirit of the world is the thinking of human viewpoint. Today, this is humanism, fairness, equality and political correctness. Once and awhile, a culture can have as a strong component of that culture divine viewpoint. However, Satan works to destroy that sort of thinking as quickly as possible. A good example of human viewpoint today is the gay marriage movement. If you say that homosexual activity is wrong, you will be told that you are judging, and that Jesus told you not to judge. However, the Bible is clear on this: homosexual acts are wrong and sinful. Understanding what is sinful is not judging. The gay marriage movement says that homosexual desires are natural and God-given. It goes much deeper than that, however. The whole Satanic purpose of the gay marriage movement is to censor pastors and/or to censor the Bible and/or to denigrate the Bible. The idea is to put Christians into difficult positions and then to ostracize them or even sue them if they do not tow the gay marriage party line. Since gay marriage was legalized in Canada, there have been hundreds of lawsuits, most of them against Christians and Christian speech and actions. *To know* is the perfect active subjunctive of *eidō* (εἶδω) [pronounced *I-doh*], which means *to see, to perceive, to discern, to know*. Strong's #1492. The perfect tense is action which occurs in the past, but with results that carry on into the present. The subjunctive mood means, we may choose to know and we may choose not to know. However, that which God wants us to know is *freely given* to us. Any believer with positive signals to the Word of God can learn the Word of God through the channels which God has set up. As an aside, I lived in a large city, at one time, where finding good teaching was nearly impossible. I found okay, but legalistic teaching, at a Christian institute. However, now, with the internet, there is a surfeit of good teaching available. See the cities and pastors in **the List**. In this day and age, there is no reason for a believer to be ignorant of the Word of God.
- 4) **These things we also speak, not in words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual.** Paul, as an apostle and as a pastor-teacher, teaches these things, not as the philosophies of the day, but he teaches what the Holy Spirit teaches, where spiritual things are compared with spiritual. The verb is the present active participle of Verb *sugkrinō* (συγκρίνω) [pronounced *soong-KREE-no*], which means, 1) *to joint together fitly, compound, combine*; 2) *to interpret*; 3) *to compare*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4793. We then have the neuter plural adjective used twice: *pneumatikós* (πνευματικός) [pronounced *nyoo-mat-TEE-koss*], which means *spiritual*; as a plural, it acts like noun, and it means *spiritual things, spiritual matters*. Strong's #4152. It is found as an accusative and as a dative; so the verb acts upon *spiritual things* and to this we append *with spiritual things*. The idea here is, doctrine is built upon doctrine. You do not walk into Bible class the first day and, in an hour, get everything you need for you spiritual life. In fact, you do not get this after going to a good church for a year; or for 5 years. This is a process which continues throughout your entire life, because, for 15 hours

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

a day, you are exposed to human viewpoint from every side: from your parents, from your children, from your supervisor, from your job description, from the movies and from television. Taking the example which I used earlier—gay marriage—we find the gay agenda in such diverse programs as *Downton Abbey* and the innocuous *Pretty Little Liars* (from the Disney channel, I believe). In fact, on perhaps half of the programs I have seen, we have the gay agenda presented, over and over again. We wonder why the youth of America favors gay marriage—it is because they have been exposed to nothing else in all of what they take in. This is one example, mentioned primarily because it is a big issue today (far more important to our president than economic matters). 5 years ago, our president told us that he believed that marriage was between 1 man and 1 woman and that God was in the mix. And recently, he is **telling Africans about the gay agenda**. So, in order to combat human viewpoint, which is going to come at us from every side, we need a little bit of the Word of God. The reason we need it daily is, we are going to be exposed to human viewpoint all day long, in its many and contradictory forms (for instance, **American Muslims** and **LGBT** types overwhelmingly support the Democratic party, even though these two groups are diametrically opposed to one another).

- 5) **But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.** The *natural man* is the unbeliever, who views the things of the spirit as foolishness. On the Facebook page *Being Liberal*, nearly every day, there are anti-Christian graphic postings. Here, the Bible tells us that the unbeliever cannot learn or retain the things of the Spirit. This helps to explain to me how I could listen to and sing Christmas hymns throughout my entire life without understanding what they all meant. Although I celebrated Easter for 20 or 21 years before I was saved, I did not even know what happened to Jesus after the resurrection. I am not sure if I knew much about the resurrection itself, despite all of my exposure to it. This explains why liberals complain that Christians are *judging* when they say that homosexual acts are wrong. This is why these same liberals think that this is a violation of what Jesus said about judging, because they are unable to understand spiritual matters. This is why liberals often think that Jesus is a long-haired, sandal-wearing hippie who was the first socialist who gave away free healthcare. He did wear sandals, by the way, but the rest of this picture is wrong. However, they cannot receive the things of the Spirit. Also, it is man's nature to make God in his own image.
- 6) **But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged by no one. For who has known the mind of the Lord, that he may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.** To be *spiritual* here means not just filled with the Holy Spirit but with some spiritual growth as well. Also, Paul here claims to have the *mind of Christ*, which is the thinking of Jesus Christ, which is the content of all Bible doctrine. He uses the pronoun *we* referring to himself and the crew that he moved about with. This can be further extended to all of the apostles at this time, as well as to their proteges; and to pastor-teachers today who actually know and teach the Word of God.
11. A natural question which may come out of this is, *how does the unbeliever understand the gospel of Jesus Christ?* After all, this is fundamental Christian doctrine. The Holy Spirit graciously acts as the human spirit for the believer and makes the gospel understandable. I recall hearing the gospel for the first time and it was really poorly explained to me, but I walked away from that conversation knowing that I needed to make a decision. I wasn't sure about what exactly, but I did understand that there was a decision to be made. I eventually turned to the book of John, and understood the decision to be made as Jesus explained it in John 3 (like so many others

The Grace Apparatus for Perception

who have been saved).

12. To sum up the doctrine of GAP, you need a trained pastor-teacher teaching his congregation Bible doctrine. They need to be filled with the Spirit (in fellowship) and there needs to be enough teaching to counteract the constant flow of human viewpoint which we all experience. All believers in that congregation, being in all stages of spiritual growth, can learn from what is being taught. One of the things which I found to be fascinating is, I listened and took copious notes on R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s study of David. 30 years later, I re-listened to this study, and it was as if I had never heard a word of it before. The difference was, I had a much greater background of spiritual information the second time that I listened to this study. I got something out of it when I first heard it; and I got a great deal more out of it the second time through. There was more spiritual information in my soul, to which I could compare (lay along side) the spiritual information being taught.
 - 1) As an aside, the same thing is true of the pastor. R. B. Thieme, Jr. for 10+ years taught book after book after book of the Bible to his congregation (none of which is available to us today). He would teach 1 or more chapters a night, night after night, which we are aware of today because of the classes from the early 1960's which are still available to us. He continued increasing the number of classes to the point where, at his peak, he was teaching ten 1.25 hour classes a week. By the 2nd or 3rd or 4th pass-through of this or that book, his knowledge and understanding of the Bible expanded to a point where he could expound on these passages in much greater detail, often spending a full hour on each verse, gleaning from it as much meaning as possible.

Other resources for the Doctrine of grace apparatus for perception (GAP) (some of these were used as partial sources for this doctrinal development as well):

http://gracebiblechurchwichita.org/?page_id=134 (A dead link now)

<http://www.versebyverse.org/doctrine/gap.html>

<http://makarios-online.org/notes/pdf/GAP%204-09.pdf>

These other sources go into greater detail on this doctrine.

Related to this doctrine is the Importance of Bible Doctrine ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

What follows was taken from the Study of Luke ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)). This study includes all of lessons #77–79.

When it comes to spiritual growth, we as believers look to Jesus Christ, Who set the precedents for us as Church Age believers. Even as our physical bodies grow, so our spiritual life should grow, and that can happen in one way and one way only—the intake of Bible doctrine while we are filled with God the Holy Spirit (which is the result of naming our sins to God¹).

This is the grace system which R. B. Thieme, Jr. called the grace apparatus for perception (gap) and later he used the term *Operation Z* to describe the basic mechanics of the grace apparatus for perception.

¹ We all have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit from the point of salvation.

This doctrine was originally developed by R. B. Thieme, Jr.; and this iteration of it comes from Ron Snider, the pastor of Makarios Bible Church. It is apparent to me that the pastor developed this doctrine on his own, having learned Bob's doctrine of GAP. I integrated in some additional notes from Maranatha church and added some original material as well. Ultimately, R. B. Thieme, Jr. deserves the credit for his original development of this doctrine.²

There is a lot to take in concerning this doctrine. You may not have the background to appreciate some or most of this particular doctrine. Do the best to understand what you are able to understand. If you stay with Bible doctrine, all of this information will become perspicuous to you.

Do not expect to read and understand this doctrine in one sitting. I would think a minimum of 3 or 4 sittings would be required.

Basically, GAP means, the believer, regardless of his IQ, can grow spiritually. Your IQ can be low, it can be right in the middle or it can be high; but every believer can grow spiritually. If a person has a high enough IQ to be able to understand the gospel and then believe in Jesus Christ, then that same person can advance spiritually just like anyone else.

There are a great many theological terms found in this doctrine; therefore, I have also included a list of definitions for many of the technical vocabulary used. This list will follow the doctrine of GAP. I have set up this dictionary to integrate perfectly with the doctrine of GAP. So when you come across a technical term, it will be hyperlinked to its definition; and then the definition will be hyperlinked back to its first occurrence in the doctrine. This way, you might easily link back and forth between the doctrine and the definition list.

This doctrine primarily comes from 1Cor. 2:9–16. I have used several translations of this passage so that you can see that this important information can be discerned in many translations.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- I. Introduction and preliminary considerations.
 - A. As one observes the world, it quickly becomes evident that believers and unbelievers view the world around them in very different ways.
 1. This is said with the caveat that the believer in **reversionism** often sees the world as an unbeliever does.
 2. The believer with some **spiritual growth**, even if it is minimal, will see things differently from the unbeliever.
 - B. The fact that these two sets of perceptions are quite dissimilar may be observed in the ways in which believers and unbelievers operate and conduct their lives.
 - C. It is further evident that there are significant theological differences among the various groups in Christendom, which this doctrine is designed to explain, at least in part.
 - D. This doctrine is foundational to effectively living the Christian way of life, since an understanding of it is theologically critical to having a sound biblical anthropology. In fact, you are not really living the spiritual life apart from the application of this doctrine (for those who have never heard of GAP before, you may actually be growing spiritually, but not understanding exactly how and why).
- II. Definition and description of terms.
 - A. Pertinent vocabulary and definitions.
 1. Dichotomous is a technical term that describes the status of all unbelievers, who are

² Bob learned a great deal from L. S. Chafer; so we do not know how much his contribution is.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- in possession of only a physical body and **soul**. The soul is the immaterial part of man which allows us to be able to interact with the world and with other men. You work with a guy named Charley Brown, and you have an understanding of who he is (which understanding takes place in your soul), and you interact with him based upon what you know about him.
2. Trichotomous is a technical term that describes the status of all believers, who possess the physical body, soul, and **human spirit**, the human spirit being the immaterial part of us which allows us to perceive, understand and commune with God.
 3. Psuchikos (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*] is an adjective that is used 6 times in the New Testament; it refers to the natural physical life that is possessed by both men and animals. Strong's #5591.
 - a. It deals with physical life, which is manifested in breathing, and pertains to the natural world and what belongs in it; this is in contrast to the spiritual world and the realities in it.
 - b. It is used once as a technical term to refer to the unbeliever, who is governed by the physical realities of life, and not by the Spirit of God. 1Cor. 2:14 (which passage we will take up further down in this doctrine).
 - c. The acrostic NAP is used to refer to the natural apparatus for perception, which can only perceive those things that come through the five senses; the natural man cannot perceive or understand spiritual things.
 - d. Even when the unbeliever hears spiritual information (like **gospel** information), it generally does not remain with them for any amount of time. The unbeliever hears it; God the Holy Spirit makes the gospel real to the unbeliever, and the unbeliever then decides what to do with it. If the unbeliever rejects the gospel, then it is quite possible that they lose their understanding of the gospel as well.
 - e. Let me give you a personal example of spiritual information which the unbeliever may lack. I grew up in a normal household, I went to church (not a doctrinal church) and we celebrated Easter at my public school. When I was saved by believing in Jesus Christ, one piece of information which I lacked was, *what happened to Jesus after the crucifixion?* I was unaware of that, even after living for 21 years where this information was not exactly a secret. Soon after I believed in Jesus Christ I became aware that He was resurrected and that He interacted with His disciples for many days on earth, and then He was taken up by God the Father into heaven. When I heard this information, I believed it. Now, I was not saved a second time, after I heard, understood and believed in the resurrection. Furthermore, it would be wrong to say that I was really saved when I understood and believed in the resurrection. All believers have limited knowledge of Jesus when saved. My limited knowledge was, I read John 3 and said to God (or thought to God), *I hold You to this promise—that I believe in Jesus and I will be saved.* After salvation, I learned a great deal about Jesus, and I grew spiritually when I heard things about Him and believed them (I was practicing GAP at that time without knowing it).
 4. Sarkikos (σαρκικός) [pronounced *sar-kee-KOSS*] (Strong's #4559) is an adjective that is used 7 times in the New Testament; it means that which belongs to the flesh.
 - a. It is derived from the Greek noun sarx (σάρξ) [pronounced *sarx*], and refers to the physical substance that covers animal and human bodies. It is usually

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- translated *flesh*. Strong's #4561. 1Cor. 15:39
- b. The adjective is used to refer to the believer that lives under the influence and/or control of his **fleshly nature**. 1Cor. 3:3
 - c. Since the **sin nature** is located in the genetics of the **flesh** (Rom. 7:18), this term is used to denote a believer that is under the domination of the old sin nature. This is the believer who lives after the sinful trend of Adam.
5. Pneumatikos (πνευματικός) [pronounced *nyoo-mat-EEK-oss*] is an adjective that is used 26 times; it refers to that which is **spiritual**. When used of believers, it refers to one that is spiritual, one that is in **fellowship**, guided by the Holy Spirit, with the sin nature isolated from one's life (until we break fellowship with God and choose to sin). Strong's #4152. We enter into fellowship with God, a spiritual state of being, when we name our sins to God (1John 1:9). The moment that we sin, we are out of fellowship (which requires us to name our sin/sins again to God).
- B. The acrostic GAP is an abbreviation for the **grace apparatus for perception**; it is used to refer to the internal constitution of believers following salvation, as well as the entire system for the **perception** and **metabolization** of Bible doctrine.
 - C. **Grace** is not only the title and policy of God's plan, it is the basis for the perception of God's Word.
 - D. Grace is the method by which the believer receives God's blessings. Man's requirement for apprehending God's grace is positive volition expressed through the system of faith, which is a non-meritorious system of thinking in which the merit lies in the object. Furthermore, all men perceive things based upon *faith*; this is a system of perception employed by believers and unbelievers alike.
 - E. Since God operates through a system of grace and faith in order to reveal Himself, human systems of perception that rely on factors other than grace should be dismissed.
 1. This specifically refers to human systems of learning that are based on human intelligence alone.
 2. If a high IQ was required in order to perceive and understand Bible doctrine, then logically only those with a high IQ could learn the truth and make the maturity adjustment.
 3. Paul makes it quite clear that cosmic systems of wisdom were of no value when it comes to perceiving and apprehending the truth of God. 1Cor. 2:1,8
 - a. 1Cor. 2:1 **And I, when I came to you, brothers, did not come proclaiming to you the testimony of God with lofty speech or wisdom.**
 - b. 1Cor. 2:8 **None of the rulers of this age understood this, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.** (ESV)
 4. In fact, as we will document, the very nature of unbelievers makes it impossible for them to perceive and believe the truth, apart from Divine provision and intervention.
 5. All humans use 3 systems of perception:
 - a. Faith. Faith means you hear something and you believe it. What you hear may be perfectly reasonable or completely crazy; but you choose, from your own volition, to believe what you hear (*why* you choose to believe something can depend upon many factors). About 70–95% of what we *know* in life is based upon faith. This is every person's primary way to perceive the world.
 - b. Empiricism. We see something and we believe that it is true. Bear in mind that we see many things and draw incorrect conclusions about what we see, based

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

upon our understanding of life, which comes from what we have already believed. An evolutionist can find bone fragments in the ground the come to one set of conclusions regarding those bones; and a non-evolutionist can see the same bones and form a different set of conclusions.

- c. Logic or rationalism. We may begin with several assumptions and/or observations, and them logically follow this to a conclusion. Thinking based upon logic and reason is certainly the least used system of perception among those in the human race.
 - d. Empiricism and rationalism always have some element of faith mixed in with them; or faith is essential or a basis for what one believes.
 - e. Empiricism and rationalism both have some amount of merit attached to them. We do not all see the same things; and even when we do, we do not always interpret what we see in the same way.
- F. The grace apparatus for perception consists of two elements, coupled with one mechanic for growing spiritually.
1. Every believer has the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which he (or she) received at the point of salvation as part of the salvation package. 1Cor. 6:11, 19 12:13 2Cor. 5:5
 2. The human spirit, which is regenerated at the point of salvation (Titus 3:5). The function and interaction of the body, soul and spirit restores the trichotomous state that Adam had prior to the fall. 1Thess. 5:23 speaks of our *body, soul and spirit*.
 3. The rapid recovery system of **rebound** provides us with spiritual cleansing and instantaneous forgiveness of sins (which sins we commit after salvation). We name our sins to God and we are instantly forgiven and cleansed for forward movement in the spiritual life. 1John 1:9
 4. This mechanic is the means by which one regains fellowship with God, which puts the Holy Spirit in the position of rulership, and isolates the sin nature (the sin nature remains isolated until the point that we choose to sin again).
- G. God provides the grace apparatus for perception so that each believer might learn those things that are freely given by God, and come to a complete knowledge of the truth. 1Cor. 2:12 1Tim. 2:4
1. 1Cor. 2:12 **Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit Who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.**
 2. 1Tim. 2:3–4 **This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. (ESV; capitalized)**
- H. We also use the term/acrostic GAP to refer to the process of a believer in fellowship, functioning under the grace apparatus for perception, and learning Bible doctrine,
- I. The believer is able to GAP the truth, but the unbeliever can only NAP the truth, which makes the true perception of God an impossibility.
- III. The documentation for this theological position is found in the book of First Corinthians (1Cor. 2:9–16). Therefore, let us launch into an exegetical study of 1Cor. 2:9–16:
- A. Introductory notes:
1. I have found that, when an extensive passage lays out the framework for a particular doctrine, then the believer is more apt to believe the doctrine (as opposed to simply seeing a set of points).
 2. I have used **Syndein's notes** here of R. B. Thieme, Jr. translation of this passage (with considerable editing). We will view other translations as well.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- B. V. 9: **But, in contrast, as it stands written** [with the result that it remains written forever—perfect passive indicative of the verb] [quoting Isaiah 64:4]: **Things which the eye has not seen** [see point 1 below] **and the ear has not heard** [see point 2 below] **and which have not entered the heart** [or, *right lobe*] [a reference to rationalism] **of man all that God has prepared** [see point 3 below] **for those who love Him.** [see point 4 below]
1. *Seen* is the aorist active indicative of *eidō* (εἶδω) [pronounced *ī-doh*], which means, *to see, to perceive, to discern, to know*. Strong's #1492. This is a reference to empiricism.
 2. *Heard* is the aorist active indicative of *akoúō* (ἀκούω) [pronounced *ah-KOO-oh*], which means *to hear; to hear and pay attention to; to listen to; to hear and understand*. Strong's #191. This is also a reference to empiricism.
 3. *Prepared* is the aorist active indicative of *hetoimázō* (ἐτοιμάζω) [pronounced *het-oy-MAHD-zoh*], which means, *to make ready, to prepare; to make the necessary preparations, to get everything ready*. Strong's #2090. What God has prepared for us is a part of the **divine decrees** made by God in eternity past; and we understand these preparations as God's plan for our life. The aorist tense means that this was done one time in eternity past. God does not revise His plan as he goes along.
 4. The present active participle of *agapaō* (ἀγαπάω) [pronounced *ahg-ahp-AH-oh*], which means *to love, to esteem, to regard with strong affection; to love and serve with fidelity; to regard with favor [goodwill, benevolence]; to delight in*. Strong's #25. This is a mental attitude love which we develop through positive volition and the learning of Bible doctrine. There are many believers who reject the plan of God and they do not move forward in God's plan (but they do remain eternally saved). Agape is the form of love based on who and what you are apart from any merit in the object of your love. Many parents have points in their lives when they love some of their children, but they may not like them very much.
- C. V. 10a: **Moreover God has revealed them** [see point 1 below] [His Plans for those who love Him] **to us by means of His Spirit.**
1. *Revealed* is the aorist active indicative of *apokaluptō* (ἀποκαλύπτω) [pronounced *ap-ok-al-OOP-toe*], which means, *to uncover, lay open what has been veiled or covered up; disclose, make bare; to make known, make manifest, disclose what before was unknown*. Strong's #601. The aorist tense is the iterative aorist, where God's plan is made known to us at various points of time in our lives.
 2. What is *revealed* to us are these things which the eye has not seen, the ear has not heard; the things which have not entered into the thinking of man.
 3. All that we know about the essence of God and the plan of God is revealed to us by God. We do not go out and search for this knowledge, it is found within the covers of Scripture. And, for those who want to know God's Word, God will provide a way for them to know it.
 4. The Holy Spirit reveals these things to us. This is a part of the function of GAP. The well-prepared pastor-teacher teaches Bible doctrine and the congregant hears this information and the Holy Spirit makes it real to the hearer. When we hear accurate Bible doctrine and believe it, we advance in the spiritual life (that is, we grow spiritually).
 5. Physically, when we consume a protein or nutrient rich food, that aids to our growth; whereas drinking a soda provides us nothing but empty calories. Some pastors do

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- nothing but provide soda (empty doctrines) for their congregants. Or some pastors provide milk, but never provide any meat. 1Cor. 3:2
- D. V. 10b: **For the Spirit investigates** [see point 1 below] **all things, and the deep things** [see point 2 below] **of God.**
1. *Investigates* is the present active indicative of ereunaô (ἐρευνάω) [pronounced *er-yoo-NAH-oh*], which means, *to search (out), to inquire, to seek (out), to investigate, to examine*. Strong's #2045. The Holy Spirit is always available to us to reveal divine truth (but, *only* through God's revealed Word).
 2. The plural of the noun bathos (βάθος) [pronounced *BATH-oss*], which means, *depth, height; of "the deep" sea; metaphorically; deep, extreme, poverty; of the deep things of God, profundity; mystery; the extent*. Strong's #899. The most profound information of God's plan is available to us.
 3. After salvation, our success in God's plan means for us to apply our faith to information provided for us in the Word of God (as taught by a well qualified pastor-teacher). The Bible is the Mind of Christ; and when we learn Bible doctrine, we are learning His thinking. When we expose ourselves to accurate Bible teaching, then God the Holy Spirit will make real to us the truth which is the basis of our spiritual growth. The final step is to then apply doctrine in the soul to life. Then, since it is His Thinking, Jesus lives through us!
- E. 11a: **For what man understands** [with results that last forever; see point 1 below] **the things of man except [by] the spirit of man** [this is a reference to the human soul] **which is in him?**
1. *Understands* is the perfect active indicative of eidô (εἶδω) [pronounced *I-doh*], which means, *to see, to perceive, to discern, to know*. Strong's #1492. The perfect tense indicates something which occurs in the past with results that continue forever.
 2. Strictly speaking, the *soul* is related to man's immaterial being which relates to the world and to other men; and the *spirit* is man's immaterial being which relates to God. However, on occasion, these terms may be interchangeable, which is made clear by the context. The point being made here is, man understands other men by means of the immaterial part of his being; similarly, he understands God by means of the immaterial part of his being (v. 11b below).
 3. This verse means all men are from the earth and understand the earthly things through experience. But there is a failure of this rationalism to understand spiritual information—they simply have no frame of reference.
- F. 11b: **Even so the things of God no one understands** [perfect active indicative of eidô (εἶδω)] **except the spirit of God.**
1. Only by means of God the Holy Spirit is man able to understand the things of God. This is an invisible process.
 2. Verse 10a says spiritual things are revealed through the instrumentality of the Spirit. Without a human spirit, unbelievers find spiritual things to be *foolishness*—they just do not understand.
- G. 12a: **Now we have not received** [see point 1 below] **the spirit of the world** [see point 2 below].
1. *Received* is the aorist active indicative of lambánô (λαμβάνω) [pronounced *lahm-BAHN-oh*], which means *to take, to receive, to have, to hold; to obtain; to get a hold of*. Strong's #2983. We did not receive (in a point of time) the spirit of the world; but we received the Holy Spirit from God. We received *the spirit of the world* in a point of time (at birth); at which point, this *spirit* begins to function.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

2. *World* is the masculine singular noun *kósmos* (κόσμος) [pronounced *KOSS-moss*], which means *world, world order, arrangement, order, organized world system*. By far, most of the uses of *kósmos* are to simply this world which we inhabit. This word is also used with a negative connotation. Strong's #2889. *Kosmos* refers to *worldly thinking*. This goes further than simply being human viewpoint thinking; this incorporates Satan's evil thinking as well.
- H. 12b: **But, in contrast, the spirit which is out from the source of God, for the purpose that we might know with the result that we know forever** [the perfect active subjunctive of *eidô* (εἶδω)] **the things being freely given** [see point 1 below] **by grace** (no strings attached) [see point 2 below] **to us under** [the principle of grace from] **God**.
1. This appears as though we have the verb *to give* followed by some word for *grace*, but that is not what we have here.
 2. *Grace given* is the aorist passive participle of *charizomai* (χαρίζομαι) [pronounced *khar-ID-zohm-ahee*], which means, *to do something pleasant or agreeable (to one), to do a favour to, gratify; to show one's self gracious, kind, benevolent; to grant forgiveness, to pardon; to give graciously, give freely, bestow; to forgive; graciously to restore one to another; to preserve for one a person in peril; to show oneself gracious by forgiving wrongdoing, forgive, pardon*. The root is *charis*, which is *grace* or *kindness*. Strong's #5483. The *grace* aspect of this verb is found twice in the translation above. What we are given from God in order to understand Him and His plan is given to us graciously—meaning, we do not earn or deserve what God has given us. What God has given to us is the mechanics of studying and learning Bible doctrine
- I. 13a: **Which things** [Divine viewpoint thinking/wisdom] **also we speak** [Paul refers here to his teaching and to the teaching of the other Apostles], **not in words taught by human viewpoint thinking/wisdom**. [see points 1, 2 & 3]
1. *Taught* is actually the masculine plural adjective *didaktos* (διδακτός) [pronounced *dihd-ak-TOSS*], which means, *that can be taught; taught, instructed by one, that which is communicated; teachings, precepts*. Strong's #1318.
 2. *Human* is the feminine singular noun *anthrôpinos* (ἀνθρώπινος) [pronounced *anth-ROH-pee-noss*], which means *human, humankind, applied to things belonging to men, the things of man, things common to mankind, after the manner of mankind*. Strong's #442.
 3. *Wisdom* is the feminine singular noun *sophia* (σοφία) [pronounced *sohf-EE-ah*], which means, *wisdom* [spiritual, human, cosmic]. Strong's #4678.
 4. A good contemporary example of human viewpoint wisdom is the liberalism and socialism which is being taught as truth in many American colleges.
- J. 13b: **But [in contrast] that [which is] taught by the Holy Spirit** [see point 1 below] **explaining/interpreting/putting together/comparing** [see point 2 below] **spiritual doctrines" [with] spiritual doctrines**. [see point 3 below]
1. This is a similar set of words to those found with v. 13a, except that instead of *human wisdom* we have the *Holy Spirit*. In v. 13a, we have **taught by human viewpoint wisdom**; and in v. 13b we have, **taught by a Spirit of Holiness**.
 2. *Comparing* is the present active participle of *sugkrinô* (συγκρίνω) [pronounced *soong-KREE-no*], which means, *to joint together fitly, compound, combine; to interpret; to compare*. Thayer definition only. Strong's #4793.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

3. The dative neuter plural followed by the accusative neuter plural of pneumatikos (πνευματικός) [pronounced *nyoo-mat-EEK-oss*], which means, as a plural, *spiritual things, spiritual matters*. Strong's #4152.
 4. The Bible only has one method stated of how to study itself. See Isaiah 28:10—line upon line, precept upon precept, a little here and a little there—building and comparing one doctrine with another.]
- K. 14a: **Howbeit the soul-ish man** ["psuchikos man"] [see point 1] **does not receive to himself/accept** [see point 2 below] **the things of the Spirit of God**.
1. *Soul-ish* is the masculine singular noun/adjective psuchikos (ψυχικός) [pronounced *psoo-khee-KOSS*], which means, *soul-ish; natural; unregenerate; of or belonging to breath; having the nature and characteristics of the breath; the principal of animal life, which men have in common with the brutes; governed by breath; the sensuous nature with its subjection to appetite and passion*. It is the *breath, life, immaterial substance* of man. Strong's #5591. Because unregenerate (unbelieving) man lacks the human spirit; he only has a soul and body. This refers to the immaterial part of man (that is, his soul).
 2. The verb found here is the present middle indicative of dechomai (δέχομαι) [pronounced *DEKH-om-ahee*], which means, *to receive, to accept; to take*. Strong's #1209.
 3. **The soul-ish man**—the man lacking a human spirit—**cannot receive [or take in] the things of the Spirit of God**.
- L. 14b: **For they are foolishness to him**. The unbeliever is an unbeliever because he is negative towards God. Therefore, the things of God appear to be foolish to him. It is not often that you might present a passage to an unbeliever and for him to comment, *that is pretty amazing; tell me more!*
- M. 14c: **And he is not able** [see point 1 below] **to obtain knowledge** [see point 2 below] [of spiritual matters—Divine Viewpoint-type wisdom] **because they are discerned/examined/judged** [see point 3 below] **from the source of the Spirit**
1. The verb is the present middle/passive indicative of dunamai (δύναμαι) [pronounced *DOO-nam-ahee*], which means, *to be able, have power whether by virtue of one's own ability and resources, to be able to do something; to be capable, strong and powerful*. Strong's #1410. With the negative, he lacks this ability.
 2. *To obtain knowledge* is the aorist active infinitive of ginōskō (γινώσκω) [pronounced *gih-NOH-skoh*], which means *to know, to learn to know, to come to know, to get a knowledge of perceive, to feel; to become known; to understand, to perceive*. Strong's #1097.
 3. The final verb is the present passive infinitive of anakrínō (ἀνακρίνω) [pronounced *aw-nah-KREE-noh*], which means *to examine in order to pass a judicial sentence, to examine accurately or carefully, to inquire, to ask questions*. Strong's #350.
 4. V. 14c is all about the perceptive ability of the Spirit-filled person.
- N. 15a: **But he that is spiritual** [pneumatikos] **truly discerns the all things**. [spiritual matters—the things of God]
- O. Divine Viewpoint thinking/wisdom: 15b: **However, he himself is judged by/under no one**.
1. This means that someone without Divine viewpoint thinking is not equipped to judge someone who has Divine viewpoint thinking. This becomes important particularly since apparently believers of the day were taking disputes to the courts and were

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

being judged potentially by unbelievers.

- P. Conclusion: 16a: **For, who has known** [see point 1 below] **the mind/thinking of the Lord...**
1. The verb is the aorist active indicative of ginōskō (γινώσκω) [pronounced *gih-NOH-skoh*], which means *to know, to learn to know, to come to know, to get a knowledge of perceive, to feel; to become known; to understand, to perceive*. Strong's #1097.
 2. V. 16a asks the question, *who knows divine viewpoint thinking? Who is able to understand wisdom?*
- Q. 16b: **...that he can instruct Him?**
1. The verb is the future active indicative of sumbibazō (συνβιβάζω) [pronounced *soom-bihb-AHD-zoh*], which means, *to unite (in association or affection), (mentally) to infer, to show, to teach, to instruct, to prove; to gather, to knit together*. Strong's #4822.
 2. What man fully understands the thinking of God that he might instruct God?
- R. 16c: **Nevertheless, we have** [see point 1 below] **the thinking/mind of Christ.**
1. The verb is the present active indicative of echō (ἔχω) [pronounced *ECHKH-oh*], which means *to have [and/or] hold; to own, to possess, to adhere to, to cling to*. Strong's #2192.
 2. Paul is saying that he and the other Apostles keep on having and holding onto the mind of Christ. Today, we have the mind of Christ; it is the Scriptures.
 3. We do not have any other access to divine viewpoint thinking. We cannot go into a monastery and starve ourselves and pray fervently and receive special knowledge of God. All of that comes through the teaching of the Word of God.
- IV. A theological study of 1Cor. 2:9–16, using the Analytic-Literal Translation:
- A. 1Cor. 2:9 **But just as it has been written, "What [things] an eye did not see and an ear did not hear and did not enter into the heart of humanity, [fig., no person thought could happen], which [things] God prepared for the ones loving Him."** [Isaiah 64:4]
1. Paul loosely quotes Isaiah 64:4 to document his position that Divine wisdom, and the perception of that wisdom, does not come from human sources.
 2. Man does not know or fully appreciate, apart from divine revelation, what God has prepared for those who love Him (and we love God by being *in Christ*).
- B. 1Cor. 2:10 **But God revealed [them] to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all [things], even the depths of God.**
1. Paul logically moves on to say that God must choose to reveal what He thinks. Mankind is unable to perceive God's wisdom on his own.
 2. Revelation from God is our only means of understanding God. God the Holy Spirit, as a Member of the Godhead, is able to reveal divine truth to us, as He knows even the depths of God.
 3. The **anthropopathism** of searching is used to indicate the omniscience and veracity of the Holy Spirit, Who faithfully and accurately communicates the thinking of God to the human race. John 16:13–15
- C. 1Cor. 2:11a **For who among people knows the [things] of the person, except the spirit of the person, the [one] in him?**
1. Paul points out the fact that only the real you knows at any given time what you are thinking.
 2. This gnomic expression (short sayings that express basic truths) is one with which a thinking person would not argue.
 3. While a man knows what he thinks, no one knows what another person is thinking, unless that person chooses to reveal his thoughts.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

4. Anyone can cover his true thoughts with an overt façade, which may simply be designed to disguise his thinking and motives. Prov. 26:24–26
- D. 1Cor. 2:11b **In the same way also no one knows the [things] of God, except the Spirit of God.**
1. If Charley Brown is the only person who really knows what Charley Brown is thinking, then the logical conclusion is that the only one that can truly know what God thinks would have to be God Himself.
 2. Going back to v. 10, the Holy Spirit is not only privy to what God thinks, He is the One whom God has appointed to reveal that information to mankind.
- E. 1Cor. 2:12–13 **But we did not receive the spirit of the world, but the Spirit, the [One] from God, so that we should know the [things] having been graciously given to us by God; which [things] also we speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in [words] taught by the Holy Spirit, interpreting spiritual [things] by spiritual [words] [or, combining spiritual [ideas] with spiritual [words]].**
1. The spirit of the world refers to the thinking that dominates the fallen world—the world manipulated and deceived by Satan.
 2. The cosmic/human systems of education, wisdom, and philosophy, which are based on human systems of intelligence, are not sufficient to provide mankind an accurate understanding of God and His plan.
 3. The natural apparatus for perception is the only means of perception that unregenerate humanity has available.
 4. However, the NAP system is contaminated with the genetic sinful trend of Adam, which can only distort the truth, and tends to reject the things of God.
 5. Therefore, those dominated by the spirit of the world and the natural apparatus for perception cannot accurately perceive or understand the things of God.
 6. While the principle of human intelligence is not bad in itself, those that have only cosmic wisdom tend to be arrogant and reject spiritual realities. v. 14
 7. Percentage wise, not many of those with great human intelligence possess positive volition. 1Cor. 1:26
 8. One of the primary reasons each believer received the indwelling ministry of God the Holy Spirit at the point of salvation was so that he could learn the thoughts of God. 1Cor. 2:12 **(Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.—ESV)**
 - a. The fact that we have received the Spirit who is from God is documentation for the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.
 - b. This Spirit from God is distinct from and antagonistic to the spirit of the cosmos, governed strictly by human systems of thinking, who see **Divine viewpoint** as foolishness. 1Cor. 2:14
 - c. The purpose clause is introduced by hina (ἵνα), which is followed by the subjunctive mood of the verb know; this is designed to convey the fact that the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not the only issue in learning God’s truths. v. 12
 - d. Other factors that must be considered are the volition of the student, his willingness to orient to God’s system, humility, consistency, having a qualified teacher, and whether or not he understands and uses the mechanic to isolate the sin nature.
 - e. The doctrines that comprise the faith are freely given to us by God through the teaching ministry of God the Holy Spirit, which indicates that grace is still a most

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

important aspect of learning the thoughts of God.

9. Although God the Holy Spirit is the ultimate teacher of doctrine, He has chosen to communicate to **Church Age** believers through human communicators. 1Cor. 2:13
 10. Those that reject the authority of the **pastor-teacher**, who was established in his canon by the Holy Spirit, manifest a rejection of the very system that the Holy Spirit has established. Acts 20:28 1Peter 5:2
 11. Verse 13 also documents the fact that God has chosen to communicate His plan using a particular vocabulary, which is designed to communicate spiritual doctrines by means of technical spiritual language. Paul's teachings are filled with technical vocabulary.
- F. 1Cor. 2:14 **But a natural [or, unspiritual] person does not receive the [things] of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he is not able to know [them], because they are spiritually examined.**
1. The natural man (the soulish man, the dichotomus man) is unable to understand the things of God. In fact, accurate theology seems foolish to him.
 2. He has no Holy Spirit to teach his human spirit because he has no human spirit. Therefore, the soulish man is unable to learn and take in Bible doctrine.
- G. 1Cor. 2:15 **But the spiritual [one] indeed examines all [things], but he himself is examined by no one.**
1. The spiritual man (the trichotomous man, the believer) is able to evaluate both spiritual and human matters, because he has a soul and spirit. He is able to understand the things of man by means of his soul; and the things of God by means of his spirit.
 2. No soulish man is able to evaluate and understand the believer.
- H. 1Cor. 2:16 **"For who knew [the] mind of [the] LORD? Who will instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ. [Isaiah 40:13]**
1. What man is there—what dichotomus, unbelieving man exists—who knows the mind of God? What soulish man thinks he has anything to tell God?
 2. Paul, and those who traveled with him, and the other Apostles, all have the mind of Christ. They understood Who Jesus is; what He did for mankind; and how all of this is well-integrated with the Old Testament (hence Paul quoting from the OT).
- V. The natural man. 1Cor. 2:14 **Now the natural person** [Note: Since this person is contrasted with the spiritual person of verse 15, it is taken here to mean the person without the Holy Spirit] **does not receive the things [i.e., truths] revealed by the Holy Spirit of God, because they are [considered] foolishness to him. And he cannot understand them because they must be discerned by using spiritual judgment [i.e., judgment aided by the Holy Spirit].** (An Understandable Version, which includes the bracketed comments)
- A. The natural man is a term that is used by Paul to refer to the unbeliever who resides in the realm of spiritual death, ruled by the genetic sin nature. Rom. 5:12, 21
 - B. Since he lacks the grace apparatus for perception (he has no human spirit and is not indwelt by the Holy Spirit), he is incapable of discerning or assimilating spiritual information.
 - C. Paul makes it clear that the natural man cannot understand spiritual things. Therefore, he cannot come to the knowledge of the truth since he is incapable of receiving, learning, or grasping the significance of spiritual information.
 - D. The only exception to this reality occurs at the point of gospel hearing, when the Holy Spirit acts to present the issues related to salvation. John 16:7–9

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- E. Therefore, it is not productive to attempt to discuss any area of Divine viewpoint with an unbeliever; the gospel is the only doctrine that he can grasp. Everything else would be, at best, a matter of debate for him.
- F. While an unbeliever may have a predilection for religion, philosophy, science, psychology, or any other discipline, he ultimately views Divine viewpoint as foolishness.
- G. He may cover his thoughts with polite and measured responses; nevertheless, he finds the information to be lacking in truth or credibility, since he does not possess the ability to evaluate spiritual matters.
- H. The wisdom of the natural man is linked to natural life on earth, dependent upon human abilities and IQ, and tied to the fallacious thinking of demons. James 3:15 (**This is not the wisdom that comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic.**)
 - 1. The “wisdom” that permeates the cosmos is called earthly, indicating that the organized systems of human wisdom are tied to the earthly scheme of things; it is contrasted with the wisdom that comes from Heaven.
 - 2. The fact that it is natural demonstrates that it comes from the realm of unbelievers, unregenerate men that are dominated by their sin natures.
 - 3. The final adjective, demonic, documents that the earthly systems of wisdom and philosophy are consistent with the thinking of fallen angels (also known as *the doctrine of demons*). 1Tim. 4:1–3
- I. He is finally contrasted with the spiritual man, the regenerate man, the believer possessing the grace apparatus for perception and who metabolizes doctrine.
- J. The natural man cannot effectively question/evaluate/judge the spiritual man, since he lacks the frame of reference or the internal apparatus to do so.
- K. Further, neither the natural man, nor the carnal believer, can effectively judge the positive, advancing believer, since the sinful trend of Adam always prejudices the evaluation.
- VI. The grace provision for learning the plan of God in the Church Age.
 - A. In order to communicate His thoughts to the human race, God has chosen to record His revelation in the objective words of the Scripture. There is no learning about God or God’s plan apart from the Bible. For most people, this then requires a well-qualified teacher of Bible doctrine.
 - B. Therefore, the first aspect of God’s grace provision for learning His plan is the formation and preservation of the completed canon of Scripture.
 - 1. The thoughts of God were communicated, through the principle of revelation, to positive men that were enabled to record the Divine revelation without any error or imperfection. Exodus 17:14 Jer. 30:2 Rev. 1:11
 - 2. This mysterious process was not as simple as mere dictation; it did not override the volition, personality, history, or any other aspect of the human author. The human author’s vocabulary, background, and personality are found throughout the Scriptures.
 - 3. This process resulted in an inspired text that was free from human error (doctrine of inerrancy), and whose inspiration extended to the very words of Scripture. 2Tim. 3:16
 - 4. Throughout the course of human history, other positive believers gathered the inspired material, and rejected that which was spurious. For the New Testament, this process took about 300 years, but there came to be universal acceptance of the New Testament canon.
 - 5. The final result was the completed canon of Scripture, which has been preserved in

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments in accordance with the promise of Jesus Christ. Matt. 5:18 24:35

- C. God has provided the only authorized environment for the dissemination and teaching of His Word in this **dispensation**.
1. The local church, not any other organization, is the medium, which God Himself has chosen and established to advance His plan. 1Cor. 4:17 1Tim. 3:15
 2. Face-to-face teaching is the format that God has ordained, and is superior to all other forms of communication. 2John 12
 - a. The apostles recognized that their own epistles to local churches were not the ideal; they simply served to encourage believers in the interim until the **apostle** could be personally present. 1Thess. 2:17–18 3:2,10
 - b. If the written correspondence from the highest ranking authority in the Church Age was an inferior form of communication, where does that leave other forms of communication like books, television, radio, etc.?
 - c. Beyond that, apart from active personal participation in a local church, one cannot effectively fulfill many of the Royal imperatives. Heb. 10:25 (...not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.—ESV)
 - d. This does not mean that alternate forms of taking in doctrine are forbidden. It simply means that they are not ideal. I have personally observed people who have listened to doctrine apart from the assembly with others, and the negative results are often obvious.
 - e. This is not to mean that electronic methods are to be rejected or that reading and studying are out of bounds; it just means that those methods are not ideal. Most recently, our church, due to the Corona virus, **has gone online** and the pastor (R. B. Thieme, III) has been teaching online to an empty auditorium. There is a time and place for technology; and this was the proper approach. However, there will come a time in the near future where we will gather as a local church once again to hear his teaching face to face.
 3. The independent, autonomous local church, with a pastoral form of government is the norm that is promoted by the New Testament; denominations are not.
 - a. Denominations (as well as other aberrations) undermine the principle of authority, and the Royal Chain of Command.
 - b. Denominations often pressure the pastor-teacher to parrot the doctrines of that denomination, rather than teach all the doctrines contained in the Word of God.
 - c. The fear of excommunication from the denomination has led most to avoid the truth of certain matters, and teach only the doctrines that are accepted or approved by the denomination. A pastor fears this because being removed from the denomination would remove its branding; and this would reduce his congregation size.
 - d. Sound ministries have left the denominational camp; they are willing to bear the reproach of teaching the whole purpose of God. Heb. 13:13: Acts 20:27
 4. Those that reject the principle or function of the local church are obviously out of touch with the very dispensation in which they live (the Church Age), and cannot ultimately be successful spiritually.
 - a. Spiritual mavericks, loners, or renegades, who become a law to themselves, reject authority, and reject God's system, often continue to manifest the delusion

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- that they are pleasing to God. 2Tim. 3:8–9,13
- b. Such people often hold to a small set of verses (perhaps 10, perhaps 50, perhaps 100) which they consider to be the entire spiritual life. Everything else is interpreted in terms of those verses. This is how some cults manage to separate individuals from their family and friends. Cults cannot afford to have their teachings questioned by neutral outside parties.
 - c. Further, false teachers will find out at the **Bema seat of Christ** what the positive, adjusted believer has learned and embraced in time.
 - d. One must compete according to the established rules of his dispensation. 2Tim. 2:5 (**An athlete is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules.**)
- D. For the vast majority of the Church Age, God has provided each local church with precisely one spiritual leader as part of grace. Eph. 4:7,11 Rev. 2,3
1. As is consistent with the pastoral analogies in the New Testament, each flock (congregation) can only have and respond to one shepherd. John 10:4–5 1Tim. 3:1
 2. Although no size is ever specified for a local church, I would think that more than 3 would make the most sense. A pastor who teaches a small congregation (of say, 5–15) has to be particularly faithful to his calling. The size of one's church, whether it is fewer than 10 or more than 3000, is irrelevant. Each pastor has his own set of challenges and difficulties.
 3. The pastor-teacher is selected by God the Holy Spirit, established in the appropriate canon, and supported throughout his ministry. Acts 20:28
 - a. This principle demands that any man that is prepared for the ministry not resort to inappropriate tactics in order to obtain a congregation. He must be humbly willing to wait until such time as the Holy Spirit brings him together with his right congregation.
 - b. This also indicates that the pastor-teacher is not simply an employee that may be hired and fired like other employees; believers need to understand the principle that lifting a hand against God's appointed leader is not only wrong, it can be dangerous. 1Sam. 24:6 2Cor. 10:7–11 12:21–13:2
 - c. Although the pastor-teacher is the ranking authority in the local church, God has provided deacons to support him in the administration of the local church. Every pastor-teacher requires support. Acts 6:1ff
 - d. While the pastor-teacher may rely on the insight of other positive believers (deacons and those in the congregation at large), he alone is responsible for shepherding and teaching the congregation. 1Pet. 5:1–4
 - e. Not every congregation is able to sustain all of the financial needs of its pastor-teacher. Even Paul constructed tents as a side business in order to make ends meet (when that was necessary—Acts 18:3). Just because a congregation is small and cannot support their pastor, this is *not* a reason to disband that local church.
 - f. The response of people will vary with the times. There was a time in Berachah Church where one could not find a seat. However, guaranteed that, if R. B. Thieme, Jr. were still alive, that would not be the case today.
 - g. Therefore, a pastor must concern himself only with the teaching of the Word of God. He congregation may be large or small; he may lose members, he may gain members. He must focus on his responsibility, and let the chips fall where they may.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

4. God supernaturally supports, sustains, and guides the positive pastor-teacher; the pastor teacher that diligently seeks to fulfill his ministry before the Lord will be blessed with insight, understanding, the knowledge of where to teach, what to teach, and how to teach (Matt. 7:7–11). In a few individual cases, a pastor-teacher will be required to work another job in order to make ends meet. Such a pastor needs to thank God for his small congregation and for his supplementary income.
 5. It is my opinion that the needs of the pastor-teacher should be foremost in the minds of his congregation. This is far more important than the purchase of land and a building. There is no shame for a small doctrinal church to meet in a public building, in the pastor's home, in the home of a parishioner, in a rented building, etc. I have known doctrinal churches which have rented out space in other churches in order to meet.
 6. God has always used human communicators in every dispensation, each of whom was different in personality, style, experience, etc.; however, each of them possessed an active sin nature. James 5:17
 - a. The great illustration of this is Moses. God spoke the Ten Commandments directly to the people of Israel, and they totally freaked out. They asked Moses to stand between them and God; to hear what God said and to teach it to them (instead of hearing God's voice). However, Moses did far more than simply repeat verbatim the words which God spoke to him (although he did repeat word-for-word what God said to him). Moses was also able to organize and develop spiritual information and teach it directly, which is the book of Deuteronomy. It is his set of sermons from this book which informed the **generation of promise** before they entered into Canaan to take it.
 - b. One man is not only responsible to feed the flock and look after their spiritual well being; he is fully capable of providing sufficient doctrine to get his sheep to maturity. 1Tim. 4:16
 - c. Those that reject the principle of one, spiritually appointed pastor-teacher often do so with the arrogant suggestion that one man cannot teach them the truth and take them to maturity.
 - d. This type of believer often manifests his spiritual instability and inconsistency with the assertion that only he can really determine what the truth is; therefore, he becomes his own teacher!
 - e. How can any believer know that he can trust one man with his spiritual well-being? Ask Noah, Moses, Elijah, or Paul.
 - f. All communicators must be evaluated on the content of the teaching; other factors such as personality, likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc. are not part of that criterion.
 - E. As stated previously, there is one mechanic provided in the GAP process; God has provided the rapid recovery system of rebound. 1John 1:9
 - F. This is the only method by which a believer with a functional and active sin nature can regain fellowship with God, learn His plan, and be prepared to execute within that plan.
- VII. The stages of GAP.
- A. The first stage of GAP begins with the pastor-teacher and the study-teach routine; this is comprised of private study and public proclamation. 2Tim. 2:15
 1. The pastor-teacher must himself be a positive believer, who desires to know the truth, and seeks the necessary wisdom. James 1:5

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

2. He must be prepared spiritually, intellectually, and academically to interpret the word of God; this involves knowledge of the languages of Scripture, biblical history, sound hermeneutics, and a good doctrinal foundation.
3. The acrostic ICE (isagogics, categories, exegesis) has been commonly used to refer to the proper approach; however, in terms of actual order EIC is more accurate.
 - a. The first step in this process is the study of the Scripture from the original languages in which they were written.
 - b. This allows the pastor-teacher to ascertain the correct translation he must determine the meaning of every word, phrase, sentence, paragraph and book in the context in which they were written.
 - c. The second step, isagogics, refers to the fact that one must understand the historical context in which a particular passage was written. How did the people of that era understand what was being taught to them; how did their experiences and culture inform them when reading/hearing the words of Moses, Isaiah or Paul?
 - d. The final step is the categorization of the individual doctrines that are taught throughout the Bible; all doctrines must be harmonized, since Scripture does not contradict Scripture.
4. The pastor-teacher must be intellectually honest with respect to his doctrinal grid; he should not be inordinately bound to his own thinking, but must be willing to let the text speak for itself.
5. It would be difficult for a pastor-teacher to teach much false doctrine if they teach verse-by-verse, book-by-book in the Bible. He would find himself over-and-over saying, "Now, this does not say what it appears to say." Congregants are allowed to consider the words of Scripture and compare them to what their pastor is teaching them.
6. Following his prayer for wisdom and preparation in the study, the next step in this process involves teaching the Divine viewpoint to his congregation.
 - a. This is to be done in the authorized environment of the local church.
 - b. A careful study of the New Testament demonstrates that teaching was done via monologue, which is still the finest way to communicate information to a receptive audience.
 - (1) Jesus largely executed His teaching via monologue, and did not respond kindly to interruptions. Matt. 5:1–7:27 Luke 11:28
 - (2) Paul executed his teaching ministry via monologue. Acts 20:7–11
 - (3) The very Greek term kêrux (κήρυξ) [pronounced *KAY-roox*] is most often translated preacher, and denoted an official that was charged with delivering public monologues or proclamations for kings, magistrates, or military commanders. Strong's #2783.
 - (4) Each pastor in Revelation 2 and 3 was evidently to read the message from the Lord, and deliver it to his congregation.
 - c. While the physical location of the assembly is not the critical issue, the pastor-teacher should seek to establish and maintain an environment that is as conducive to learning as it can be.
 - (1) The environment should be as free from external distractions as possible.
 - (2) The pastor-teacher is not to tolerate distractions from those that are assembled; he is to enforce good manners, poise, and overt humility.

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- B. The second step in this process is for believers to take in the Word of God in the authorized environment.
1. This begins with believers assembling together. Heb. 10:25
 2. Each believer is responsible to comply with the overt decorum necessary for conducting Bible classes. Every believer is to supply his own true humility. James 1:19–21
 3. Each believer is responsible to judge himself rightly, ensuring that he is in fellowship with the sin nature isolated. James 1:21 1John 1:9
 4. The objective at this stage is to get the information into the analysis center of the soul, so one can accurately evaluate the information apart from sinful trend of Adam. This is why rebound is necessary, in order to avoid the discoloration or contamination of the sin nature.
 5. Each believer should be positive, assembled, humble, in fellowship, concentrating on the information, and seeking to comprehend it.
 6. Each believer must then consider the information and documentation, reflect on it, and determine if it is sound.
 - a. A believer should not reject information simply because it is new, or because he has not heard it previously.
 - b. Believers should not reject information based on the absurd notion that another pastor- teacher has not taught it.
 - c. Each believer must be very careful not to reject information that goes against him personally; each believer has his own sinful trend of Adam problems, and the pastor-teacher is to reprove, rebuke, and exhort from time to time.
 - d. The goal is to simply evaluate the information in an intellectually honest fashion, see if the documentation is sufficient, and if it harmonizes with other truth.
 - e. If the pastor says something which you question, then set it aside for the moment. Over time, his point may sink in; he may teach it in the future with more of an explanation, or you may develop the necessary understanding of other doctrines in order to understand and believe what the pastor has taught.
 - f. Sometimes the pastor will teach something that you do not understand. Similarly, set that doctrine aside for future examination.
- C. The third stage of this process is applying faith to the doctrine taught.
1. The first thing each believer must do is listen to the entire teaching with an open mind before attempting to evaluate it or pass judgment on it. Prov. 18:13
 2. Positive volition places its faith in the truth that is taught; negative volition rejects the truth and may seek to rationalize rejection of the doctrine.
 3. As a believer applies faith toward the truth, he reprograms the brain computer with the Divine viewpoint of life. Prov. 3:3, 7:3 Rom. 12:2
 4. The believer uses this information to form a new frame of reference (Eph. 4:23), a new conscience that is programmed with God's norms and standards (1Tim. 1:5,19), and the new man grows. 2Cor. 4:16
 5. The ability to understand doctrinal concepts grows in proportion to one's frame of reference and level of spiritual advance.
 6. R. B. Thieme, Jr. summarized stages 1–3 with the designation **Operation Z**.
- D. The fourth stage in this process is the application of the doctrine learned.
1. All doctrine that the believer learns will be tested. 1Peter 1:6–7
 2. Failure to apply the doctrine learned not only results in sin (James 4:17), but will

Doctrine of GAP (The Grace Apparatus for Perception)

- hamper spiritual progress toward the maturity adjustment. Heb. 5:12–14
3. Application of the doctrine one has learned is called justification by works (James. 2:14– 26); however, it must be recognized that this does not refer to **Phase 1** justification, which involves the imputation of God's righteousness apart from works. Rom. 3:24,28
 4. It should be evident that each of the previous three stages is necessary for one to produce Divine good and accrue the attendant **supergrace 3** (abbreviated SG3). In that regard, eternal rewards are contingent upon the doctrine one learns in Bible class.
- E. The fifth stage of GAP is the maturity adjustment. Mark 4:28
1. It is important to recognize that spiritual maturity is a goal, but it is not the end for the positive believer.
 2. The final objective for the mature believer is to complete his course by running his race to the end of his **Phase 2**. 2Tim. 4:7
 3. Maturity is a state of spiritual growth that is attained over time as a result of faithfully hearing and applying the Word of God. Eph. 4:13 James 1:25
 4. The goal of all adjusted communicators is to present mature believers before the Lord at the Bema Seat. Eph. 4:12–15 Col. 1:28
- VIII. Various forms of negative volition are capable of undermining the entire GAP process.
- A. Since the process for each believer begins with the proper instruction, any believer that places his faith in an unbelieving pastor-teacher will suffer loss. Matt. 24:45
 - B. Those that fall prey to unscrupulous teachers that have gone negative, such as Hymenaeus and Alexander, will not ultimately grow to maturity. 1Tim. 1:19–20
 - C. The believer that refuses to assemble manifests that he is unwilling to hear the truth. I have known believers who had the opportunity to gather with a group of doctrinal believers and they chose not to. This did not bode well for their spiritual lives. Heb. 10:25
 - D. The believer who assembles but fails to isolate the sin nature by means of rebound will distort the truth of doctrine along the lines of his sinful trends, and will not grow spiritually. James 1:21
 - E. The arrogant believer makes himself an enemy of God. This is manifested by an unwillingness to receive the Word being implanted with humility. James. 1:21 4:6
 - F. The believer who assembles but does not apply faith toward the truth manifests a refusal to believe. which will hinder or destroy spiritual growth. Matt. 21:32 Jude 1:5
 - G. The believer that assembles and believes the doctrine, yet does not follow through and apply the doctrine, comes under temporal and operational death. James 2:17–20
 - H. Negative volition at any point in the GAP process effectively destroys the process of spiritual growth, which may result in the appropriate form of Divine judgment. 1Cor. 11:31–32 2Thess. 2:12

Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. 1Cor. 2:12–13

The terms below are hyperlinked to their first occurrence in the Doctrine of GAP.

Theological Terms from the Doctrine of GAP

Anthropopathism = A characteristic of man which is assigned to God; a characteristic which God does not actually have. This often makes God's actions or motivation easier to understand, as it brings God down to a level which we are familiar with.

Apostle = this is the highest gift of authority in the Church Age. An Apostle has authority over more than one local church. Many Apostles wrote the inspired documents which make up the New Testament.

Bema seat of Christ = the Judgment Seat of Christ; this is where Church Age believers will be evaluated by Jesus Christ (along with all other believers). Our human good will be burned and our divine good will be rewarded. Even the believer who has only produced human good in his lifetime will be preserved, despite all of his works going up in flames. 1Cor. 3:12–15

Church Age = is the period of time from Pentecost to the rapture of the church. God works through individual believers, groups of believers, and nations with significant numbers of believers. Spiritual growth primarily takes place in the local church. God no longer works nearly exclusively with nation Israel.

Dispensation = a period of time during which God has a specific program going on. Between the time of Abraham and the beginning of the ministry of Jesus Christ, was the Age of Israel. At this time, God primarily worked through nation Israel. From Pentecost until now is the Church Age, where God works through the body of believers.

Divine decrees = the chosen and adopted plan of God designed in eternity past for all of His works (which includes His creation of mankind and angels).

Divine viewpoint = the way that God sees things; also known as truth.

Fellowship = having a functional relationship with God the Father. During our lives as believers, we can either be in fellowship or out of fellowship. We are in fellowship when filled by God the Holy Spirit; out of fellowship after we sin.

Generation of promise = although there are many references to the Exodus generation throughout Scripture and sermons, there are actually two very different generations. There is Gen X, those who were adults (20 and older) at the time of the exodus. Although these Israelites were saved, they were in constant rebellion against God and against Moses and God wiped out that generation in the desert (Heb. 3:7–11, 15–19). The follow-on generation (who I call the generation of promise) were those who were either children when leaving Egypt or those who were born in the desert during the *desert wandering*.³ The generation of promise marched into Canaan and took the land in 7 years. See the first half of the **book of Joshua**. ([HTML](#)) ([PDF](#)) ([WPD](#)).

Gospel = This is the information that Jesus Christ died for our sins and that we have access to God if we believe in His Son (or trust that Jesus died for our sins). We may not fully understand the entirety of the gospel when we first believe in Him.

³ Moses was not just wandering about the desert. He knew where he was at all times.

Theological Terms from the Doctrine of GAP

Grace = all that God is free to do for us on the basis of the cross. Apart from the cross, we are fallen creatures, unable to have any sort of relationship with God. But because Jesus died for our sins, we may apprehend a relationship with God through faith in Christ. God's plan and policy is based upon grace; and all that God does for us we do not earn and we do not deserve. Because grace is based upon the cross of Jesus Christ, God does not violate His Own character by interacting with us on the basis of grace.

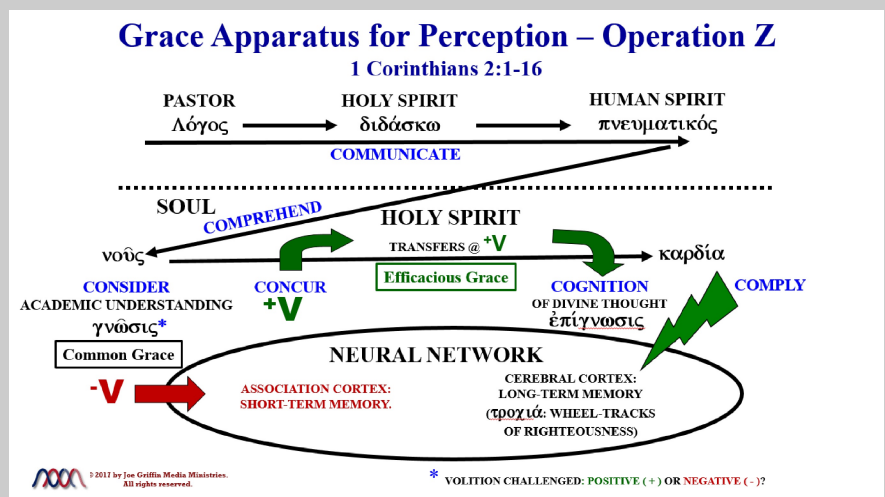
Grace apparatus for perception = the system set up by God in the human soul and spirit whereby Bible doctrine might be understood by all believers. This is dependent upon the believer being in fellowship (by means of rebound); and having a well-qualified pastor-teacher teaching accurate Bible doctrine. If any believer wants to know the truth God will supply him with truth.

Human spirit = the immaterial part of man where information about God and God's plan are stored.

Metabolization (of Bible doctrine) = You hear Bible doctrine taught; you understand it; and you believe it. Doctrine which has been metabolized becomes a part of your human spirit and a part of your thinking.

Operation Z = the pastor-teacher teaches sound Bible doctrine to a congregation. They hear the doctrine and then believe it, converting it from gnosis to epignosis (this conversion makes the doctrine in the believer's soul useable).

Operation Z (graphic); from **Joe Griffin**; accessed April 11, 2020.



Pastor-teacher = is the authority in a local church. Usually the pastor-teacher is hired (or recognized as the authority) by a board of deacons or by a vote of the congregational members themselves. He is not appointed by an organization which oversees more than one local church because such an organization is not recognized by the Word of God. Denominations are the result of human viewpoint thinking; they are not found in the words of Scripture.

Perception (of Bible doctrine) = This means that you simply hear Bible doctrine taught accurately. You have a frame of reference for the information being taught and it makes sense to you.

Phase 1 = is a step in the Christian life. Phase 1 is exercising faith in Jesus Christ.

Phase 2 = the Christian life after salvation. Phase 3 is our life after death.

Rebound = the act of naming one's sins to God. Since Jesus Christ died for the sins which we name, they are temporally forgiven (not *temporarily*). This puts us back into fellowship with God and we are filled with the Spirit (until the next time that we sin). 1John 1:9

Theological Terms from the Doctrine of GAP

Reversionism = the life of the believer who is retrogressing spiritually. That is, his rate of forgetting is exceeding his rate of learning. He rejects various concepts of Bible doctrine or he rejects Bible doctrine altogether, and, therefore, begins to think like an unbeliever. Just as spiritual growth is a process, reversionism is also a process. Spiritual growth is advancing in the spiritual life; reversionism is retrogressing in the spiritual life.

Sin nature = fleshly nature = the flesh = the distorter of the human soul; this is an integral part of our soul which leads us to sin (but when we sin, that is fully a function of our own volition).

Soul = the immaterial part of man

Spiritual = this term is often used in a very technical way in the New Testament, indicating that a person is filled with the Holy Spirit. This is accomplished by naming one's sins to God (rebound). Only a believer can be spiritual.

Spiritual growth = advancing (or growing) as a believer.

Supergrace 3 (abbreviated SG3) = Paragraph SG3 (Supergrace Three) contains the surpassing grace rewards and blessings over and above the usual blessings reserved for all believers in phase three. **In order that in the ages to come [phase three] He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness [generosity] toward us in Christ Jesus.** (Eph. 2:7) When a believer possesses supergrace or ultrasupergrace capacity, God pours out fantastic blessings which glorify Him in time and eternity. Spiritual maturity is the goal for every believer. In supergrace, you reap what God sows, not what you sow.⁴

Fellowship and *spirituality* are two sides of the same coin. *Fellowship* views our state of being in relationship to God the Father; *Spirituality* views our state of being in relationship to God the Holy Spirit.

We have one more loose end to tie up from Luke 2:

Luke 2:52 **Throughout His life, Jesus increased in wisdom; He advanced in age and maturity; and He increased in grace, both with God and with man.**

The doctrine of GAP and Jesus' relationship with the Father (God) are so monumental, that it is easy to lose track of the fact that He increased in grace with man. What does that mean?

Jesus no doubt was raised in Joseph's profession as a carpenter (Matt. 13:55 Mark 6:3). Despite His love of the Word, I do not see Jesus as studying full time each and every day preparing for His public ministry. My estimation is, He likely studied the Scriptures way more than most. This was enhanced by what I believe was a perfect memory (Jesus' mind was not corrupted by sin). At my age, I meet someone for the first time, hear their name; and then hope that they do not ask me 2 minutes later, "What is my name?" Jesus did not have this problem. Similarly, when He heard the Scriptures read, He remembered them.

He is associated with his father, being called *the carpenter's son* in Matt. 13:55. It would seem reasonable and logical that He would have learned to be a carpenter. After all, Jesus is said to be

⁴ This definition comes directly from R. B. Thieme, Jr. I took it from versebyverse.com accessed April 4, 2020.

submissive to His parents in v. 51. Since He is not from the tribe of Levi, He would have not have been able to dedicate His life to the Word or to Temple service (of some sort).

My reason for pursuing this tangent—some of which is logical supposition—is that Jesus would have had relationships with people that, as a young man, would have been different from His public ministry. Exactly what these relationship were would have been related to His training to be a carpenter under the guidance of His step-father, Joseph.

As a man, Jesus enjoyed many things in life: eating a good meal, companionship and friendship with others, having a glass of wine (well, they did not use glasses). It is reasonable the a portion of His life was devoted to carpentry work. Might He have assisted in some way in the local synagogue? Perhaps; but I think, given this mention of obedience to His parents, that training under Joseph would have been expected. Furthermore—and some of you may not grasp this—work is a beautiful and wonderful thing which God has given to man. I believe carpentry work is something which the Lord did and enjoyed. There are few things more wonderful in this world than working with wood.

In this profession, Jesus would have interacted with many people. What exactly did Joseph do? Did he build houses? Again, we only have logic and reason to go by—I am assuming that Joseph was able to do any sort of wood working and that these skills were taught to His step-Son Jesus.

We do not know any of the details, but as an apprentice and a workman, Jesus would have come into contact with many people, and His honesty, His forthrightness, His skill, and His willingness to work would have been a joy to see and to interact with.

In my various professions, I have worked with hundreds of people in a variety of capacities; and those who are underhanded, who talk behind your back, who do things to harm you in one way or another—these are people one tends to avoid whenever possible. But those who are hardworking, who are honest, who, when they say something to you, mean it; those are the kinds of people that you want to work with and to interact with. Jesus, as a carpenter, would have been a joy to work with (again, I am assuming that a portion of his life was given over to carpentry).

As an aside—even though much of what I wrote above is speculation (except for Joseph being a carpenter and Jesus being submissive to His parents)—man far too often loses sight of the importance of work. Some doctrinal teacher added this to R. B. Thieme, Jr.'s list of divine institutions, and I wholeheartedly agree with this addition, and wish I could remember who it was to give him credit for this addition. In the Garden of Eden, man, in an undefiled state, had work to do. When man sinned and left the garden, he was promised work of a different sort—where man would have to work extremely hard to eke out a living. That work would be hard and sometimes very taxing is part of the curse of man—and I daresay everyone can point to times in their life where work was exactly that.

However, work can also be a wonderful thing. In recent weeks, most of us have been without work or with limited work because of the COVID19 pandemic; and I believe that many people have come to realize the importance of their own work. Obviously, people understand this from a monetary point of view (one needs to work to make money to pay for life's requirements); but for many people, work provides them purpose and structure. There are so many people I have talked to whom this has taken a toll, where so many of their days are extremely boring. How many people have become sedentary and have spent much of the past month or so overeating? This is not every single person; but this is a significant portion of any population which had to remain in place during this pandemic. I don't know that

we have any stats from this yet, but I would not be surprised to find out that suicides increased over this period of time.

Topics

Kukis Homepage

Charts, Maps and Short Doctrines

Doctrines