

Introduction: Plato's Cave; Kohl's Synopsis & Griffin's Analysis; Part I: Paul Lives in the Cave but Sees the Light,  
2 Cor 4:16

**Liberation of the Christian Troglodyte**

**2007 Shreveport Bible Conference**

**East Ridge Bible Church  
9400 Wallace Lake Road  
Shreveport, Louisiana**

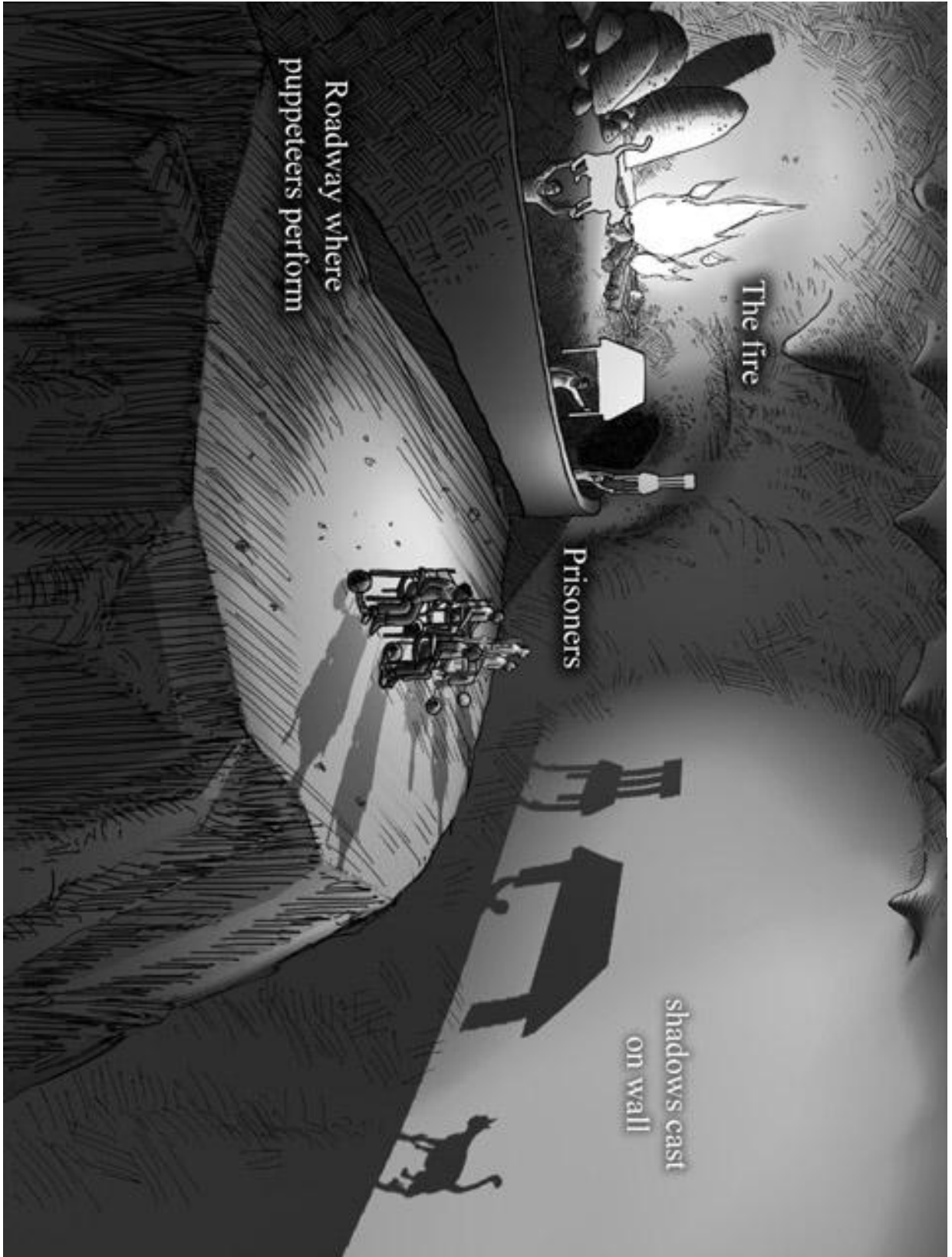
**Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
June 19, 20, and 21, 2007  
7:00 – 9:30 P.M.**

**Guest Speaker: Joe Griffin**



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# Plato's Cave



**Liberation of the Christian Troglodyte<sup>1</sup>**

*“What fellowship has light with darkness?”*

—2 Corinthians 6:14c

**Introduction: Plato’s Cave<sup>2</sup>**

*The Republic, book 7:*

Persons of the dialogue: **Socrates**, *who is the narrator*, and **Glaucon**.

[514] And now let me show in a figure how far our nature is enlightened or unenlightened:—Behold! Human beings living in an underground den, which has a mouth open towards the light; here they have been from their childhood, and have their necks and legs chained so that they cannot move, and can only see before them, being prevented by the chains from turning round their heads. Above and behind them a fire is blazing at a distance, and between the fire and the prisoners is a raised way; and you will see, if you look, a low wall built along the way, like the screen which marionette players have in front of them, over which they show the puppets.

And so you see men passing along the wall carrying all sorts of vessels, [515] and statues and figures of animals made of wood and stone and various materials, which appear over the wall? Some of them are talking, others silent.

**You have shown me a strange image, and they are strange prisoners.**

Like ourselves; and they see only their own shadows, or the shadows of one another, which the fire throws on the opposite wall of the cave?

**True; how could they see anything but the shadows if they were never allowed to move their heads?**

And of the objects which are being carried in like manner they would only see the shadows?

**Yes.**

And if they were able to converse with one another, would they not suppose that they were naming what was actually before them?

**Very true.**

And suppose further that the prison had an echo which came from the other side, would they not be sure to fancy when one of the passers-by spoke that the voice which they heard came from the passing shadow?

**No question.**

To them the truth would be literally nothing but the shadows of the images.

**That is certain.**

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<sup>1</sup> *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary of the English Language*, 2d ed., 1962, s.v. “troglodyte”: 1. a cave dweller; 2. (b) anyone who lives in a primitive, low, or degenerate fashion; *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, 2001, s.v. “troglodyte”: a person who is regarded as being deliberately ignorant or old-fashioned.

<sup>2</sup> Plato. *The Republic*, 514-518a.

And now look again, and see what will naturally follow if the prisoners are released and disabused of their error. At first, when any of them is liberated and compelled suddenly to stand up and turn his neck round and walk and look towards the light, he will suffer sharp pains; the glare will distress him, and he will be unable to see the realities of which in his former state he had seen the shadows; and then conceive some one saying to him, that what he saw before was an illusion, but that now, when he is approaching nearer to being and his eye is turned towards more real existence, he has a clearer vision—what will be his reply? And you may further imagine that his instructor is pointing to the objects as they pass and requiring him to name them—will he not be perplexed? Will he not fancy that the shadows which he formerly saw are truer than the objects which are now shown to him?

**Far truer.**

And if he is compelled to look straight at the light, will he not have a pain in his eyes which will make him turn away to take refuge in the objects of vision which he can see, and which he will conceive to be in reality clearer than the things which are now being shown to him?

**True.**

And suppose once more, that he is reluctantly dragged up a steep and rugged ascent, and held fast until he is forced into the presence of the sun himself, [516] is he not likely to be pained and irritated? When he approaches the light his eyes will be dazzled, and he will not be able to see anything at all of what are now called realities.

**Not all in a moment.**

He will require to grow accustomed to the sight of the upper world. And first he will see the shadows best, next the reflections of men and other objects in the water, and then the objects themselves; then he will gaze upon the light of the moon and the stars and the spangled heaven; and he will see the sky and the stars by night better than the sun or the light of the sun by day?

**Certainly.**

Last of all he will be able to see the sun, and not mere reflections of him [the sun] in the water, but he will see him in his own proper place, and not in another, and he will contemplate him as he is.

**Certainly.**

He will then proceed to argue that this is he who gives the season and the years, and is the guardian of all that is in the visible world, and in a certain way the cause of all things which he and his fellows have been accustomed to behold?

**Clearly he would first see the sun and then reason about him.**

And when he remembered his old habitation, and the wisdom of the den and his fellow-prisoners, do you not suppose that he would felicitate himself on the change, and pity them?

**Certainly, he would.**

And if they were in the habit of conferring honours among themselves on those who were quickest to observe the passing shadows and to remark which of them went before, and which followed after, and which were together; and who were therefore best able to draw conclusions as to the future, do you think that he would care for such honours, or envy the possessors of them. Would he not endure anything, rather than think as they do and live after their manner?

**Yes, I think that he would rather suffer anything than entertain these false notions and live in this miserable manner.**

Imagine once more such an one coming suddenly out of the sun to be replaced in his old situation; would he not be certain to have his eyes full of darkness?

**To be sure.**

And if there were a contest, and he had to compete in measuring the shadows with the prisoners who had never moved out of the [517] den, while his sight was still weak, and before his eyes had become steady, would he not be ridiculous? Men would say of him that up he went and down he came without his eyes; and that it was better not even to think of ascending; and if anyone tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would put him to death.

**No question.**

This entire allegory you may now append, dear Glaucon; the prison-house is the world of sight, the light of the fire is the sun, and you will not misapprehend me if you interpret the journey upwards to be the ascent of the soul into the intellectual world. My opinion is that in the world of knowledge the idea of good appears last of all, and is seen only with an effort; and when seen, is also inferred to be the universal author of all things beautiful and right, parent of light and of the lord of light in this visible world, and the immediate source of reason and truth in the intellectual; and that this is the power upon which he who would act rationally either in public or private life must have his eye fixed.

**I agree as far as I am able to understand you.**

Moreover, you must not wonder that those who attain to this beatific vision are unwilling to descend to human affairs; for their souls are ever hastening into the upper world where they desire to dwell; which desire of theirs is very natural, if our allegory may be trusted.

**Yes, very natural.**

And is there anything surprising in one who passes from divine contemplations to the evil state of man, misbehaving himself in a ridiculous manner; if, while his eyes are blinking and before he has become accustomed to the surrounding darkness, he is compelled to fight in courts of law, or in other places, about the images or the shadows of images of justice, and is endeavoring to meet the conceptions of those who have never yet seen absolute justice?

**Anything but surprising.**

[518] Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light, which is true of the mind's eye, quite as much as of the bodily eye; and he who remembers this when he sees any one whose vision is perplexed and weak, will not be too ready to laugh; he will first ask whether that soul of man has come out of the brighter life, and is unable to see because unaccustomed to the dark, or having turned from darkness to the day is dazzled by excess of light. And he will count the one happy in his condition and state of being, and he will pity the other.

What we have just read is an allegory whose message has come to be known in Western philosophy as the Theory of Ideas. A summary analysis of Plato's Cave, sets up our study of how a Christian troglodyte is liberated. I have inserted editorial comments to bring out necessary biblical applications from what Plato wrote:

**Plato's Cave.** The allegory of the cave appears in chapter VII of Plato's *Republic*. Plato uses it to illuminate the way in which the highest reality, the Platonic ideas [for us the **Word of God**], which transcend mere appearances, can be known, and to show how enlightened philosopher-kings [believer-priests] who come to know the ideas are equipped to rule by virtue of that knowledge.

The allegory of the cave is written in the form of a dialogue between Socrates and two young men. Socrates compares the situation of unenlightened people to that of men living in a huge cave [the devil's world] who are chained [ignorance of truth] so as to be able to look only toward the back of the cave. Behind them is a fire, and in front of the fire passes a procession of people carrying all sorts of objects. The shadows of the objects are cast on the back wall of the cave. Since that is all they can see, the prisoners in the cave mistake the shadows for reality [the Mosaic Law]. If, however, one of the men should break free, he would turn to the fire and at first be blinded [e.g., Paul before Christ on the road to Damascus]. Then, after taking time to adjust to the light, he would see that he had taken the shadows [the typology of the Old Testament sacrifices] for the objects they represented [the doctrines of Messiah, sacrifice, salvation, and forgiveness]: he had mistaken appearance [types] for reality [antitype].

If then he came out into the sunlight [the light of divine thought], he would be blinded again [meat before milk], though little by little [line upon line, precept upon precept] his eyes would adjust and he would come to see reality unveiled [the immutable truth of divine thought exposed through Bible study]. The same, Plato says, happens to philosophers [believer-priests] who, by steps [spiritual growth], reach up to the direct perception of the universal and eternal ideas [the sophisticated spiritual life], which are only weakly reflected by knowledge gained through the senses [gnōsis through empiricism]. This hard-won knowledge of the ideas, of Platonic "reality" [for the believer "epignōsis knowledge" of divine truth], then impels the philosopher [believer-priest] back to earth [personal evangelism, mass evangelism, or missions] to wake up other blind people [unbelievers].

By virtue of this knowledge [epignōsis] of the Real [Truth], the philosopher [believer-priest] is qualified to rule and has an obligation to return to earth and lead others [only functional in the Millennial kingdom through escrow blessings: Nike Award #4, paragraph 1: Revelation 2:26-27].<sup>3</sup>

In our study we are going to observe Paul and Abraham, two great heroes of grace, as they learn to disregard the temporal realities that pass before them in the visible cave of *cosmos diabolicus* and concentrate on the eternal realities that reside outside the cave: the promises and blessings of God, His matchless grace, and the absolutes of eternal truth.

In Plato's allegory a troglodyte is allowed to exit the cave and then reenter. Our study will depict the cave as the devil's world in which we are all held captive. We will then observe Paul and Abraham's transformation from darkness into Light to illustrate the liberation of those cosmic troglodytes who express faith alone in Christ alone. This liberation is amplified and maximized by growing in the Light of grace and utilizing the power of the invisible promises and doctrines taught by our Lord in the Incarnation and expanded in the revelation of the New Testament Epistles.

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<sup>3</sup> Herbert Kohl. *From Archetype to Zeitgeist: Powerful Ideas for Powerful Thinking*. 1st ed. (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1992), 76.

**Part I. Paul Lives in the Cave but Sees the Light**

**2 Corinthians 4:15 -** All things are for your benefit, so that the grace impact has spread to more and more people causing an overflow of thanksgiving resulting in the glory of God.

1. The ability of a believer to manage his life in the Light of eternity results in a grace impact that eventually influences others.
2. When these beneficiaries enjoy the benefits of grace living, their spiritual and historical impact is spread to even more people, all of which results in glorifying God. When the power of grace and doctrine is utilized by believers and result in God receiving credit, then we are blessed and rewarded.
3. “All things” refer to each and every circumstance in life—positive or negative—which requires the believer to apply doctrine. Regardless of the category, a grace oriented believer will have a mental attitude of thanksgiving, or reciprocal love for God.

**2 Corinthians 4:16 -** Therefore, we do not despair [ οὐκ ἐγκακέω, **ouk enkakeō** ], but though our outer man [ **physical body** ] is decaying, yet our inner man [ **soul** ] is consistently being renewed [ ἀνακαινῶω, **anakainoō** ] day by day.

4. The words for “not despair” are “faint not” in the KJV, and “not lose heart” in the NIV and NASB. The words in the Greek are οὐκ ἐγκακέω, **ouk enkakeō** and mean “not waste away,” “not become weary,” or “not become despondent.”
5. A believer with a grace mental attitude does not despair when he realizes that his physical body, which he can see, is decomposing but instead is more motivated to emphasize the continued development of his spiritual strength through spiritual growth.
6. While the visible physical body is said to be decaying the invisible soul is becoming stronger and stronger through daily renewal, the present passive indicative of ἀνακαινῶω, **anakainoō**: “to renew.”

present: Iterative; describes that which recurs at successive intervals, sometimes called the present of repeated action.

What is being renewed on a daily basis is the soul. And renewal demands repeated use of the two power options of (1) the filling of the Holy Spirit acquired through use of rebound, and (2) the use of the Grace Apparatus for Perception for development of the problem-solving devices. When utilized repeatedly and consistently they become spiritual skills that lead the believer to a personal sense of destiny.

passive: All aspects of this renewal are made possible by a portfolio of grace provisions in the plan of God for the believer. The passive voice is the voice of grace by which the believer receives the action of renewal.

indicative: Declarative; a statement of reliable fact that renewal is a daily occurrence when the assets of the spiritual life are exercised.