Perfect Gifts from Above

Intro: James tells us: “17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” The idea of “perfect gift” is that the gift is perfect or complete because of the goodness of the giver. That which God puts forth for our acceptance is good and that which we receive from God is perfect. Let us consider three (of the many) things God has given to us that is perfect.

I. The Perfect Book: The Bible

A. Perfect in its inspiration.
   1. The Bible claims to be inspired of God.
      a. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 “16 All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: 17 That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works.”
      b. 2 Pet. 1:20-21 “20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. 21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.”
   2. There is available evidence to prove that the Bible actually is God’s Word.
      a. The testimony of Jesus.
         (1) Jesus affirmed the inspiration of the Scriptures.
         (2) Prove He was more than mere man, and you prove the accuracy of what He said.
         (3) The empty tomb proves that Jesus is God.
            (a) Rom. 1:4 “4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead:”
            (b) This proves that what He said about the Scriptures being inspired is true.
      b. The unity of the books of the Bible
         (1) There is no way to account for the Bible except by inspiration of God.
         (2) It had about 32 human writers.
            (a) They came from various backgrounds, walks of life, different countries, spoke different languages, wrote under different circumstances, some rich while others poor, etc.
            (b) They wrote over a period of at least 1600 years embracing about 6,000 years of man’s existence on earth.
         (3) When you put their writings together, they are harmonious.
            (a) There is a unity of thought and presentation where each book complements all the other books.
            (b) The doctrinal thesis or presentation set forth in the Old reaches it climax or fulfillment in the New.
            (c) The types and antitypes show a unity of presentation.
            (d) The three dispensations of time show a unity of the Bible.
      c. Scientific accuracy and foreknowledge
         (1) It is not a book of science.
            (a) Yet, there are scientific facts recorded in it.
(b) When the Bible touches scientific facts, it is always correct.
(c) There is never a discrepancy between the Bible and true science.
(d) Yet, the Bible predates many of the scientific discoveries made by man.

(2) The Bible touches on areas of:
(a) Astronomy (earth is spherical, it revolves daily, it is not supported, the universe is expanding, stars are innumerable)
(b) Geology (all seas lie in one bed)
(c) Oceanography (paths in the sea, hydrologic cycle)
(d) Physics (first and second law of thermodynamics)
(e) Biology (life is in the blood, seed of woman)

(3) The only way the Bible writers could know these facts centuries to man’s discovery of them (most contradicting the prevailing thoughts of man) is that it was inspired of God.

d. Fulfilled prophecy
   (1) Prophecies regarding individuals (Abraham, Ishmael, King Josiah, et.al.)
   (2) Prophecies regarding Christ
   (3) Prophecies regarding nations (the Israelites, destruction of Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, the four world empires of Dan. 2 and 7)
   (4) All the prophecies are accurate.
   (5) The only way to account for them is the Bible is inspired of God.

e. Archaeological accuracy
   (1) The spade continues to confirm the Bible; almost every passage has been confirmed through archaeology.
   (2) There are confirmations regarding:
      (a) Origin of the world’s civilization
      (b) Writing in Moses’ day
      (c) The Noahic flood
      (d) The early use of metals
      (e) Nations (the Hittites, the discoveries in Egypt, etc.)
      (f) To name just a few.

f. Influence of the Bible
   (1) Mat. 7:20 “20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
   (2) Where the Bible has gone, man has been elevated; where the Bible has not gone, man has devolved.
   (3) The Bible has elevated man regarding human freedom, elevation of women, civil laws and man’s respect for government and laws, moral influence.
   (4) There have been side affects in such areas as literature, education, the arts (architecture, painting, poetry, music).

g. Victory over all attacks
   (1) God said it would be victorious:
      (a) Mat. 24:35 “35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
      (b) 1 Pet. 1:25 “25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.”
(2) Many have tried in vain to destroy it:
   (a) Governments
   (b) Judaism
   (c) Catholicism
   (d) Modernist of our day
   (e) Infidels

B. **Perfect in its inerrancy.**
   1. Inerrancy is the fact that it is impossible to be wrong.
   2. If God is the author of the Scriptures
      a. Thus, what God gives cannot contain mistakes.
      b. Inerrancy is not restricted to moral and religious truth, but is applied to all
         statements of fact in the Bible: scientific, historical, or geographical.
   3. The Bible is always right.
      a. Ps. 119:160 “160 Thy word is true from the beginning: and every one of thy righteous
         judgments endureth for ever.”
      b. John 10:35 “35 If he called them gods, unto whom the word of God came, and the scripture
         cannot be broken;”
      c. John 17:17 “17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
   4. The evidences given in regards to the Bible’s inspiration also affirm its inerrancy.

C. **Perfect in its indispensability.**
   1. This deals with the absolute necessity of the Scriptures.
   2. Ecc. 12:13 “13 Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his
      commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.”
   3. The Scriptures are the only way to accomplish the very purpose of man.
      a. Man’s purpose is to glorify his Creator.
         (1) Acts 17:27 “27 That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find
             him, though he be not far from every one of us:”
         (2) 1 Cor. 9:20 “20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in
             your spirit, which are God’s.”
         (3) 2 Cor. 5:15 “15 And that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live
             unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.”
      b. It gives man hope:
         (1) Without the Bible there is only hopeless emptiness.
         (2) Heb. 6:18-19 “18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to
             lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope
             set before us: 19 Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and
             which entereth into that within the veil;”
         (3) Tit. 1:2 “2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world
             began;”
      c. Peace
         (1) John 14:27 “27 Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth,
             give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.”
         (2) Phi. 4:7 “7 And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts
             and minds through Christ Jesus.”
d. Joy
   (1) John 15:11 “11 These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and
       that your joy might be full.”
   (2) Phi. 4:4 “Rejoice in the Lord alway: and again I say, Rejoice.”
   (3) 1 John 1:4 “And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.”
4. The Bible is the only way that shows man how to attain reconciliation with God and
   thus eternal life.
   a. Man’s great problem is sin:
      (1) Rom. 3:23 “23 For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;”
      (2) Gal. 3:22 “22 But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of
           Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.”
   b. Man cannot save himself.
      (1) We are saved by God’s grace:
      (2) Eph. 2:8-9 “8 For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the
           gift of God: 9 Not of works, lest any man should boast.”
      (3) That grace teaches us (through the Scriptures): Tit. 2:11-13 “11 For the grace of
           God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying
           ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present
           world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our
           Saviour Jesus Christ;”
   c. 2 Cor. 5:18-20 “18 And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ,
      and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling
      the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the
      word of reconciliation. 20 Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you
      by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God.”
   d. Eternal life:
      (1) John 20:30-31 “30 And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples,
          which are not written in this book: 31 But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is
          the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name.”
      (2) Acts 20:32 “32 And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace,
          which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are
          sanctified.”
5. The Bible thus gives us the answer to the three great questions of life.
   a. Where did I come from?—God.
   b. Why am I here?—to glorify God.
   c. Where am I going?—eternity to either heaven or hell.

D. Perfect in its indestructability.
   1. It cannot be destroyed.
   2. This is the fact that the Bible is victorious over all attacks as previously studied.
   3. Mat. 24:35 “35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.”
   4. 1 Pet. 1:25 “25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is
      preached unto you.”
   5. Poem by John Clifford:
      Last eve I passed beside a blacksmith’s door
      and heard the anvil ring the vesper chime:
      When looking in, I saw upon the floor,
      Old hammers worn with beating years of time.
“How many anvils have you had,” said I,
“To wear and batter all these hammers so?”
“Just one,” said he; then said with twinkling eye,
“The anvil wears the hammers out, you know.”

And so, I thought, the anvil of God’s Word
For ages skeptics’ blows have beat upon;
Yet, though the noise of falling blows was heard,
The anvil is unharmed — the hammers gone!

6. We will face it on the last day and be judged by it.
   a. John 12:48 “48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
   b. Rom 2:16 “16 In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel.”
   c. Rev. 20:12 “12 And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.”

II. THE PERFECT CHARACTER: JESUS CHRIST
   A. Perfect in His modality
      1. He is the God-man.
         a. He has all the attributes of each essence/nature perfectly joined in one Person.
         b. He is 100% God.
         c. He is 100% man.
      2. He is God.
         a. John 1:1 “1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
         b. Phi. 2:6 “6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:”
         c. Heb. 1:8 “8 But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.”
      3. He is man.
         a. John 1:14 “14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”
         b. Heb. 2:14 “14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;”
         c. 1 Tim. 2:5 “5 For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus;”
      4. Thus, the God-man.
         a. Mat. 1:23 “23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”
         b. 1 Tim. 3:16 “16 And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory.”

Perfect Gifts From Above
B. Perfect in His morality

1. He was sinless.
2. He could challenge the people; John 8:46 ““Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?”
3. The Scriptures repeatedly state that Jesus was without sin.
   a. 2 Cor. 5:21 ““For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."
   b. Heb. 4:15 ““For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.”
   c. 1 Pet. 2:22 ““Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:"
   d. 1 John 3:5 ““And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.”
4. He is spoken of as the Righteous or Just One.
   a. Acts 3:14 ““But ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you;"
   b. 1 Pet. 3:18 ““For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:"
   c. 1 John 2:1 ““My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"

C. Perfect in His message

1. Mat. 22:37-39 ““Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.”
2. In His message of morality.
   a. Love for one another.
      (1) John 13:34 ““A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”
      (2) Thus practicing righteousness before all:
         (a) Tit. 2:11-13 ““For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, 12 Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; 13 Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:"
         (b) Thus practicing the golden rule; Mat. 7:12 ““Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.”
         (c) Providing things honest before all:
            (i) Rom. 12:17 ““Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men.”
            (ii) People should not be able to question my integrity.
   (3) Showing compassion, kindness and benevolence:
      (a) Parable of the good Samaritan; Luke 10:30-37 ““And Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. 31 And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. 33 But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, 34 And went to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him.”
when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. 36 Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? 37 And he said, He that shewed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.”

(b) Judgment scene: Mat. 25:31-46 (hungered thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, in prison)

(4) Forgiving one another:

(a) Mat. 6:14-15 “14 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.”

(b) Luke 17:3-4 “3 Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. 4 And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him.”

(c) Mat. 18:33 “33 Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant, even as I had pity on thee?”

(d) No matter how many times they sin against us: Mat. 18:21-22 “21 Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.”

(e) Seeking forgiveness from others; Mat. 5:23-24 “23 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.”

b. Proper speech;

(1) Mat. 5:37 “37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”

(2) Mat. 12:36-37 “36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. 37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.”

c. Immorality and marriage:

(1) Mat. 5:28 “28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”

(2) Mat. 19:9 “9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

3. In His message of worship;

a. Mat. 4:10 “10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

b. John 4:23-24 “23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”

4. In His message of the church;

a. Mat. 4:17 “17 From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”

b. Mat. 16:18 “18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
5. In His message of salvation  
   a. Mat. 28:19-20 "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 19 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.”
   b. Mark 16:15-16 "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
   c. Luke 24:46-47 "And said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: 47 And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

6. In His message of eternity:
   a. Heaven for those obedient, and Hell for those who disobey.
   b. Mat. 13:41-43 "The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”
   c. Mat. 25:46 "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

D. Perfect in His Majesty
1. He is the Christ
   a. He is our great High Priest
      (1) A priest offers sacrifices for sins.
      (2) Heb. 2:17 "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.”
      (3) Heb. 9:11-14 "But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; 12 Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. 13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh: 14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?”
      (4) Heb. 9:24-28 "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us: 25 Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others; 26 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. 27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: 28 So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.”
   b. He is our great Prophet
      (1) A prophet is one who speaks forth for God.
      (2) Mat. 17:5 "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”
(3) John 12:48-50 “48 He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. 49 For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. 50 And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak.”

(4) Heb. 1:1-2 “1 God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, 2 Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;”

c. He is our great King

(1) He is King of kings and Lord of lords.

(a) 1 Tim. 6:15 “15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords;”

(b) Rev. 17:14 “14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and faithful.”

(c) Rev. 19:16 “16 And he hath on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.”

(2) 1 Cor. 15:25 “25 For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet.”

(3) Eph. 1:21-23 “21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: 22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”

2. He is the Son of God

a. John the Baptist affirmed such: John 1:34 “34 And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God.”

b. The Father declared such:

(1) At His baptism: Mat. 3:16-17 “16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: 17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

(2) At the transfiguration: Mat. 17:5 “5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.”

c. Affirmed by the apostles: Mat. 16:16-17 “16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. 17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.”

d. He affirmed such: Before the Sanhedrin: Mat. 26:63-64 “65 But Jesus held his peace. And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of the God. 66 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven”

e. Proven such by the resurrection: Rom. 1:4 “4 And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

E. Perfect in His Mission

1. His mission was the saving of the world.

a. Mat. 1:21 “21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.”
b. Luke 19:10 “10 For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”

2. He accomplished this through giving His life on the cross.
   a. Mat. 16:21 “21 From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”
   b. Mat. 20:18-19 “18 Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, 19 And shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him: and the third day he shall rise again.”
   c. John 12:27 “27 Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.”

III. THE PERFECT INSTITUTION: THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

A. Perfect in its origin
   1. Its origin is from God:
      a. He planned it from eternity; Eph. 3:10-11 “10 To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, 11 According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
      b. Dan. 2:44 “44 And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.”
   2. Christ built it:
      a. Zec. 6:12-13 “12 And speak unto him, saying, Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is The BRANCH; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the LORD; 13 Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both.”
      b. Mat. 16:18 “18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”
   3. The Holy Spirit inspired the apostles to use the keys to unlock salvation:
      a. Mat. 16:19 “19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”
      b. Acts 2:38-41, 47 “38 Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. 39 For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. 40 And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. 41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls…. 47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.”

B. Perfect in its ownership
   1. Jesus says it is His:
      a. “I will build”
      b. “My church”
3. He purchased it: Acts 20:28 “28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
4. Thus the church should be called by a term that shows it belongs to Christ:
   a. Rom. 16:16 “16 Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you.”
   b. Acts 20:28 “28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
   c. Eph. 5:5 “5 For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.”
5. Since it is owned by Christ, man should not try to decide matters regarding it (alter, deviate, or change it).

C. Perfect in its organization
1. Christ is its head.
   a. Eph. 1:22-23 “22 And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.”
   b. Col. 1:18 “18 And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.”
   c. As such, He controls it, but within that which He authorizes, there are optional matters in carrying it out.
2. Each congregation is autonomous in those optional matters.
3. Elders are the ones who make those decisions regarding optional matters to expedite the work of the church.
   a. Acts 20:28 “28 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.”
   b. 1 Pet. 5:1-3 “1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.”
   c. Members have the obligation to obey them: Heb. 13:17 “17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.”
4. Deacons are appointed to help or serve in the work of the church as directed by the elders.
   a. Phi. 1:1 “1 Paul and Timotheus, the servants of Jesus Christ, to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons:”
   b. 1 Tim. 3:10 “10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon [let them serve as deacons—NKJV, ASV], being found blameless.”
5. All members serving as priests of God:
   a. 1 Pet. 2:5, 9 “5 Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. 6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. 7 Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, 8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being
disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed. 9 But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

b. Heb. 13:15-16 "15 By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name. 16 But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased."

D. Perfect in its observations (i.e., its worship)

1. John 4:23-24 "23 But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. 24 God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."

2. Adoration, praise, the proper giving of glory wells up in the human heart and the desire to show respect and homage is to be expressed to God.

3. Our worship is to be directed to the Father.
   a. Worship is not to be man directed.
   b. Worship is not to be directed toward objects.
   c. The Father is the one who is worthy of worship as He is of superlative worth.
      (1) Psa. 96:4, 8-9 "4 For the LORD is great, and greatly to be praised: he is to be feared above all gods. 5 For all the gods of the nations are idols: but the LORD made the heavens. 6 Honour and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. 7 Give unto the LORD, O ye kindreds of the people, give unto the LORD glory and strength."
      (2) Psa. 99:9 "9 Exalt the LORD our God, and worship at his holy hill; for the LORD our God is holy."

4. Our worship must be done with the proper attitude—spirit.
   a. Worship is man’s spirit reaching out to God.
   b. Worship is not simply mechanical.
      (1) The worshipper is not passive awaiting to be entertained or a mystical uplift from others.
      (2) Mark 7:6 "6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."
      (3) Isa. 1:11-15 "11 To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the LORD: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. 12 When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. 14 Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. 15 And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood."
      (4) Mal. 1:6-8, 11-14 "6 A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? 7 Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD is contemptible. 8 And if ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? offer it now unto thy governor; will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person? saith the LORD of hosts. 9 And now, I pray you, beseech God that he will be gracious unto us: this hath been by your means: will he regard
your persons? saith the LORD of hosts. 10 Who is there even among you that would shut the doors for nought? neither do ye kindle fire on mine altar for nought. I have no pleasure in you, saith the LORD of hosts, neither will I accept an offering at your hand. 11 For from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same my name shall be great among the Gentiles; and in every place incense shall be offered unto my name, and a pure offering; for my name shall be great among the heathen, saith the LORD of hosts. 12 But ye have profaned it, in that ye say, The table of the LORD is polluted; and the fruit thereof, even his meat, is contemptible. 13 Ye said also, Behold, what a weariness is it! and ye have snuffed at it, saith the LORD. 14 But cursed be the deceiver, which hath in his flock a male, and voweth, and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing: for I am a great King, saith the LORD of hosts, and my name is dreadful among the heathen.”

5. Our worship must be done according to how God said to do it—Truth.
   a. John 17:17 “17 Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.”
   b. God, in the Scriptures, has authorized:
      (1) Singing
          (a) 1 Cor. 14:15 “15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
          (b) Eph. 5:19 “19 Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord;”
      (2) Prayer
          (a) Acts 2:42 “42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
          (b) 1 Cor. 14:15 “15 What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also.”
      (3) Partaking the Lord’s Supper
          (a) Acts 2:42 “42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
          (b) Acts 20:7 “7 And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”
      (4) Contribution
          (a) 1 Cor. 16:1-2 “1 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. 2 Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.”
          (b) 2 Cor. 9:6-7 “6 But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. 7 Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver.”
      (5) Preaching
          (a) Acts 2:42 “42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.”
(b) Acts 20:7 “...And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.”

E. **Perfect in its operations (mission, work, & ultimate victory)**

1. The mission and work of the church is to save souls.
   a. That was Christ’s mission: Luke 19:10 “...For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
   b. This is also the mission and work of the church and is accomplished through three areas.
      (1) Teaching the lost; Mark 16:15-16 “...And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. 16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.”
      (2) Edifying the saved; Acts 20:32 “...And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.”
      (3) Benevolence; Gal. 6:9-10 “...And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.”

2. The ultimate goal is a home with God in heaven.
   a. Mat. 16:26 “...For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”
   b. Phi. 3:8 “...Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ.”

Conclusion: What wondrous gifts God has given to us. However, these gifts are of no value to us unless we obey the Gospel and live according to God’s revealed Will.

(idea taken from Foy E. Wallace Jr.)