

T H E
M A T R I X

A CYBERPUNK PARABLE?



THE MATRIX – A CYBERPUNK PARABLE?

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0. “SPOILER” AND RATING WARNINGS (as a service to readers)

SPOILER WARNING: This document is a detailed examination of the story and some allegorical possibilities of *The Matrix*. Readers not wishing to know such things before seeing the film may wish to see it before reading further.

RATING WARNING: *The Matrix* film was rated “R” in the USA for:

- intense scenes (medical, acupuncture, blood, burns, physical grotesquerie, the “bugging” of Neo, etc.)
- violence (including a direct gunshot to the head when Trinity says “dodge this”)
- language (19 scatological references, 4 “posterior” references, 11 variants of “God”, 7 variants of “Jesus”).

The film does not contain sex or nudity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Matrix, a Warner Brothers film released in April of 1999 in the USA, was directed by brothers Larry and Andy Wachowski. *The Matrix* stars Keanu Reeves and Laurence Fishburne, among others.

(Plot summary paragraph) Mankind created Artificial Intelligence (‘A.I.’), which in turn “spawned a race of machines” that defeated humanity in a great war. Because nuclear winter has darkened the sky, those machines required a substitute for solar power. The machines found a way to siphon the heat and bioelectricity from a human body, but they needed a way to keep captured humanity docile during the process. So the machines built a vast ‘power plant’ system of prison pods where humans float in a lifelong coma, their brains hooked up to a vast virtual reality called the ‘Matrix’. The Matrix is a simulation of 1999 earth, where people go about their illusionary lives oblivious to their true state of captivity. The machines have ‘sentient programs’ called ‘Agents’ who patrol within the Matrix simulation to ensure the mental prison runs smoothly. Neo, the protagonist, is a human in the Matrix who senses something is wrong with his existence. A tiny group of freed humans from outside the Matrix extracts Neo from the Matrix simulation then physically rescues him from the machine ‘power plant’. From their hovercraft, they train Neo to overcome the rules of the Matrix. Neo must then use the socket on his skull to jack back into the Matrix simulation world so he can free other humans and fight the virtual Agents. Neo masters the Matrix world and destroys an agent at the end of the film, leaving us to guess the rest as he ascends into the simulated sky.

On the surface, *The Matrix* is a polished, thinking man’s sci-fi action flick with big budget special effects, tech tunes, and cyberculture influences. But *The Matrix* mainly succeeds as a canvas for conjecture. The film pulsates with religious and philosophical nuances, provocative names, cultural commentary, and myriad metaphors, giving the perceptive observer a mental playground. Simply put, it seems that with a little effort, one can get just about anything out of this multifaceted movie. And for a thinker, that’s fun – which is one reason why the film quickly developed a dedicated fan base.

Is *The Matrix* a commentary on man vs. technology? Or reality vs. illusion? Does Neo represent an anarchist? Or the antichrist? Or even Christ? Is Neo a nihilistic rebel? Or is he a parable of a Christian? Does *The Matrix* use eastern philosophy? The answer to all these questions is “Yes”, depending on how you choose to view the film!

We will glance at some of the many ways to view the film, then analyze in detail two fascinating allegories of *The Matrix*: Neo as a lost person who finds truth, and Neo as a Messiah figure. As DuJour says, “Come on - it’ll be fun!”

II. THE MANY WAYS OF VIEWING *THE MATRIX*

(If this list bores you, just skip ahead to the allegory in part III)

To give you an idea of just how many 'lenses' are available to view *The Matrix*, here is a very incomplete (and purposefully so!) list of themes and influences that people are analyzing in the film:

- Neo as man who becomes a Christian and learns to walk in faith
- Neo as Christian Messiah
- Neo as Jewish Messiah
- Christ's Second Coming (the hint from Morpheus that Neo came once before)
- Neo as Antichrist (reverse all good/evil roles in the film)
- Neo as Moses who leads people out of captivity
- Neo as key figure or exemplary believer for various religions, philosophies, movements, governments
- Neo as man coming to enlightenment (Buddhism, some eastern philosophy)
- Neo as man discovering himself and/or truth (many philosophies and religions)
- Alice in Wonderland (white rabbit, looking glass, etc.)
- Dorothy / Kansas / "Mr. Wizard" / Oz
- The nature of reality
- The nature of truth
- The nature of identity
- Philosophy vs. Religion
- Man vs. Technology
- Science vs. Faith
- Fate / Free Will / Destiny
- Illusion / Dreams
- Conscious vs. Subconscious (Jung)
- Superstition (Neo sees black cat = 'bad luck')
- Man vs. "The System"
- Nihilism
- Social Rebellion / Anarchy / Nonconformity / Disestablishmentarianism (a fifty-cent word!)
- Control / Authority ("You have a problem with authority, Mr. Anderson")
- Greek mythology (Morpheus, Oracle, etc.)
- Mind over matter ('Spoon boy' bending spoons, girls levitating blocks)
- Metaphysics
- Humanism (a future with 'no borders', 'the power is within you', 'free your mind', etc.)
- Evolution (cf. Agent Smith's speech to Morpheus)
- Reincarnation (Neo apparently existed previously; see Morpheus' bedside speech)
- The 'Ecological Gospel' (Agent Smith says man is a virus that destroys the planet)
- Truth is everywhere / Pantheist / "You're not looking for him, but for an Answer"
- Atheism (God is arguably not part of the basic plot or future world)
- Existentialism
- Relativism
- Simulation / virtuality
- Nietzsche, Plato, 'know thyself', etc.
- Postmodern philosophy (Simulacra & Simulation)
- Martial arts and related philosophy
- Martial arts film culture, Hong Kong stuntwire work
- Drug culture (mescaline / altered perception)
- Coded messages (Matrix code, Bible codes, etc.)
- Harlan Ellison's sci-fi tale "I Have No Mouth But I Must Scream"

- The *Terminator* films– AI controls and destroys the world
- *Logan's Run* film - computers control life; a world exists outside the city domes; etc.
- Superman – Neo flies away at the end.
- Life is a simulation (films such as *Dark City*, *Thirteenth Floor*, *eXistenZ*, *Total Recall*, *Tron*, etc.)
- William Gibson's *Neuromancer* novel and others (Matrix, cyberjacks, implants, construct, samurai female sidekick in leather, etc.)
- Techno-industrial soundtrack / significance of song selection
- Stylized heroes (shades, leather, trenchcoats, shoes, etc)
- Stylized violence / choreography / John Woo's trademark style (guns in both hands, slo-mo, etc.)
- Anime influences
- Comics influences (artist Geof Darrow did some concept design); the storyboarded flavor of scenes
- *Star Wars* vs. *The Matrix* (Neo/Luke the disgruntled hacker/farmboy is mentored by Morpheus/Obi-Wan and becomes a super-powered Jedi/"The One")
- Hero vs. Obstacle (the hero faces an obstacle that nearly defeats him, then he revives. Superman escaping kryptonite, Godzilla getting temporarily beaten by rival monsters, Rocky Balboa nearly 'down for the count', Popeye just before eating spinach, etc.)
- "Mikey, I think he likes it." – Tank makes a reference to an old cereal commercial!
- Old spaghetti western clichés with gunfight face-off, 'tumbleweed' newspaper, twitching trigger fingers
- ...and many more!

Symbolism, Metaphor, Imagery, Etc.:

- room numbers 303 and 101, other numerology
- coming 'full circle' (film starts and ends with computer screen, room 303, a trip in and out of a phone, etc.)
- water / rain
- reflections / mirrors
- nomenclature (names of streets, people, companies, etc.)
- time: regular vs. slo-mo vs. 'bullet-time'; 1999 vs. 2199, etc.
- falling, climbing, jumping, flying, heights
- color, filter, and lighting schemes, reality blue, hacker green, etc.
- clothes / gear
- casting, race, gender, age, etc.
- lion-headed chairs appearing multiple times, other strange set pieces
- the golden blob on Neo's chest
- organic look of the machines
- old vs. new, ancient vs. modern
- clocks, signs, etc.
- camera angles / cinematography / scene construction / etc.
- ...and many more!

If you wish to see just how deep the rabbit hole goes, or how wide the rabbit tracks run, you might visit Warner Brother's forum for *The Matrix* at <http://wbboards.warnerbros.com>, then select *Matrix*, *The* in the dropdown list for movies (forum still available as of March, 2000).

III. THE MATRIX AS A CYBERPUNK PARABLE

A. OVERVIEW

The Matrix is not an intentionally Christian film; hints from various philosophies and religions are sprinkled throughout it. But the flexibility of the film allows people to draw many themes from it, including Christian allegories.

The film obviously suggests Neo can play a Messiah figure, an aspect some of the actors highlighted in their interviews. But a truly intriguing angle of *The Matrix* is to view it as a sort of cyberpunk parable similar to *The Pilgrim's Progress*. A classic bestseller written from prison by John Bunyan in the mid 1600's, *The Pilgrim's Progress* uses a fanciful tale to depict Christianity through one man's conviction, conversion, conflicts, and final conquest.

Neo makes a similar odyssey in *The Matrix*. He is a confused searcher who is led to the truth, and then acts upon it to be saved from a false world. Neo must then learn to walk in faith as he faces formidable enemies and ultimately triumphs. To flesh out this allegory, the Agents in the film can represent Satan and his forces, and sometimes sin itself. Trinity and Morpheus could both serve at times not only to represent God, but also Christians in the roles of evangelist and discipler. And the Matrix represents the fallen world system, and perhaps sin as well.

The detail in *The Matrix* adaptable for paralleling Christianity is amazing! To help you catch the depth of the parallels in *The Matrix*, here are two paragraphs summarizing Christianity:

God created man and woman (Adam and Eve) and gave them dominion over a perfect earth. Tempted by Satan, they sinned against God. As a result, they took on a sinful nature (a 'lost' condition), inherited by all mankind since then. The world was theirs, so it also suffered corruption. Because man obeyed Satan, he forfeited his position with God and became aligned with Satan, along with the fallen world (the Matrix). God is holy and hates sin, so He will eventually punish Satan and sin in eternal fire. However, mankind is infected with sin, so to destroy sin would mean to destroy the sinner. So God, being rich in mercy and love for mankind, provided a way out. God humbled Himself to become a human being - Jesus Christ - in order to die an innocent, substitutionary death on a cross to pay for the sins of mankind. Men buried Christ, but God raised Him from the dead. Jesus ascended to heaven soon afterward.

Because Jesus has paid the full penalty of God's anger against sin, any person who truly trusts in Christ (His blood = the red pill) as the Son of God is forgiven as God credits the atonement and righteousness of the living Christ to him. This act of saving faith is the moment of 'conversion', and much happens here (as we will see with Neo!). A person is thus ransomed from Satan and sin by the blood of Christ, becoming a newborn spiritual child of God and follower of Christ (a 'Christian'). God will eventually destroy the fallen world and make a new heaven and earth, where Christians will live forever with God in glorified bodies. But until then, Christians remain in the fallen world, commanded by God to share in word and deed the message of salvation through Christ. (Whether every Christian obeys God is another matter!) A true Christian is no longer a slave to sin, and God indwells him, empowering the obedient Christian to overcome the world and Satan by faith in the truth. The process of learning to operate in the truth is a key process for the Christian (as it will be for Neo.)

To further clarify as we pick the film apart from this angle, here is a key for the analysis:



KEY:

M = *The Matrix* story

S = Spiritual parallels



B. THE PARABLE

1. TRACKING: Confusion, Contact, and Conviction

1a. APARTMENT

(Remember the key: M = *The Matrix* story S = Spiritual parallels)

M. Neo, the protagonist, initially goes by the name 'Thomas Anderson' in public.

S. The name 'Thomas' reminds us of the disciple of Jesus that history has nicknamed 'Doubting Thomas'. Similarly, Thomas/Neo often struggles with belief – first as a lost man coming to the truth, then as a saved man doubting his position.

M. Thomas will later be called 'Neo'. (To strengthen the allegory, we will call the character 'Thomas' until he takes the red pill, and afterward we will call him 'Neo'.)

S. The name 'Neo' means 'New'. The names of 'Thomas' and 'Neo' contrast the old and new conditions. Scripture says that when a sinful man comes to salvation, he is a "new creature, the old things passed away" (2 Corinthians. 5:17). 'Thomas' is the old, 'Neo' is the new. When the Fed-Ex man brings the package to Thomas/Neo's cubicle early in the film and asks, "Thomas Anderson?" Thomas replies, "Yeah, that's me." This acceptance of the name indicates his initial lost condition and blind immersion in it. After Neo is saved from the Matrix, Agent Smith continues to call Neo "Mr. Anderson", to which Neo replies with conviction, "My name is NEO," signifying his understanding of his new self. To parallel Satan's persistence, Agent Smith calls Neo "Mr. Anderson" 11 times in the film. In contrast, Morpheus and crew always call him "Neo", reinforcing the truth of who he wants to be, and who he indeed becomes after salvation.

M. When we first see Thomas, he is sleeping. It is apparently nighttime. Thomas is wearing black.

S. The terms 'sleep' and 'darkness' are used to describe a lost person in scripture. "We are not of night, nor of darkness, so let us not sleep as others do..." (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5). Until he is saved, Thomas IS always literally asleep in his womblike pod of the machine 'power plant' in the real world! This is a striking portrayal of how a lost person is spiritually asleep even though he perceives himself awake in a fallen world.

M. As Thomas sleeps, his computer is "Searching..."

S. This is the first indication of Thomas' discomfort with his life. He is searching, which is the key to finding truth. "Seek and you will find..." (Matthew 7:7). Trinity later confirms this searching when she tells Thomas, "I know why you hardly sleep, why you live alone, and why night after night you sit at your computer. You're looking..." Thomas lives alone, which reflects his desire to separate from a fallen world.

M. The media on Thomas' computer seems to portray Morpheus as a wanted criminal worldwide, when in truth Morpheus is a good man who wants to save humanity.
S. This might be paralleled to much of the blatantly anti-God / anti-Christian media of today.

M. The computer screen clears and a message appears from Trinity, who comes from outside the Matrix world. Trinity warns: "Wake up, Neo. The Matrix has you!" And he wakes up!
S. The 'Trinity' character may at times portray God. God is paradoxically depicted in scripture as a Trinity – a single Being, yet made up of three Persons known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This scene parallels the Spirit of God convicting the lost person of his dire condition. "Wake up! [Sin and the fallen world] has you!" Or as Ephesians 5:14 puts it, "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Thomas strangely awakens as if he somehow heard the message internally, which hints at the spiritual nature of the warning.

Trinity does not live in the Matrix illusion; she came from outside it. Similarly, Jesus said, "I am not of the world" (John 17:14). Scripture states clearly that Jesus Christ was not just a mere man - He was God Himself, come to earth as a man (Colossians 2:9, Philippians 2:5-11, John 1:1,14, etc.). Just as Trinity's words on Thomas' manmade computer were a message written by someone from the outside world, the scriptures also claim to be a supernaturally inspired message from God to mankind as human writers were controlled by God's Spirit.

Trinity initiates contact with Thomas, just as God takes the initiative in salvation: "No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him..." (Jesus in John 6:44). God will draw, man must respond.

M. Thomas tries to remove the warning message.

S. The conviction of sin and eternal danger is disturbing. It affronts our pride, and we don't want to hear it. The lost person tries to regain 'CONTROL' of his thoughts from the disturbing impulse (Thomas hits the 'CONTROL' key), and when that fails, he may try to 'ESCAPE' it as well (Thomas hits the 'ESCAPE' key).

An interesting triple metaphor occurs here. Thomas knocks the 'ESCAPE' key twice, the computer says 'knock' twice, and then Choi knocks twice on Thomas' door. For every knock of the 'ESCAPE' key, Trinity answers with a written 'knock' back to Thomas, showing God's persistence in knocking on the heart of the lost person. "Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him..." (Revelation. 3:20). Trinity's prediction of the knocks on Thomas' door parallels the omniscience of God.

M. Thomas is a computer hacker who peddles software to Choi. (Technical Note: The film credits list this character's name as 'Choi', and not 'Troy')

S. Hacking is illegal. Choi and his cronies are obviously 'bad company' in the moral sense. Thomas is a sinful man - a lawbreaker - who has sinful friends.

On a deeper level, here is one of the most fascinating ironies of the film. Thomas thinks that he is hacking into computers, but in truth, the Matrix computers control Thomas' entire existence - even allowing him the illusion that he is 'hacking', if that will pacify him! The prison allows some illusionary escapes to keep the prisoners oblivious to the real problem!

To parallel spiritually, the fallen world fools it's prisoners with meaningless progress, like the 'rich fool' in Luke 12:20 who focused on earthly riches but neglected his eternal state. An equally deadly deception occurs when lost people believe they are saving themselves by doing good works, making political changes, etc., 'hacking' away at the evils in the world and themselves. However, God declares the nature of our problem is spiritual and that only He can remedy it for us through Christ.

In another angle, Thomas' vain attempts to hack the system as a lost person both contrast and foreshadow his victorious 'hack' of the Matrix once he is 'Neo/New'.

M. Thomas puts \$2000 in a hollow copy of postmodernist Jean Baudrillard's *Simulacra and Simulation*. The camera lingers on the chapter titled *On Nihilism*. Thomas lives in the pinnacle of a 'simulacra', the image that has no underlying truth. Thomas' world and the futile persona he has developed in it are based completely on illusion; the fallen real world is vastly different.

S. Man, created in the image of God and placed in a perfect world, severed himself from his Creator by rebellion. And unless he reconciles with God through Christ, a man crafts his own futile image apart from truth, for God is Truth. An unsaved man is dead even as he thinks he lives; the trimmings of his worldly life are a vain and temporary mask covering his lost spiritual and eternal state. We focus on the tangible and glory in our civilizations, yet God regards our fallen state to be as bleak as the postwar cities in *The Matrix*.

The dictionary defines 'nihilism' as: 1) A doctrine that all values are baseless, that nothing is knowable or can be communicated, and that life itself is meaningless. 2) The belief that destruction of existing political or social institutions is necessary for future improvement.

Perhaps Thomas has been 'putting his money' on the aspect of nihilism that says nothing is knowable. But this philosophy has left him as hollow as the hole in the chapter. Thomas will leave that empty, despairing philosophy behind and find that there is indeed a knowable salvation and truth.

As to future improvement, Thomas will not find it by using the rules of the Matrix to fight the Matrix - illusionary 'hacking' against an illusionary world. Instead, Thomas will only bring change by escaping the very Matrix itself and attacking it in the power of the truth. In the same way, a man must find salvation in Christ to escape being a part of the fallen world, and then he must walk by faith in God to make a true difference.

M. Choi, the 'worldly wiseman', admits his constant use of mescaline. He and his sultry companion DuJour invite Thomas to 'unplug' for some rest and relaxation by going to a dance club with them.

S. Choi represents the escapist. His solution to 'unplug' (be saved) is to forget the problems of life by using drugs, which he takes 'all the time'. Choi tells Thomas that 'the only way to fly' is mescaline. Thomas/Neo literally does fly at the end of the film – but only as a result of walking in the truth, not hallucination or illusion. We might contrast Choi's false 'only way' statement with that of Jesus in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth..." Choi's life of seeking pleasure will not bring salvation. "I said to myself, 'Come now, I will test you with pleasure. Enjoy yourself.' And behold, it too was futility." (Ecclesiastes 2:1). Lastly, Choi's advice that Thomas needs to 'unplug' is not only foreshadowing, but also another nudge to lost Thomas. God can even use sinners to send a message...

M. Trinity tells Thomas to "follow the white rabbit". Spotting a white rabbit tattoo on DuJour's shoulder, Thomas chooses to go with Choi and DuJour.

S. More than just an *Alice in Wonderland* nod, this is another of the heavyweight moments where Thomas/Neo must make a choice that will irrevocably determine his destiny. First, Thomas had to choose to open the door for Choi (opening doors, windows, etc. is also a prominent theme). Now he must choose to accompany Choi and DuJour. (On internet discussion threads, 'tracer' observantly pointed out that 'choix' and 'duJour' are French for 'choice of the day'.) The story consistently resonates with a powerful theme of 'one way', where Thomas must often choose to either follow or abandon the one narrow Way to a singular Truth in a reality of unflinching absolutes.

1b. CLUB

M. The club is obviously a degenerate place, where Choi is surrounded by his ‘harem’ of friends, oozing chic as someone lights his cigarette. The shadowy scene seems to be a celebration of bondage, with dance cages and a few S&M-style costumes. Music by Rob Zombie provides a sonic backdrop for the dark set.

S. This setting depicts the depraved, sinful state of the fallen world. Even though darkness keeps fallen man in bondage, many choose the darkness over the Light. Rob Zombie’s music is a perfect thematic fit, as Mr. Zombie likes to associate himself with evil on his products (for example, he uses a sinister portrait and pentagram on the *Hellbilly Deluxe* CD).

M. Thomas/Neo stands alone and apart from the dance club crowd, looking uncomfortable.

S. This highlights a lost person’s growing discomfort with the wrong state of self and surroundings.

M. Trinity contacts Thomas/Neo at the worldly club, calling him by name and describing his private habits.

S. Like the Shepherd going away from safe pasture to find the lost sheep (Luke 15) or Jesus eating with the despised tax gatherers (Matthew. 9:11), God pursues the lost man even in the most worldly circumstances. God also intimately knows the private life of the sinner, like Trinity saying, “I know what you’ve been doing.”

M. Trinity warns Thomas that he is in danger and that he is being watched.

S. Trinity’s statement, “I brought you here to warn you” has echoes of “...flee from the wrath to come” (Luke 3:7). The Holy Spirit convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16.8).

M. Trinity and Morpheus prompt Thomas three times to verbalize what is on his conscience: 1) Trinity prompts Thomas, “You know the question...” to which Thomas answers, “What is the Matrix?” 2) Later on the cell phone Morpheus prompts, “Do you know who this is?” and Thomas answers, “Morpheus!” 3) At the hotel, Morpheus describes Thomas’ sense of something wrong, then prompts, “Do you know what I’m talking about?” Thomas replies, “The Matrix.” This triple confirmation helps Thomas to crystallize what he is sensing, as well as to prove that he is becoming ready to receive the truth.

S. To find truth, we must be honest with ourselves about what we are sensing from God. Daring to reach into our foggy convictions and crystallize them will ignite them in our hearts as a crisis that we must act upon. Thomas was prompted to acknowledge both the Matrix (the fallen world) and Morpheus (representing God here) as the two sides he must choose between.

M. Trinity tells Neo, “The answer is out there...it’s looking for you. And it will find you, if you *want* it to.”

S. God is longing for us far more than we are looking for Him (Luke 15, Matthew 23:37) But He “stands at the door and knocks” (Revelation 3:20); He does not break down the door. We must *want* to be saved; the choice to open the door of our hearts and allow Christ to enter is ours.

1c. OFFICE

M. Thomas works for Metacortex, which is also spelled Meta Cortechs inside the building.

S. This company name describes the powerful fallen world system that grips Thomas. The prefix 'meta' can mean 'situated behind', and 'cortex' can refer to the cerebral cortex of the brain. Thus 'Metacortex' can mean, "we are the ones behind the scenes, who control your mind". Given the alternate spelling of 'corTECHS', and noting that 'techs' is slang for 'technicians', the name also carries the idea that "we 'work' on your head, to shape your thinking as we wish." As Morpheus later explains, people are indeed born into bondage to a fallen world system that bombards the mind with fallen thinking.

M. Thomas is late for work. Mr. Rhineheart reprimands Thomas, whose voice is hollow as he agrees. Even though Mr. Rhineheart is correct, he seems unbending as he demands flawless obedience.

S. Work at Metacortex represents the state of bondage of sinful man to a fallen world as he tries to work his way to heaven. The law is not in Neo's heart, and he has found himself lacking ability to comply. He is depressed and motionless in his cubicle afterward.

Man will fall short of perfectly obeying God's standards of right and wrong, and will become depressed in the constant failure to comply. The Bible says that these standards are good (it is not wrong that Thomas must have a job, or that Rhineheart want Thomas to be on time), but God's standards are designed to show us our inability to hit the mark. God's standards are an unbending 'teacher' that makes us to realize we need to be saved from our flawed nature, leading us to the Savior, Jesus Christ. When a person is saved by faith in Christ, God considers sin forgiven, then He 'writes His law on the heart' of that person, giving him a new, constant spiritual desire to do what is right - and a joy in doing it.

M. Now we will reverse the allegory and let Mr. Rhineheart represent the fallen world system. Rhineheart reprimands Thomas, saying, "This company is one of the TOP software companies in the WORLD because every single employee understands that they are part of a WHOLE...The time has come to make a CHOICE..."

S. The words 'TOP' and 'WORLD' are significant, indicating the pinnacle strength of the fallen world system. Like the nerve-wracking squeegees, the fallen world chafes the lost person, yet he is caught in the pull of that dead world to conform to the dying 'WHOLE'. Rhinehart calls Thomas 'Mr. Anderson' twice, using his Matrix identity to reinforce his belonging to the world system. A 'CHOICE' must be made toward either accepting captivity to the lost world or taking that narrow path to Freedom...

M. Window washers maddeningly squeak their squeegees as Mr. Rhineheart reprimands Thomas.

S. Notice that when Thomas/Neo is later 'flushed' out of his womb-pod in the 'power plant', his hands scrape along the sides and make this same sound! Perhaps the sounds of the window washers are linked to an unhappy Thomas reflexively scraping against the sides of his pod in the power plant at the same time as he is being reprimanded? This irritating sensation reinforces that Thomas is a tormented prisoner of the world system.

M. A dejected Thomas Anderson sits motionless in the dim bleakness of his lifeless cubicle. Even his computer screen is dead.

S. What a striking visual metaphor for how empty life is without Truth! Careers, money, information, etc. – these are pathetically powerless to fill the void of a human heart without God. As his conscience bears witness that something vital is missing, the lost person often begins to despair of all other aspects of life; nothing has meaning or vibrancy.

M. The Fed Ex man says, “Mr. Anderson?” Thomas accepts the illusionary identity by saying, “Yeah, that’s me.”

S. (See prior comments about this from the first apartment scene.)

M: Via cell phone, Morpheus prompts, “Hello, Neo. Do you know who this is?” Neo replies, “Morpheus!”

S: (See prior comments about these promptings from the dance club segment.)

M. Morpheus says, “They’re coming for you, Neo...” Thomas asks, “Who’s coming for me?” to which Morpheus replies, “Stand up and see for yourself.” “What...right now?” asks Thomas. Morpheus replies, “Yes. Now.” Thomas stands, and for the first time, he sees enemy Agents and policemen entering his office to catch him.

S. God helps the lost person to see his own sin and sense the spiritual enemy that craves his death. As God warned Cain in Genesis 4:7, “sin is crouching at the door [like the Agents entering the office] and its desire is to have you...” Morpheus’ response of “now” stresses the urgency of the situation. We do not casually decide when to grapple with evil – it is a predator that eventually strikes its final deathblow. We must escape while God gives us opportunity. “Behold, now is the day of salvation...” (2 Corinthians 6:2). “Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts” (Hebrews 4:7).

M. Neo asks frantically: “What the hell do they want from me?”

S. Nice pun. “Hell” is exactly what Satan wants for every lost person.

M. Morpheus offers Thomas a way out – yet another series of one-way choices! Morpheus warns, “I can guide you – but you must do *exactly* as I say.”

S. For the sinner, there is no alternative – exact adherence to God’s way of salvation, or face the consequences. God will provide “the way of escape” (1 Corinthians 10:12).

M. As Morpheus guides Thomas to the office with the ‘window of opportunity’, Thomas asks, “How do you know all this?” Morpheus responds, “We don’t have time, Neo...”

S. A lost person could never understand God anyway; he has not yet become new and he does not have spiritual understanding. Sin cannot comprehend holiness, nor can deception grasp all truth. Thomas’ query is the lost man’s resistance to faith – he wants to know ALL the answers before making a decision. But God urgently pleads, “You are drowning! First take My hand and let Me lift you up – I can describe My ship to you later!” On another note, Morpheus describing each step in advance once again symbolizes God’s omniscience.

M. In one of the most symbolic choices of the story, Morpheus tells Thomas, “There are two ways out of this building. One is that scaffold. The other is in their custody.”

S. The Metacortex building represents the fallen world in concise form. The scaffold can hint at the cross of Christ. The scaffold goes *up*, symbolizing going to God. In the custody of the Agents means going *down* – notice that they leave with Thomas on the *bottom* floor of the building. Think of heavenward as up, hellward as down. The lost man finds that he truly has no neutral ground! In his pride, he fancies himself having many choices and plenty of time. But in truth, he can only be on one of two paths – heaven or hell, with the default path of no resistance being hell.

M. Morpheus tells Thomas, “you take a chance either way.”

S. It takes faith to trust in God. It also takes faith not to.

M. Thomas responds to Morpheus: “No way. No way! This is crazy. ...This is insane.”

S. To a man who has only paid attention to his mortal life, the sudden realization of eternity in heaven or hell shakes him. There is nothing he can do to earn his own salvation except to trust in God’s way out. And that way is by faith in Christ, which is difficult for the natural man to accept, especially as it is not dependent on his own good works.

M. Thomas mutters in frustration, “What did I do? I didn’t do anything. I’m nobody...”

S. Thomas lies to himself. He committed many crimes; he is a hacker! Thomas is a lawbreaker who does not want to follow rules or face consequences for his wrong actions. But the unbending truth is that there is no neutral ground for the sinner. Thomas says he is ‘nobody’ as another excuse. But again, no lack or excess of a person’s social status, age, achievements, identity, etc. remove the fact that he is caught between heaven and hell and is still personally accountable for a choice between them. There are no ‘nobodies’ to God and Satan.

M. Thomas begins to inch his way along the narrow path of the ledge toward the scaffold. But then he takes his eyes away and looks at the street far below. Gasping in fear, he drops the cell phone and says, “I can’t do this.” Fear cripples him, and he the enemy captures him as a result.

S. In addition to the ‘Doubting Thomas’ theme, this metaphor reminds us of the apostle Peter trying to walk on water to come to Christ. As long as Peter’s eyes were fixed on Christ, he was able to continue. But “seeing the wind” (Matthew 14:30) - meaning he was no longer looking at Christ - Peter became afraid and started to sink. Christ reached out and rescued him, just as we will see Morpheus ‘reach out’ by telephone to contact Thomas again. Dropping the cell phone represents both Peter losing his fix on Christ, and also the lost man abandoning his communication with God as his Way of salvation. The narrow ledge illustrates that “the way is narrow that leads to life” (Matthew 7:14). Thomas had no alternatives. Either he climbed the scaffold, or he was captured. Thomas could not have infinite chances to make his escape, nor could he simply stroll back to his cubicle and pretend his crisis of destiny did not exist. Like it or not, we all face that crisis and must choose before our time is up.

When Thomas says, “I can’t do this,” he reiterates that a lost man cannot save himself. That is why God had to do the work for him on the cross. In the Bible, Peter asked, “then who can be saved?” to which Jesus answered, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26).

1d. INTERROGATION

M. As Agent Smith lectures Thomas, he flips through a record of Thomas’ crimes.

S. Smith is like Satan, who will always be called the ‘accuser’. (Revelation 12:9-12).

M. Agent Smith tells Thomas three distinct lies (see below) during the interrogation scene.

S. Satan is the ‘father of lies’ (John 8:44).

M. Lie #1: Agent Smith indicates that Thomas’ illusionary Matrix life is reality – having a job, paying taxes, helping the landlady. In contrast, Smith tells Thomas that his other (hacker) life is “lived in computers”, which is an interesting twist of words! In truth, it is Thomas’ illusionary life in the Matrix - his job, taxes, and landlady – that is “lived in computers” that generate the Matrix simulation! The real life that Thomas will live as Neo outside the Matrix is NOT lived “in computers”.

S. Satan’s lie is a complete reversal of truth. He lies that this tangible earthly life is all there is, that it is substantial, and that the spiritual things are silly myth that we should stop seeking.

M. Lie #2: Smith says, “One of these lives [a life of lies inside the Matrix] has a [good] future, and one of them [a life of truth outside the Matrix] does not.”

S. This is another direct reversal. Truth gives eternal life - a good future. Believing lies results in eternal death.

M. Lie #3: Agent Smith describes Morpheus as a ‘dangerous man’, a ‘criminal’ who must be brought to ‘justice’. In truth, Morpheus is a good man – so good that he is willing to lay down his own life to allow Neo to escape the Agents in the wet-wall scene.

S. Satan again reverses roles, portraying himself as good and God as evil. Many people fall for this lie. For example, many see Satan as noble liberator in the garden of Eden but judge God as a stingy jailer – instead of seeing God as providing an idyllic environment, while selfish man just had to have one more tree despite the abundant orchards! Man, imitating Satan, said “I will be like God” and rebelled against his benevolent Creator – a Creator Who in turn humbly took the form of a man to be crucified for the willful sins of His own creation so that a way of redemption could be open to all by simply trusting the Rescuer. To regard Someone as ‘evil’ who dies on your behalf is the height of deception.

M. Thomas demands a phone call. Agent Smith in turn demonstrates his total power over Thomas by literally sealing his mouth, or ‘shutting him up’.

S. Who would Thomas have called anyway? He did not know Morpheus’ number, and no fellow enslaved human could have helped him. Smith’s power over Thomas represents Satan’s natural dominion over the sinner. A lost man is utterly powerless to overcome Satan with natural strength, willpower, and abilities. Satan’s goal is to mute the lost man through intimidation and power so that he will fear attempting to cry out to God. From another angle, “scripture has shut up all men under sin,” exposing our sinful ways so that we would agree that we need God’s salvation. (Galatians 3:22).

M. Agent Smith implants his nightmarish tracer ‘bug’ into Thomas.

S. A lost man’s awareness of his problem grows once more – he now clearly sees he is infected with sin, just like Satan. The sinner cannot escape his own sin; it is internal and must be removed by Someone else.

M. Agent Smith tells Thomas, “You’re going to help us – whether you want to or not.”

S. The sinner finds again that he has no neutral position – he belongs to the enemy by default. Man is infected with sin, just like Satan. In the eyes of God, a sinner’s eternal destiny is the same, from the curious agnostic down to the most ardent Satanist. If the plane is going to crash, the doctor near the window dies just as fiery a death as the rapist in the aisle seat. We are all born into slavery of sin; the only way out is through faith in Christ.

1e. THE ROAD TO MORPHEUS

M. After the interrogation, Morpheus contacts Thomas again and asks, “Now do you still want to meet?”

S. God is persistent in His rescue of the sinner.

M. Morpheus tells Thomas, “You may have spent the last few years looking for me, but I’ve spent my entire life looking for you.”

S. God comes to seek and save the lost, even when sinful people do not desire Him. It is God that looks and longs for us. (See the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son in Luke 15; also Luke 19:10, Romans 5:8.)

M. After being tormented by Agent Smith, Thomas understands the dangers of allowing the enemy to have him. Morpheus asks Thomas, “Now do you still want to meet?” “Yes!” answers Thomas. (another choice!)

S. The sinner comes to understand that the cost of staying in evil’s grip is less than the risk of taking the Way out.

M. Morpheus tells Thomas to “go to the Adam Street Bridge.” (another choice!)

S. God takes the lost person to the root of the problem – the sin nature we inherited from Adam. To admit our sinfulness is a key step in the path to truth, so we can see that Someone must save us from that sin (thus, a ‘Savior’).

M. Thomas waits under the bridge. A car drives up, the door opens, and Trinity tells Thomas to get in. (another choice!) Switch points a gun at Thomas. “What’s that for?” asks Thomas. “For our protection,” answers Trinity. “From what?” asks Thomas. “From you,” she replies. Thomas is contaminated with a tracer ‘bug’, and he might also become an Agent at any time, as they still control him in the Matrix!

S. God will not allow sin to infiltrate His holiness. His method of dealing with sin is extermination. After Adam and Eve sinned, God removed them from the garden so that they could “not also eat from the Tree of Life, and live forever.” (Genesis 3:22). God did not want man to live forever while trapped in a sinful state, to have eternity polluted with sinful beings. When a sinner trusts Christ, God considers that sinner to be crucified (exterminated) with Christ (Romans. 6:6), and mercifully reborn spiritually as a ‘new creature’ (2 Corinthians 5:17). Switch did not hate Thomas; she only hated the bug within him. God hates sin, but loves the sinner infected by it. God will ultimately destroy sin, but is holding back for a while so that each person can choose between the two ways of having his sin ‘exterminated’ – either trust Christ who bore God’s death penalty for sin on our behalf, or keep our sin nature and thus be burned with it when God destroys sin.

M. Switch tells Thomas, “it’s our way – or the highway.” (a choice!) Not wanting to submit himself to anybody, Thomas says, “Fine!” and begins to exit the car to return to the rainy darkness of the false Matrix world. But Trinity puts a comforting hand on Thomas’ shoulder and says, “Please, you have to trust me. Because you have been down there; you know that road. You know exactly where it ends. And I know that’s not where you want to be.” Thomas considers the empty road and realizes Trinity’s words are true and for his own good. So Thomas chooses to stay with her.

S. Here again is the theme that there is only one Way to real life. Jesus said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father, except through Me.” (John 14:6). Switch uses the term ‘highway’ to describe the option of going back to the slavery of the Matrix, which is an interesting parallel to “...the way is broad [like a ‘highway’] that leads to destruction...but the way is narrow that leads to life” (Matt. 7:13).

Thomas represents the pride of man when he says “Fine!” In other words, “Nobody tells *me* what to do!” Had Thomas obeyed his pride and exited, how do you think he would have felt later? He would never have found the truth, and would be back on the same confused, dead road, yet still be hunted by the enemy.

Trinity’s gentle empathy with Thomas reflects that aspect of God as well. Her understanding tone causes Thomas to look hard at the road outside and the empty, answerless death it brings. It also shows her care for Thomas, in contrast to the threats of the Agents. Trinity pleading with Thomas (she said “please”) reflects the amazing fact that Almighty God literally pleads with the sinner. “...As though God were making an appeal through us, we beg [also plead, implore] you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.” (2 Corinthians 5:20).

M. So that Thomas can have an audience with Morpheus, Trinity hunts and painfully extracts the bloody metallic 'bug' from Thomas' stomach, then casts it out the window.

S. God will listen to the man who comes admitting sin, but not to the man who hides it. "If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear" (Psalm 66:18). Honesty is a requirement. And just as the extraction of the 'bug' was bloody for Thomas, the payment for sin demands blood. "...without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness" (Hebrews 9:22). This is why Jesus shed His pure blood on the cross, to provide perfect payment for all who believe.

M. When Thomas sees the nightmarish, bloody 'bug' that Trinity has extracted, he blurts, "That thing is *real!*?"

S. God increases the sinner's awareness of his inward contamination by sin. The problem is not only the world around him; he himself is polluted within. "I had *that* inside me? I wonder what else is wrong within me?"

1f. A VISIT WITH MORPHEUS

M. As Thomas ascends the stairs to meet Morpheus, we notice the black and white tiled floor.

S. A lost man must make a black-and-white choice when he faces God. Light or darkness. Truth or lies. Faith or unbelief. Christ's love or God's wrath. Salvation or damnation. There is no neutral ground, no 'gray'.

M. Just outside Morpheus' door, Trinity advises Thomas: "Be honest. He knows more than you can imagine."

S. For this moment, Morpheus can represent God (after all, lightning flashes when he is introduced, and the chairs in his room do have lion's heads on them – grin.) In order to find truth, a man must be truthful with himself and God. "The Lord is near to all who call upon Him; to all who call upon Him *in truth*." (Psalm 145:18). The man who hides his sin will not find truth. (Psalm 66:18) Salvation involves being transparent with God and being brutally honest about your condition.

M. Morpheus tells Thomas, "You have the look of a man who accepts what he sees because he is expecting to wake up. Ironically, this is not far from the truth."

S. Being 'awake' is a scriptural metaphor for being saved; being 'asleep' is a metaphor for being lost. (See the scene at Thomas' apartment for more.)

M. Morpheus tells Thomas, "Let me tell you why you're here. You're here because you know...feel...that there's something wrong with the world...like a splinter in your mind..."

S. A lost man nearing salvation has become aware of sin in self and the world.

M. Morpheus prompts Thomas to verbalize his convictions. "Do you know what I'm talking about?" asks Morpheus. "The Matrix." Thomas answers.

S. (See the prior 'dance club' segment about promptings to verbalize convictions.)

M. Morpheus confirms the existence of the Matrix, and directly offers to show Neo what it is.

S. At some point, the seeker finds the direct source of an Answer – scripture, an 'evangelist', etc. – that confirms his convictions that there is indeed something wrong and offers the exact solution for coming to the Truth.

M. Morpheus describes the Matrix to Thomas. "It is everywhere" - outside, inside, in all walks of life. In one of the most scriptural statements of the film, Morpheus concludes that the Matrix "is the world that has been pulled over your eyes to blind you from the truth."

S. The Matrix is like the condemned world system that resulted from man's original sin. We are completely immersed in that world's secular flows – politics, materialism, entertainment, pop culture, etc. Just as the machines and Agents control the Matrix, Satan and the sinful state of man create and pollute the systems and values of the world. This fallen world saturates our senses and trumpets itself, saying that it is all there is, the here and now, the visible. It is a vast, busy lie that obscures and distracts from the truth of eternal spiritual things beyond.

M. "What truth?" asks Thomas. Morpheus then tells Thomas, "You are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else you were born into bondage..."

S. Every human descended from Adam and Eve inherits a sinful nature (Romans 5:12-21). Because this nature is inherited, a human is considered sinful from the beginning of his life. As the Psalmist says, "I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:6). A lost man remains a "slave to sin" (Romans 5:17) until he is set free by faith in "Jesus, who gave Himself for our sins so He might rescue us from this present evil world..." (Galatians 1:4). A lost man is in bondage to the fallen world until he is reborn spiritually in Christ. "He that is born of God overcomes the world." (1 John 4:5).

M. Morpheus introduces the final moment of truth. He says, "Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself."

S. A saved person is a 'new creature' in God, with a living, fresh spirit from God. An 'old' creature cannot understand what being 'new' is until he actually *becomes* 'new'. It would be like trying to describe to a caterpillar how it is to be a butterfly. The only way the caterpillar could fully understand would be to enter a cocoon (similar to an 'old' creature being crucified, buried, and risen in Christ through faith) and exit a new and different creature.

It takes faith to cross this final gap. All of the tangible proofs in the world may point the way, but will not solve the problem, for the spiritual things are not tangible. Nobody can be saved just by listening to teaching about how to be saved, just as a sick person cannot be healed by only hearing about medicine. The only way to find the truth is to take a step of faith based on inward convictions and outward evidences.

Imagine the difficulty of describing chocolate ice cream to a child raised in a tent in the Sahara desert - a child who has perhaps never felt something cold, nor tasted chocolate! The child could see pictures, and hear testimony from multiple witnesses for years. This evidence might convict the child that ice cream is a good thing - but the only way to have that child fully understand would be for him to eat a sample! "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8). Seeing requires tasting.

M. In a moment thick with tension, Morpheus warns Thomas, "This is your last chance."

S. Even though God is rich in patience and love, there will eventually come a last chance for every person. "The Lord is not slow about keeping His promise [to come again]...but He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but all to come to repentance. But the [judgment] Day of the Lord WILL come..." (2 Peter 3:4 and 9). "NOW is the day of salvation..." (2 Corinthians. 6:2) In His earthly ministry, Jesus warned the wicked leaders that he would not always be present at their convenience: "Jesus said, 'For a little while longer I am with you, then I go to Him who sent Me. You will seek Me, and will not find Me..." (John 7:33). "My Spirit will not strive with man forever..." (Genesis 6:3).

M. Morpheus offers the most important choice of all to Thomas by offering a blue pill in his left hand and a red pill in his right hand.

S. The red pill can represent the blood of Christ. This saving gift is freely offered by God to man, just as Morpheus offers it freely to Neo. The red pill is the 'right' way to go; thus it is in the 'right' hand while the blue pill is in the left. In another interesting parallel of right and left, Jesus described the final judgment at God's throne, where believers are put on the right side of God to be eternally blessed, and unbelievers are directed to the left side to be eternally punished (Matthew 25:31-46).

The blue pill has many metaphorical qualities to adapt. Deep blue can suggest nighttime and dreaming, indicating the 'sleep' of lies and illusion that is associated with being an unbeliever. Blue is darker than red, showing the contrast of light and darkness. There is the popular cliché of "having the blues" - in other words, experiencing sadness, depression, and heartache instead of happiness. The blue pill means illusion, darkness, and heartache.

M. "After this there is no turning back," says Morpheus. To take the blue pill means to "wake up in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe." To take the red pill means to enter the Truth. As Morpheus says, "All I'm offering is the truth, nothing more..." As Morpheus will say twice later, "I can only show you the door – but *you* have to walk through it." Neo must now choose to *act* – to take a real action based on his convictions, and *enter* through that open 'door'. He must *receive* the gift that Morpheus offers - just looking at the red pill won't help.

S. This is the climactic all-essential 'step of faith' for the sinner (so it will also get a bit more explanation – it is the centerpiece of Christianity!) Scriptures and truthful people can point out the 'door' (Jesus said, "I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved..." - John 10:9), but each person must then take *action* to *enter* that door in a personal transaction of faith between he and Christ. Simply understanding that the door is there does not mean a person has entered it. As scripture says (James 2:14), even Satan believes in God. So mere understanding alone is not enough to save, no more than understanding what medicine can do means you have taken it. There must be an *act* of trusting. Christ died to pay for our sins with his red blood (like the red pill); a person must make an act of trust in that atoning blood sacrifice to be freed from sin. "Righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22). "...being justified through His blood" (Romans 5:8,9).

To take the blue pill means to remain in death, as Morpheus says, "the story ends". To "believe whatever you want to believe" saves nobody. A person may feel good as he deceives himself with comforting lies, or even challenging lies. But lies are lies, and there is only one Truth. Had Neo rejected that 'one way' to truth and taken the blue pill, he would have remained a slave of the Matrix no matter what else he believed, and eventually he would have died there. The unbelieving sinner will physically die in his sins also, but then suffer the "second death" (Revelation 20:14) in the eternal, fiery justice of God against sin, having rejected Christ's blood as a freely available payment for that sin penalty. "He who has the Son has the life, He who does not have the Son of God does not have the life." (1 John 5:11-13). The one who "believes in the Son has eternal life", but the one who does not remains under the "wrath of God" (John 3:18, 36).

Many people allow pride to blind them to the costly Gift of love that God is offering them. Sadly, they angrily label God's wrath against their sin as "unfair", instead of focusing on the fact that God gave His Son's own life (what more could God have done?) to make a free, cleansing 'red pill' available to all takers. Those who hope to stand at judgment and accuse Christ of lacking love will be silenced simply by seeing the Judge's scarred hands – pierced in the ultimate, brutal sacrifice of His own life on a cross to offer them salvation by a simple act of faith in Him.

Which available pill are you focused on? The blue? Or the Red?



2. TRANSFORMATION: Conversion, Conception, and Construction

Note: When someone trusts Christ, all effects of salvation are instantaneous. However, the film moves in sequence through many effects (pill, water, mirror, arrest, awakening, birth, seeing, etc.), which allows us to view each in detail.

2a. RED PILL

M. Thomas takes the red pill and swallows it.

S. This is salvation! It represents an act of faith in the red blood of Christ. "...righteousness comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe..." (Romans 3:22). "...being justified through His blood..." (Romans 5:8,9)

M. Neo chases the red pill with a glass of water.

S. The red pill represents Christ's blood, and it is the only necessary ingredient. Neo did not have to drink the water; he could have swallowed the red pill without it. He could have also drunk the water after taking the blue pill. But if we do choose to use the water in the analogy, it may be paralleled to many things. Here are a few:

1) Jesus referred to the Spirit of God as 'Living Water' (John 7:38). (In this case, that Water would be essential.) "...whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst,...it will become...eternal life" (John 4:14). To complement, Jesus also said, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will not *thirst*" (John 6:35). Even the last chapter of the Bible says, "And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who wishes take the water of life without cost". (Revelation 22:17b)

2) When Jesus was crucified, both water and blood flowed from His pierced side, evidence of a literally broken heart. (John 19:34)

3) Water can also symbolize baptism, which, in brief, is a believer's public form of professing faith in Christ and being identified with Him. But a better allegory of baptism exists when Neo falls into the water later.

4) Water may also represent the Word of God ("...by the washing of water with the word..." - Ephesians 5:26). The word is an important force in helping us come to faith in Christ. "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing from the word of Christ." (Romans 10:17). Note the sequence here: "From childhood, you have known the holy scriptures, which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" (Paul speaking to Timothy in 2 Timothy 3:14).

M. Thomas now truly becomes Neo.

S. 'Neo' literally means 'New'. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old has gone, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

M. It is wryly interesting that the first words Neo hears upon taking the red pill are "Follow me."

S. As soon as anyone becomes a Christian through faith in Jesus, God immediately demands obedient discipleship. Among Jesus' initial commands to his disciples were "Follow me." (Matthew 4:19, 8:22, 9:9, and many more.)

M. Morpheus tells Neo, "*Time* is always against us."

S. A new Christian is instructed by God to "make the most of the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16). A Christian should be fully focused on God's work as a wicked earth draws closer to final judgment.

A second application: It is now time for Thomas to 'wake up' in the real world, which echoes, "...knowing the *time*, that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now salvation is nearer..." (Romans 13:11).

M. Looking at the hi-tech device that will extract him from the Matrix into the truth of the real world, Neo asks Trinity, “You did all this?” “Uh-huh [yes],” Trinity replies.
S. God (‘Trinity’) is the “author (constructor) of eternal salvation” (Hebrews 5:9).

M. Part of the Matrix extraction device includes an old-style rotary telephone.
S. This humorous touch can be paralleled to show that God’s methods do not need to change. Some cliché Christianity as ‘old time religion’, but the truth is that the sacrifice and blood of Jesus Christ do not lose truth or power over time. Faith in Christ will always be the only method of salvation and extraction from a fallen world.

M. Morpheus tells Neo that the red pill will “disrupt [his] input/output carrier signal” with the Matrix system, which allows them to pinpoint his location.
S. When a person trusts in Christ for salvation, he is severed [disrupted] from the fallen world system [Matrix] by “the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians 6:14). Metaphorically, God has also then found [pinpointed] His lost sheep (Luke 15).

2b. REFLECTION

M. Neo peers into a fractured mirror. He appears to be without a face. As he adjusts, he sees his face, and the fractures in the mirror heal. As Morpheus speaks to him, Neo touches the liquid mirror, which coats his entire body, finally pouring down his throat to fill him from within as well. During this process, Trinity says Neo is going into ‘replication’ and ‘arrest’.

S. The symbolically rich mirror sequence may be allegorized at least 4 ways!

1) Neo sees himself ‘whole’ for the first time, and then *enters* the real world through interacting with the mirror. Salvation is not only spiritually seeing; it is also a becoming, as God spiritually brings forth a new creation with a fresh spirit, heart, and mind. “Unless one is born again, he cannot see...” and he also “cannot *enter* the kingdom of God.” (John 3:3,5). (Note: Although Neo has yet to be ‘born’ into truth through his awakening in the womb-like Matrix pod and ‘delivery’ down the watery tube, remember that in Christianity various effects of salvation are immediate. So, we may consider Neo ‘born again’ the instant he took the red pill.)

Neo ‘goes into arrest’ during this process, implying death by heart attack. Salvation is a death of the old self, then a birth of the new. When a sinner trusts Christ for salvation, God considers him ‘crucified [arrest] with Christ, buried with Christ, and risen/reborn anew with Christ (Romans 6:4-8, Galatians 2:20, Ephesians 2:5-6, John 3:3-8, 16.). The infilling of the mirror represents the internal aspects of that transformation.

2) Here is another interesting way to view the mirror sequence:
“But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image...” (2 Corinthians 3:18). As a result of taking the red pill (blood of Christ), Neo’s face is ‘unveiled’ (a term for entering into a new covenant relationship of Christ’s grace) as he adjusts his position in the mirror. The fractures heal, and Neo is made whole.

Continuing to look in the mirror, he sees someone else in it...Morpheus. Morpheus (who can play the role of God here) is not an illusionary Matrix persona; he is a real being who lives in the true world outside the Matrix. As Neo ‘beholds that image’ of Morpheus, the mirror envelops him and transforms / translates him into that ‘same image’ – another real being who functions in the Truth, just like Morpheus. Trinity says it is going into “replication”, meaning to ‘reproduce something’. This wordplay echoes the idea of ‘being made into the same image’ as Morpheus – ‘reproduced’ into a like being existing in the truth.

As a nice touch, Morpheus no longer wears mirrored glasses when he tells Neo, “welcome to the real world”, indicating that they are now united in the truth. Neo will also continue to become ‘like’ Morpheus as he focuses on Morpheus training him into further truth and maturity.

- 3) Others may wish to parallel the popular verse “For now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face...” (I Corinthians 13:12) to this event, or especially to when Neo sees Morpheus without mirrored sunglasses for the first time in the Nebuchadnezzar. (But to be accurate, this verse applies to when a Christian finishes his stay on earth and eternally sees God face to face.)
- 4) Some may wish to view the mirror as the Word of God, based on James 1:23-25.

2c. REBIRTH

M. Neo wakes up alive in the real world.

S. A Christian is no longer ‘asleep’ or ‘dead’ spiritually.

“we are not of night nor of darkness, so let us not sleep as others do...” (1 Thessalonians 5:4-5)

“you were formerly dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world...”

(Ephesians 2:1)

M. Neo finds that he is connected to the Matrix by cables in his mouth and body, and worst of all, directly into his brain. He had been completely dependent on the Matrix, both physically and mentally. In addition, the Matrix drains life from Neo as well (as explained later in the sequence detailing how machines use humans for bioelectricity). The Matrix had controlled Neo, but now he is free and separated.

S. A new Christian discovers that he had formerly been fully dependent on the fallen world system to live, both body and mind. The ‘life’ the fallen world deceitfully offers is actually spiritual death (like the cables draining power from Neo). Through Christ, a man is set free from his life-draining dependency on the fallen world.

“...in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.” (Galatians. 6:14)

“you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world...” (Colossians 2:20)

“the life that I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God...” (Galatians 2:20)

M. Neo discovers that this is the real world, and that the Matrix was a temporary illusion generated by the enemy.

S. The Christian, having entered into eternal truth through Christ, now sees the fallen world system as God sees it.

“...the form of this world is passing away...” (I Corinthians 7:31)

“...for our citizenship is in heaven...” (Philippians. 3:20)

Christians are now “aliens” to this fallen world (1 Peter 2:1)

M. Neo looks around him. To his horror, nearly all of humanity is either comatose - or dead - in the terrifying Matrix prison pod towers.

S. A Christian learns that very few others have come to Truth in Christ. The vast majority of mankind is deceived, asleep, enslaved, and headed for eternal damnation.

“...the way is narrow that leads to life, and there are few who find it...” (Matthew 7:14)

M. Neo finds that he is a new, different creature. He is free – but he is also hairless, weak, and pale. He has holes – scars from where the Matrix cables had gripped him.

S. A Christian is also a new (“Neo” = “New”) creature. “If anyone be in Christ, he is a new creature; the old is gone, the new is come” (2 Corinthians 5:17). However, unlike Neo in the film, the new creation of God is a lovely thing, purified from sin and given a new nature that loves God and wants to do right. Yet the new Christian is also a spiritual baby (hairless, atrophied muscle); he is weak and needs God’s help to mature in a vicious world. And like Neo’s scars, a Christian’s earthly mind has been ‘scarred’ by the patterns and habits of the fallen world in which he lived, and

his old fallen body also remains. A Christian finds he is new spiritually, but still lives in a fallen physical body (that will one day be exchanged for a perfect body to match the new spirit within.) God puts his own Spirit in the new Christian, to help that Christian overcome the deadly appetites of the fallen body and the twisted patterns of the former mind. “If Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.” (Romans 8:10). Some Christians yield to God and mature quickly. Others grow weary or distracted (like Mouse with the lady in red) and sin. The maturing process takes time as the Christian learns to walk in the Truth of who he now is in God – and this process is the focus of the remainder of the film! As the quote goes, “Christianity is learning to BE who you already are in Christ.”

M. In a bizarre simulation of birth, Neo is in a ‘womb’, complete with ‘umbilical cords’ that feed him. Neo’s hairless body, covered in fluids and weak like a baby, is then ‘delivered’ down a watery ‘birth canal’.

S. Neo is literally born again. Neo was old in the Matrix, but like a baby in the real world. The Bible says that humanity is born physically, but is spiritually dead. When a person trusts Christ for salvation, God gives him a living spirit – he is spiritually born. This is what it means to be ‘born again’. The first birth is physical, the second birth is spiritual (John 3:3-8). A physically mature person (like Thomas in the Matrix world) still needs to be born spiritually! And when this is done, he is a spiritual infant - clean, but weak in faith and knowledge. He now needs to mature spiritually, not just physically.

2d. REJECTION

M. Neo is flushed from the ‘womb pod’, and out a long tube. He falls into water and nearly drowns because he has no muscles to swim. Morpheus and crew raise the drowning Neo from the water.

S. This might represent baptism, where a believer is immersed in water, then lifted up from it. But baptism is a voluntary act, whereas Neo certainly did not choose to flush himself! However, Neo *did* choose to accept *everything* that might happen in his future by taking the red pill. So in that sense, we could say he chose his ‘baptism’ as well.

For the curious, here is a short paragraph to explain baptism: Baptism is a voluntary event for a new Christian, to publicly identify himself with Christ. It also vividly depicts that the weak ‘old man’ – the sinner – dies as he is figuratively crucified with Christ and buried under the water (just as weak Neo figuratively drowns). The water reminds us of the flood judgment of the Old Testament, which Noah survived in an ark. Similarly, the Christian is placed spiritually “in Christ” (1 Corinthians 1:30), the pure Ark that forever shelters the believer from God’s wrath. The person is raised from the water, signifying the washing away of the wicked old self and the resurrection/birth of the new person in Christ.

M. Now let’s look at Neo’s expulsion from the pod in a darker sense. Like a steel vulture, a ‘doctor-bot’ descends and brutally examines Neo. Finding him defective, the doc-bot disconnects him from the Matrix pod cables and hatefully flushes Neo like sewage. Morpheus and crew catch the drowning Neo, lifting him into light and care.

S. When a person is saved by faith in Christ, the fallen world system – and the people in it – now consider that Christian ‘defective’. A lost person is oriented toward self and sin. But God puts a new nature into a Christian, a nature oriented toward God and righteousness (Romans 6 and 7). “They [the lost people] think it is strange that you do not plunge with them into the same flood of dissipation (selfish pursuits and sin) and they heap abuse on you (1 Peter 4:4). “What?” said the lemmings, “You aren’t going to run over this cliff with us and drown?”

Like the 'doc-bot' severing connections with Neo and flushing him, the world adamantly hates a true Christian. Jesus said, "you will be hated by all on account of my name." (Matthew 10:22) This is a fascinating truth – when it comes to the undiluted Jesus as presented in scripture (versus a 'tolerable' Jesus constructed by man to not offend himself), people either will love Him or despise Him. Jesus said, "The world has hated them [believers in Christ], because they are not of the world..."(John 17:14), and "if you were of the world [like the billions of oblivious human 'batteries' in the Matrix] then they would love you; but because I [Jesus] chose you *out* of the world, therefore the world hates you..." (John 15:19). Many who trust in Christ and live obediently are surprised when their former 'friends' suddenly turn hostile toward them. But God warns, "whoever makes himself a friend of the world [like the Matrix] makes himself an enemy of God." (James 4:4). Like Morpheus basically told Neo at the Metacortex building, "There are only two ways to go...with us, or with them." There is no neutral ground.

Because the world hates a true Christian, Christians should strive to love one another as God loved them, instead of engaging in petty bickering and selfish hypocrisy. Christians should concentrate on:

- lifting each other into the truth and light of God (like Morpheus hoisting Neo up into light)
- building each other up in maturity (like Morpheus reconstructing Neo's muscles)
- feeding each other spiritually, emotionally, physically (like Trinity bringing dinner to Neo)
- equipping one another for spiritual warfare and Godly living (like Tank cybertraining Neo)
- encouraging one another in the truth (like Morpheus in the training simulator: "You're faster than this! Don't think you are; know you are." etc.)
- praying for each other (like Tank 'praying' over Morpheus while the Agents had him.)
- and again, loving one another, which is greatest of all (like Morpheus, Neo, and Trinity being willing to sacrifice their lives for one another)

2e. RESCUE

M. When Morpheus lifts Neo out of the water, there is some gold material on his chest, like a sort of heart.

S. Perhaps this could represent God giving a sinner a 'new heart' (a 'heart of gold', to use the cliché) when he trusts in Christ.

M. Neo has gone through quite an ordeal! With a weak voice, he asks Morpheus, "Am I dead?" "Far from it," reassures Morpheus confidently.

S. Becoming a Christian is often (but not always) accompanied by immediate external trials. Although the purification of sin and presence of God is immediate for the Christian, the sudden breaks with old habits and hostility from a fallen world is often traumatic. A new Christian can recoil from such impact; the transition from "death to life" (John 5:24) is intense. But the Christian must realize that he has indeed taken the right path and is alive, recognizing the sobering truth that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12). Morpheus plays an important role by encouraging Neo in the truth.

M. Neo's muscles have atrophied and need to be rebuilt.

S. Again, the similarities to a newborn baby, as in 'born again'. It is lethal for a Christian to remain a spiritual infant. With the help of God, he must mature, for he is in a war.

M. Neo asks, "Why do my eyes hurt?" Morpheus replies, "Because you've never used them." In a memorable touch, we see Morpheus' eyes for the first time without mirrored sunglasses.

S. A sinner is spiritually blind; he only perceives according to the distorted wisdom of man in a fallen world. A person can only truly see when faith in Christ makes him a new creature. "Unless a man be born again, he cannot see...(John 3:3)." God gives the Christian revelation and insight, as Christ "becomes wisdom" to him (I Corinthians 1:30). As Morpheus' eyes are now visible to Neo, a Spirit-sensitive Christian can perceive things correctly. "He who is spiritual appraises all things..." (1 Corinthians 2:4).

M. Morpheus breaks Neo's chain of questions by saying, "Rest, Neo. The answers are coming."

S. Some of the most difficult things a Christian must learn are patience and rest. Maturity in God does not happen overnight. A Christian must cease (rest) from his own fleshly efforts and allow God's mighty power to work through him and teach him. (Colossians 1:29, Hebrews 4:10)

2f. SECTION SUMMARY

Here is a summary of the events of Neo's 'conversion' into the real world in this section, with the Christian parallels in parentheses:

Thomas is saved by intaking/receiving the red pill in faith (red pill = blood of Christ). He then:

- finds he is a new and different person (becomes a 'Neo'/new creature in Christ)
- is 'disrupted' from Matrix input/output (severed from the system of the fallen world)
- is 'located/pinpointed' by Morpheus (God the Good Shepherd 'finds the lost sheep')
- sees himself become whole as mirror fractures heal (becomes whole, is healed)
- sees his face in the mirror (sees his true self through faith in the word of God)
- is replicated into a like image of Morpheus (transformed by constant faith into God's purity and character)
- enters the mirror into the real world (enters into the truth; into the kingdom of God)
- has taken action upon truth, not just looked at it (is now a 'doer' of the word of God, not just a hearer)
- goes into 'arrest' (dies; is considered crucified with Christ)
- wakes up from the 'dead' (is raised with Christ, is no longer spiritually asleep or dead)
- is freed from life-draining cables/dependency on the Matrix (is freed from the fallen world)
- sees the Matrix was not the truth (sees the fallen world as God sees it)
- enters a new world, and is alien to the Matrix (becomes citizen of kingdom of God, is not of the world)
- learns that most of humanity is lost in unbelief, asleep, enslaved, headed for destruction (same spiritually)
- is found defective by the (lost) world system and rejected as an enemy of it (same spiritually)
- sees his enemy, that he is at war (a Christian learns he has spiritual enemies who war against God)
- is 'born' from a 'womb' (a person is spiritually born by trusting Christ for salvation; i.e. 'born again')
- is like a baby; clean-skinned but weak (a Christian is new and pure, but needs to grow spiritually)
- is figuratively drowned and raised (a parallel to baptism, God considers him crucified and raised)
- has some gold material on his chest (gains a new heart)
- becomes part of a body / crew of believers who help one another (like the church, other Christians)

- truly experiences life: “Am I dead?” “Far from it!” (has eternal life, real life)
- can see for the first time (unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God / spiritual things)
- enters rest: “Rest, Neo. The answers are coming” (a Christian enters the spiritual rest and wisdom of God)

...and there's much more to come! Neo will now begin his training, just as a Christian needs to mature.

3. TRAINING: Conscription, Concepts, and Conditioning

3a. CREW (the 'church')

M. Morpheus tells Neo that he is in a hovercraft called the 'Nebuchadnezzar'.

S. Nebuchadnezzar was king of the ancient Babylonian empire. He was a powerful man who had vivid dreams (note that 'Morpheus' is the mythical Greek god of dreams) that the prophet Daniel interpreted. There is strong scriptural evidence (Daniel chapter 4) that Nebuchadnezzar became a believer in God, while he was king of the empire that dominated the ancient world (just like this Nebuchadnezzar hovercraft will house those who become believers and will dominate the Matrix).

M. A plaque in the Nebuchadnezzar reads “Mark III, 11”

S. In the Bible, Mark 3:11 says, “Whenever the evil spirits saw Him [Jesus], they fell down before him and cried out, ‘You are the Son of God!’ “ Because Neo can also be allegorized in some aspects as a Christ figure, perhaps the choice of this verse foreshadows the victory that Neo as “the One” will have over the evil Agents.

M. Morpheus introduces Neo to the Nebuchadnezzar's crew. Each member has differing specialties and talents. Dozer is a pilot; Tank is the operator and trainer. Apoc, Switch, and Mouse are watchmen (sentinel duty at the hotel) and soldiers. Trinity is second in command. Morpheus is the ship's captain.

S. This represents the church. A Christian must realize that he cannot live an isolated life; he is part of a body. Like a human body, each part of the church plays a different but vital role, interacting together to make a healthy, functioning body. As Morpheus is captain or 'head' of the crew, Christ is “head over all things to the church, which is His body...(Ephesians 1:23).” When the members of the body function selflessly and with love, the body will be healthy. When members disobey God and act selfishly, the entire body suffers.

It is sad that many Christians have forgotten that the church is the people, not the building. The Nebuchadnezzar hovercraft is not a pretty ship; it is rugged and crude. Every part of it is geared for the function of war. Christians would do well to simply use the church building as a place to focus on God, each other, and the spiritual war they face, instead of squabbling over petty things (such as which color of flowers to put in the building) and pumping resources into raising structures rather than people.

3b. CONSTRUCT

M. Morpheus introduces the construct program where he can load “anything [they] need” to train or take into the Matrix, such as when Neo later says he needs “Guns. Lots of guns.” - and an infinite supply is brought forth! The construct area is pure white.

S. In Christ, God is an infinite source everything the Christian needs to function victoriously. “My God shall supply all your needs...” (Philippians 4:19). “God...who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ...” (Ephesians 1:3). “My grace is sufficient for you...” (2 Corinthians 12:9). Just as the loading area is pure white, everything the Christian receives from God is pure and perfect. “Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father...” (James 1:17).

M. Inside the construct program, Neo notices that the plugs in his body are gone, and that his hair is changed. He looks ‘good’. This is called ‘residual self image’.

S. The term ‘residual’ means ‘something left over; something remaining from what used to be; residue’, indicating that this is the way Neo formerly thought about himself, even though this image is not the truth. Every other person trapped in the Matrix still thinks this way! The carnal self does not like to look at the truth, especially when that truth includes sin and its scarring effects. A prideful lost man creates a false self-image to help him forget his faults.

M. Morpheus asks, “How do you define real? If you’re talking about what you can feel...smell...taste and see, then ‘real’ is simply electrical signals interpreted by your brain.”

S. The natural man defines his reality by the senses, by what is tangible, by what is material. Such surroundings are only temporary, even as the physical body itself is temporary and will die. God will even destroy the current earth, creating a new heaven and earth (2 Peter 3:13.) A natural man is heading for disaster by founding his life on the physical, the fallen, and the temporary – thus building his house on sand (Matthew 7:26-27).

In contrast, a Christian realizes that God the Creator is the source of all reality. Physical realities will change when God creates all things anew. Perhaps the laws of physics themselves will change, the nature of the body, the senses, and so forth. Therefore, the key is to focus on a relationship with God, Who is unchanging (Hebrews 13:8), and to store up treasure toward eternity, rather than material gain on a temporary earth (Matthew 6:19-21). A Christian must have his foundation only on Christ, his Rock, as all other ground is temporary, sinking sand (Matthew 7:24-27).

A Christian must also realize the reality of God, Satan, angels, demons, and the spiritual realm as well. All of these beings play an active role in what a lost man wrongly perceives as only the tangible world. In general, western culture either believes only in the natural, or separates the natural from the spiritual, both of which are massive deceptions.

“How do you define real?” asks Morpheus. The answer is, “By the source of reality - God”. As the Creator and Controller of all that is, He holds reality in His hand and crafts it as He wishes. The Christian must apply this truth to daily life, understanding that God can effortlessly alter any physical thing, circumstance, or ‘rule’ to accomplish His will.

3c. A HISTORY LESSON

M. Neo learns that he has entered into a war – humans vs. machines.

S. A new Christian realizes he has stepped into a war raging between God, Satan, and their respective angels. “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood (i.e., the people in the world) but against...spiritual forces of wickedness in heavenly places” (Ephesians 6:12). Again, there is no neutral ground. Just as a lost man is by default a slave of sin and Satan, a saved man is both a son and a soldier of God in the great war.

Neo sees that the war is waged in two dimensions – inside the Matrix (Agents) and outside the Matrix (the ghastly machines serving as ‘doctor-bots’, ‘harvesters’, ‘squiddies’/‘sentinels’). As the verse said, there is a great war in the heavenly places. For example, in the Old Testament, an angel dispatched to answer Daniel’s prayer fought a demon for three weeks before getting through! (Daniel chapter 10). And within the world system, in the ‘natural’ realm, the war rages as people are tempted and manipulated by Satan and his forces, while God and His angels strengthen the Christian, convict the sinner, and shape world events.

(For the curious, a paragraph of commentary on the war between God and Satan: Satan was once the angel Lucifer, created by God, given incredible power, and given free will. Lucifer became prideful and wanted to be “like the Most High” God (Isaiah 14:12-16) and started a rebellion. Therefore God cast Lucifer and his cohorts out of heaven. God is all-powerful, and Satan as a created being is no power contest for His Creator. But God, in His sovereign will, is allowing Satan to function in a limited way for a time, just as God also gives sinful man a free choice and does not kill him the instant he sins. For example of Satan’s limited power: Satan will tempt, but God in turn will not allow a Christian “to be tempted above what he is able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also...” (1 Corinthians 10:12). If Satan were not limited by God, he would probably destroy mankind quickly (see Job 1 and 2.) Satan also has legal right to unbelieving sinners. He and his demons can harm or possess them physically if God allows. As for the Christian, Satan was utterly defeated at the cross (Colossians 2:14,15). Those who become God’s children by receiving Christ in faith (John 1:12) are freed from Satan’s power; but Satan can still attempt to deceive them. As with a sinful man, Satan’s days of limited ability are numbered – read Revelation chapter 20 sometime!)

M. Neo learns that man, marveling in his own magnificence, created A.I. (artificial intelligence) which became his enemy. The A.I. spawned a machine race that turned against man and destroyed civilization.

S. There are several fascinating angles of allegory here:

1. *Man’s arrogant fallen wisdom destroys him.* Computers only operate how they are programmed to operate (like Y2K! – smile). The A.I. was simply human logic in coded form – man’s wisdom personified. And that wisdom destroyed civilization. “There is a way that seems right to a man, but the end is the way of death...” (Proverbs 14:12). “The wisdom of this world is foolishness before God...” (1 Corinthians 3:19). “Professing to be wise, they became fools...” (Romans 1:22).

2. *If a man looks at himself honestly, he will see that he is a fallen creature, worthy of the justice of God’s wrath against his sin.* Computers, devoid of pride but given logic, examined the data regarding their programmers and found mankind damnable. The collective knowledge of man concluded that he deserved death! We often won’t condemn ourselves for sin, because pride blinds us. But given an unbiased observer and honest set of data, the fair judgment is chillingly obvious.

M. In his effort to destroy his rebellious product, man “scorched the sky”, which destroyed life from the planet surface – including mankind.

S. Man’s effort to save himself not only failed, but also probably killed billions of humans in the process as civilization was annihilated by war and nuclear winter! Such failure underscores the need for a Savior who is unlike us, the need for an outside Source of rescue. Can a stain make itself clean? No, it must be washed away by an external cleanser (the pure blood of Christ).

As an illustration, if you mix poison (representing sin) into clear water (a life of good works), does adding more water remove the poison? No, the mixture is still contaminated. The best solution is to dispose of it and get a fresh glass of water! Likewise, the contaminated lost person is 'crucified and buried with Christ (emptied of the old self)' when he trusts in Jesus. He is then raised a new creature in the eyes of God, filled with a new nature and the Spirit of God (a fresh glass of living water). Sin can only be disposed of by death – either the death of the sinner (perhaps like the scorching of the sky and killing of many people in order to kill the machines too) and subsequent 'second death' in eternal fire, or by the substitutionary death of the Savior, made freely available to every seeking sinner through faith in Christ. Somebody has to die. The unbelieving sinner, or Christ in the believer's place.

M. Morpheus says, "We have been dependent on machines to survive. Fate, it seems, is not without a sense of irony." Morpheus means that the roles are now reversed: machines are now enslaving and using humans.

S. Old saying: "First, you feast on sin. Then sin feasts on you."

M. Morpheus says that the machines "liquefy the dead so they could be fed intravenously to the living."

S. This hints at several principles: 1. Sin is hereditary (Romans 5). 2. Humanity continually passes the cumulative dead weight of fallen culture from one generation to the next. Children are born into a world already polluted from all prior degraded cultures (for example: pornography, corrupt political systems, etc.) 3. People feed off the spiritual death given by the fallen world and Satan, thus nourishing the illusions of the spiritual sleep that enshrouds lost humanity.

M. As the history lesson finishes, Neo sees the horrifying spectacle of a little baby punctured with hideous cables and inserted into the Matrix.

S. Every human being is "born into bondage" of sin and the fallen world system. Every human is enslaved from birth to a sin nature, like his parents. As even king David said, "I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin my mother conceived me." (Psalm 51:5). "...the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth..." (Genesis 8:21).

M. Morpheus summarizes the Matrix as "control".

S. A lost man is indeed controlled by at least four things – his own sin, death, the fallen world system, and the harassment of Satan. God breaks all four of these chains when a sinner trusts in Christ. A Christian has been set free from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), severed from the fallen world system (Galatians 6:14) and torn away from Satan's grip and placed irrevocably in the hand of God (Colossians 1:13, John 10:28).

M. Neo is devastated at the grim reality of the war. Morpheus says, "I didn't say it would be easy, Neo. I just said it would be the truth." Neo demands, "Let me out!"

S. A Christian's first grasp of the war is numbing. He feels the weight of dying, lost humanity. He sees his own inability to save them, and learns the sad truth that few will choose to be saved anyway. He sees the trials that await him as he finishes his earthly course as a soldier. "All who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted!" (2 Timothy 3:12). To focus on these things alone can bring depression, a desire to run from the war. "Let me out!" But a Christian must focus on the fact that some indeed will be saved as a result of God using his life, and that "the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed..." (Romans 3:18). Indeed, when the war is over, 'Zion' will be a quite a 'party' - see Revelation chapter 21!

M. Neo wakes later and asks, “I can’t go back, can I?” Morpheus wisely replies, “No. But if you could – would you really want to?” This scene mirrors the moment in Trinity’s car when Neo looked down the road and realized the empty death of that way.

S. Salvation is a one-way process. A butterfly cannot return to the cocoon and exit as the former caterpillar. A Christian can be dismayed at the difficulty of walking the “narrow way”, but when he thinks about the alternative of death – especially eternal death - the price is worth it. In the old testament, when things were difficult for the Israelites, some impulsively wanted to return to Egypt, not remembering that in Egypt they were miserable, beaten slaves. The key is not to look to the past – for it was death. Nor to look down at the road – for it is difficult. But to look to the destination with Christ – for it is delight. “Christ...who for the joy set before him endured the cross...” (Hebrews 12:2).

M. Morpheus says, “We never free a mind once it’s reached a certain age.”

S. (See comments on when Morpheus later walks Neo through the false Matrix simulation.)

M. Morpheus says, “As long as the Matrix exists the human race will never be free.” Neo finds that he will soon be reinserted back into the Matrix to: 1) help save humanity and 2) fight the enemy.

S. The Christian must realize and accept his mission! For Neo to flee to Zion would be relief for himself, but selfish toward the humans still trapped in the Matrix. The Apostle Paul said, “I have the desire to depart and be with Christ [in heaven], for that is very much better, but for me to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for *your* sake...it will mean fruitful labor...” (Philippians 1:21-24). Jesus the Son asked God the Father that Christians be left in the world to continue His work of bringing men to God, knowing that it also means warfare against the enemy. “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one...as You sent Me into the world (to seek and save the lost – Luke 19:10), I also have sent them...” (John 17:15-21). To enter this war means to fight the spiritual enemy. “We do not wrestle against flesh and blood...but against spiritual forces of wickedness...” (Ephesians 6:12).

3d. COMBAT TRAINING (fighting by faith)

M. Neo meets Tank, and learns that Tank was born in Zion, not the Matrix world.

S. Interesting – perhaps Tank could represent an angel? The duties of an angel include guarding and ministering to the saints, just as Tank will oversee Matrix missions from the hovercraft control center and administer training to Neo.

M. Tank describes Zion, the last city of mankind. “If the war was over tomorrow, Zion is where the party would be.”

S. The old testament has well over 100 references to Zion that have a broad and often prophetic range of meaning. In the film, ‘Zion’ may collectively represent the new heaven, new earth, and new city of Jerusalem to be inherited by the saints. And it will indeed be a beautiful setting, full of victorious celebration – see Revelation chapter 21 for details.

M. Tank immediately gives Neo “combat training.”

S. A new Christian should immediately begin training for his mission, including training for spiritual warfare (the ‘armor of God’ in Ephesians 6-20, the effects of prayer and fasting in Matthew 17:21, many more.)

M. Tank cybertrains Neo with a series of martial arts disks.

S. Perhaps the disks can be analogous to the scriptures, which are key to equipping the believer.

M. Neo says, “I *know* Kung Fu.” Morpheus demands, “*Show* me!”

S. Knowledge is meaningless unless it is applied to daily life! It isn’t enough to *know* – you must *show* by what you do. “Faith without works is dead.” (James 2:26). *Knowing* how to do what is good is not the same as actually *doing* it! “If any man is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror, and once he has...gone away, he has forgotten what kind of person he was. ...But a [man who is not] a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer...shall be blessed in what he does.” (James 1:23-25).

M. Morpheus spars with Neo in a simulated Matrix environment so that he may teach Neo to operate by the truth instead of what he sees according to the Matrix. Morpheus warns Neo, “Your weakness is not your technique,” and asks him, “Do you believe that my being stronger or faster has anything to do with my muscles in this place?” The truth is that the Matrix is simply a simulation. Neo’s ability in that simulation is limited merely by his *belief*, not by his simulated abilities.

S. A Christian must learn to “walk by faith, not by sight.” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Just as this is Neo’s challenge throughout the film, this is also a central scriptural theme for the life of a Christian. The physical senses lie, giving false limits because physical senses cannot account for spiritual beings and influences. A Christian’s abundance or lack of natural abilities and assets - education, wealth, intelligence, looks, strength, wit, charm, influence, etc.- do not limit him. God can infinitely exceed these things, pouring His strength out where a Christian is weak (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

When the Apostles Peter and John, the simple fishermen, spoke boldly in public and showed great power, the people “marveled” because they realized that these were “unschooled and ordinary men” who had simply been with Jesus. (Acts 4:13). The Apostle Paul later said, “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” (Philippians 4:13). God controls reality, therefore He can empower Christians to overcome any situation. A Christian’s competence and confidence both come from God (2 Corinthians 3:4-5).

The difficulty for the Christian is to learn to trust in God, and not lean unto his own understanding. Interestingly, the natural abilities where a Christian is strongest are his greatest difficulty, because he tends to rely on them instead of God, and is therefore bounded by them until he walks by faith. After Tank trained him, Neo was a master of all martial arts, yet he lost to Morpheus because he trusted his perceived abilities according to the Matrix world. But when Neo walked by faith in the truth, he could effortlessly defeat even an Agent – with one hand behind his back!

M. Morpheus tells Neo, “You’re faster than this. Don’t *think* you are; *know* you are! Stop trying to hit me and hit me!”

S. The Christian must realize that God is not asking him to *pretend* (‘think’) he is changed and empowered by God, but to *know* it, and act accordingly. “*Knowing* that our old self was crucified with Christ...*account* yourselves as dead to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus...” (Romans 6:6). To ‘account’ without ‘knowing’ is ‘pretending’. The Christian needs a deep revelation from God of the ‘knowing’, so that he may account it fully and live naturally out of that ‘knowing’ rather than a teeth-gritted ‘pretending’. Salvation – including in this sense the constantly maturing walk of the Christian to be like his Master – results from the work of the Spirit and constant faith in the truth. (2 Thessalonians 2:13).

M. Morpheus tells Neo, “You have to let it all go - fear, doubt, and disbelief.” Morpheus wants to free Neo’s mind from the rules of the false Matrix that should not bind him.

S. Fear, doubt, and disbelief are the chains that cause a Christian to walk only by natural abilities, or give up altogether. A Christian must break these chains by the power of constant faith in God to have freedom in God’s unlimited power over any obstacle.

M. When Neo is about to jump from tower to tower, Cypher scoffs, “Everybody falls the first time.” Trinity says with whispered encouragement, “Come on!” Neo falls, but continues his training with Morpheus, going on to total victory at the end of the story. In contrast, Cypher will give up, betray others, and be killed.

S. A Christian will make mistakes as he matures. He must learn to keep trying, because God's grace has covered his mistakes through Christ's blood.

Neo fell, but he got up and kept going. The difference between a righteous man and a sinful man is not in that they fall down, but that only the righteous man gets up. "For though a righteous man falls seven times, he rises again; but the wicked stumble in time of calamity" (Proverbs 24:16). In a fascinating example, the apostle Peter betrayed (denied) Jesus just before the crucifixion. Judas also betrayed Jesus. Both men fell. The difference was that righteous Peter returned to Jesus (see John 21). Judas, the wicked man, went and hanged himself, even falling down from that rope and bursting in two (Acts 1:18). Both men 'fell down', but only Peter 'got up'. In *The Matrix*, Neo keeps on training even after his failed jump. Wicked Cypher gives up, betrays others, and is killed.

The unrighteous person mocks, the righteous person encourages. Note Cypher's cynical and faithless attitude. He does not even give Neo a possibility to succeed on his first try, in contrast to Trinity quietly encouraging, "Come on!"

Also note that Neo looks down before jumping, instead of fixing on Morpheus and the truth. This is another illustration of Peter looking at the stormy waves instead of walking on water by looking at Christ. Now compare this to the end of the film, where Neo looks UP - and flies!

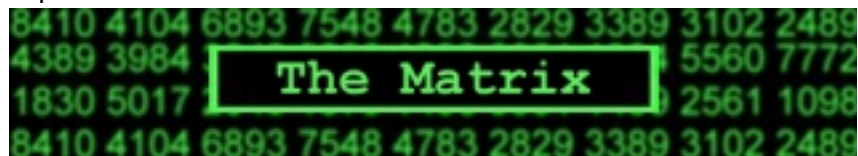
M. When Neo exits the jump program, he touches inside his lip and finds blood. Morpheus tells him that the mind makes it real.

S. Satan's great weapon is the lie. If the Christian believes lies and acts accordingly, he can be hurt.

M. Morpheus tells Neo, "The body cannot live without the mind."

S. "Just as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead." (James 1:26). Both statements apply. The body/spirit parallel is the truth about physical death. As to spiritual things, if faith does not act, it is simply dead (false). Faith will automatically produce victorious works, even as fire naturally produces heat. If faith dies away, the resulting works cease also. Without faith, a person cannot experience true life.

3e. WHAT IS THE MATRIX?



M. Morpheus takes Neo through a simulation of a city street, telling Neo about the people still in the Matrix.

S. God trains a Christian how to operate in the world but not be like the world.

M. Morpheus said earlier that the Matrix is "control".

S. Unbelievers are slaves to Satan's manipulation, the fallen world system, and sin.

M. Morpheus said earlier that "as long as the Matrix exists, the human race will never be free."

S. One day, the fallen world system and sin will be destroyed as God creates a new heaven, new earth, and perfected bodies for those who believed in Christ.

M. Morpheus says, "The Matrix is a system".

S. Scripture describes the fallen world as not merely the physical planet, but a sin-twisted system of godlessness that permeates everything. Government, business, education, entertainment, commerce, philosophy - all of it. It is not the world system as God would have designed it; it is instead the corrupt world system formed and run by fallen man and the devil.

M. Morpheus says, "That system [the Matrix] is our enemy."

S. God has condemned the corrupt world system. "Now judgment is upon this world..." (John 12:31).

M. As Neo looks around, Morpheus points out “businessmen, teachers, lawyers, carpenters.”

S. It is not just the blatant sinner who is lost - the criminal, the whore, etc. Every person is born a sinner, meaning those in all walks of life, including respectable positions. Social position means nothing in regard to spiritual position.

M. Morpheus says that the people Neo sees all around are the very “people we are trying to *save*.”

S. “Save” is a key word. The Christian must realize that all who have not trusted in Christ are lost, imprisoned in the ‘Matrix’ of the fallen world and personal sin, and are headed for destruction unless they are *saved* by an act of faith in Christ.

M. Morpheus says that until people are saved from the Matrix, they are “still part of that system, and that makes them our enemy.” Morpheus will later say, “If you are not one of us, you are one of them.” There is no neutral ground; there are those that are either freed from the Matrix or still captive within it.

S. “Whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” (James 4:4). A Christian must understand that God has condemned the corrupt world system, therefore those who embrace it oppose the God who condemns it. But, like Morpheus and Neo who are there to save those very ‘enemies’, a Christian must also love the lost - even his most spiteful enemies - and work among them to lead them to salvation from the world and sin through faith in Christ. And as Morpheus said, there are only two types of people: Those who are saved, and those who are not.

M. Morpheus warns, “Most of these people are not ready to be unplugged.” It will take time to convince them.

S. A Christian cannot force salvation upon someone. The lost person must be convicted in his own heart and come to a personal conclusion that he needs to be saved. But just as Morpheus confirmed to Neo that there was “something wrong” with the world and offered to show Neo what it was and how to escape it, a Christian must patiently plant seeds of truth at every opportunity, always leading toward the light and warning of the darkness.

M. Earlier, Morpheus said, “We never free a mind once it reaches a certain age...the mind has trouble letting go.”

S. Older people often have trouble finding the childlike faith necessary to simply receive the gift of salvation in Christ. Jesus said, “whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it at all.” (Mark 10:14). Evangelical statistics confirm that the older a person becomes, the less likely he or she will be to change spiritual beliefs.

M. Morpheus tells Neo that “Many of [the people in the Matrix] are so inert, so hopelessly dependent on the system that they will *fight* to protect it.”

S. This is the great tragedy, that many people do not desire the truth. Many prefer the pleasures of sin and the comforts of the world. “And this is the judgment - that the Light [Jesus] is come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their deeds were evil” (John 3:19; John 9:5). Others want to find security in temporary things and do not want to consider eternity. Still others do not want to face a truth that is uncomfortable for them, because truth demands that a person admit his sickness (sin) and thus his need for a cure (faith in Christ).

M. When Morpheus tells Tank to “Freeze it”, notice that every person in the scene is wearing black.

S. This visual metaphor emphasizes the dark, sinful state of the lost people in the world.

M. Later, when running from the sentinels (“squiddies”), Trinity tells Neo, “The sewers are all that is left of [the cities].”

S. This is an interesting parallel of the continual decline of the fallen world system into utter godless depravity - a decline of all civilization into spiritual sewage.

M. Agent Smith will later describe the Matrix to Morpheus by saying, “Have you ever...marveled at...its genius? Billions of people just living out their lives, oblivious.”

S. Most people in the world are completely unfocused on eternity. This is largely due to unbelief, which allows Satan and his demons (like the Agents who control the Matrix) to continually “blind the minds of the unbelieving” (2 Corinthians 4:4) about their dire eternal condition, keeping them wrapped up in busy little temporary lives.

M. As a side note about the Matrix, Agent Smith will later say that the “first Matrix was designed to be a perfect human world,” but that “no one would accept the program.” Thus the second Matrix was full of misery and suffering.

S. This echoes the story in Genesis, where God created a perfect world for Adam and Eve, but they rebelled against God, which produced misery and suffering. (The analogy is imperfect in the film in that the evil Agents created *both* versions of the Matrix, whereas in scripture God created the world to be perfect, but man chose the evil that caused creation to become corrupted into the imperfect current world.)

3f. THE ENEMY

M. There are enemies in the Matrix. In the real world, they are nightmarish machines, but they are represented digitally in the Matrix simulation as humanoid ‘Agents’. These Agents, like Neo, are not part of the Matrix either; they are from ‘outside’ it, yet can enter it and move powerfully through it. The Agents have two goals: (1) keep the citizens enslaved in the Matrix so that they can continue to drain their lives in the machine ‘power plant’, and (2) eliminate anyone who tries to disrupt the Matrix to save humanity.

S. Christians have supernatural enemies also – Satan and his demons. (Ephesians 6:12). These wicked forces work within the world system, wanting all humans to stay in deception and thus be forever separated from God. They “blind the minds of the unbelieving” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and fight against anyone trying to reveal the truth to the lost.

M. In the training simulation, Neo watches a seductive lady in a red dress walk by. Morpheus asks Neo, “Were you listening to *me*, Neo, or were you looking at the woman in the red dress?” Morpheus tells Neo to “look again” – and Neo sees that the lady in red has been replaced by an Agent pointing a gun right between Neo’s eyes. Morpheus freezes the scene to explain Agents to Neo.

S. One of the main weapons against a Christian is temptation, like the seductive woman in red. Morpheus can represent God in this sequence. “Christian, are you listening to God? Or are you focused on temptation?” When a Christian gives in to temptation, he is vulnerable and finds that beneath the deceptive attraction is sin and Satan who wish to destroy his life - a bullet between the eyes, so to speak. Speaking directly of lust, Proverbs 7:25 warns, “Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways...her house is a highway to the grave...”. We will also see Cypher yield to the meaty temptations of the enemy, including riches, fame, or as Agent Smith says, “whatever *you want*”.

Neo learns that there are two ways of attacking him: Straightforwardly (such as Agent Smith’s physical assault in the subway or in the Metacortex office) and deceptively (with temptation, illusion, etc.).

M. Morpheus teaches Neo that “if you are not one of us, you are one of them. ...Anyone we haven’t unplugged is potentially an Agent”, because an Agent can “move in and out” of anyone still hooked up to the Matrix. Thus, Agents are “everyone” and “no one.”

S. Those who have not believed in Christ are spiritually vulnerable to Satan and his demons. In addition to blinding and deceiving a lost person, demons can also manipulate them - even possess them directly in the physical world. Thus demons can be everyone [inhabit any lost person] and no one [they are not of this world nor the people in it].

M. Morpheus tells Neo that “every single man or woman...who has fought an Agent has died. ...Men have emptied entire clips at them and hit nothing but *air*.”

S. This emphasizes the spiritual nature of the battle. You can’t shoot bullets at a spirit. It is also interesting that Satan is called the “prince of the power of the *air*” in Ephesians 2:2. To fight spiritual enemies and their effects with natural abilities is hopeless, for demons are *super*-natural in power. A Christian must use the spiritual weapons given by God (the Spirit of God, prayer, the Word of God, faith, truth, love, righteousness in Christ, etc.)

M. Morpheus tells Neo that the Agents have strength and speed that “are still based in a world that is built on rules. Because of that, they will never be as strong or as fast as you can be.”

S. Satan and demons are limited in power; God has ordained their boundaries. The Christian is indwelt by the Spirit of Almighty God, who has no boundaries. The Christian must realize that “greater is He [God] who is in you than he [Satan] who is in the world” (1 John 4:4b).

M. Neo asks, “Are you trying to tell me that I can dodge bullets?” Morpheus smiles and says, “No, Neo. I’m trying to tell you that when you’re ready - you won’t have to!”

S. Neo speaks about two things: Dodging a *physical* attack (bullets) and about warring defensively (dodging vs. attacking). A Christian must learn that the true nature of the battle is not physical, but spiritual. A Christian must also learn that victory does not consist of dodging or evasion, but of overcoming!

3g. NEW IDENTITY

M. For the first time as a free man, Neo enters the Matrix simulation. But now Neo sees himself as separate from the Matrix world. “I used to eat there! [That place had] good noodles,” he says. Neo is *in* the Matrix, but not *of* it. Though a simulation of himself walks the Matrix, in reality Neo’s true body and self is ‘seated above’ in the hovercraft.

S. Christians must see themselves as still working within the world, but not of the world. “They are from the world...We are from God...” (1 John 4:5,6). Jesus said that his followers “are not of the world, even as I am not of the world” (John 17:14). Though a Christian still has his temporary physical body in the world that he uses to work in, he is positionally “seated in the heavenlies in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6).

M. Neo says, “I have these memories from my [old life in the Matrix]. What does that mean?” “That the Matrix cannot tell you who you are,” answers Trinity firmly.

S. A person can only find his true identity in Christ. Life before trusting Christ is a tainted act, a self-generated personality hoping to cope with life in a fallen world. Christ sets a person free to be who he or she was truly meant to be. But, the Christian’s mind is still stained with old habits and memories from the past. A Christian must learn that those former times do not determine his identity, that those times were overcome and put behind him through Christ making him a new creation. In Christ’s blood, the chains of the fallen world have been burned away, although a Christian ponders the ashes now and then.

3h. THE ORACLE (The Word of God)

A necessary caveat about the Oracle character:

The writers of the film used many religious influences. The Oracle is obviously a pagan, non-Christian figure. Some factors: 1) She has the title of 'Oracle'. Although this term is used in the Bible as well, the far more abundant scriptural term is 'prophet', whereas 'oracle' reminds us of the pagan Oracle of Delphi and the oracles of mythology. 2) She is female, as were the Delphic and mythological oracles, 3) She has attendant 'priestesses' 4) The clothing of the priestesses 5) The gathering of 'potentials', with many strong allusions to eastern religions 6) The Oracle studies the body and reads palms - note that the penalty for pagan fortune-telling and witchcraft was death in the old testament of the Bible. 7) She smokes - possibly an allusion to the intoxicating fumes used by the Delphic oracle 8) A purported 1996 script of *The Matrix* widely available on the internet even contained a temple scene, complete with a zodiac staircase.

Despite the Oracle character definitely *not* being based on Christianity but on the pagan oracles of history and myth, some of the aspects of the scenes with the Oracle can still be adapted to fit a Christian allegory.

Thus ignoring the pagan trappings, we will let the Oracle symbolize the "Word of God" - the scriptures. In the Bible, the term 'oracle' is used to mean a speaker from God, a prophet, a prophecy, or a truth from God.

About the "spoon boy": The idea of "there is no spoon" is not valid for the Christian. Instead, the Christian principle might be, "There *is* a spoon, for now...but God can do as He wishes with it". God does not teach a Christian to ignore a present reality - but to realize that God as Creator holds reality in His hand and can effortlessly control it any way He pleases! Thus, faith in God's infinite power and love is the key for the Christian as he faces any perceived obstacle.

M. "The Matrix cannot tell you who you are," says Trinity. "And the Oracle can?" questions Neo. "That's different," confirms Trinity.

S. For the Christian, the scriptures contain vital truths about the new creation he is in Christ.

M. Morpheus brings Neo to see the Oracle.

S. God's Spirit will direct the Christian to the truth of the scriptures. "The Spirit...will guide you into all the truth...the Word of God is truth..." (John 16:13, 17:17).

M. Morpheus tells Neo that the Oracle is a "guide" that "can help you to find the *path*".

S. "The Spirit...will *guide* you into all the truth..." (John 16:13). "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my *path*." (Psalm 119:105).

(*Important note:* Morpheus' comment about "Don't think of it in terms of right and wrong" does *not* apply to the scriptures! A central purpose of the scriptures is to clearly communicate God's standards of right and wrong to mankind.)

M. Later after the helicopter escape, Morpheus will tell Neo, "There's a difference between knowing the path and walking the path."

S. This is an ambiguous quote that can be adapted to several different meanings. For this allegory, we can adapt it to say that there is a difference between just knowing the path (academic knowledge of the Word of God) and walking the path (obeying it). "For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer...he has forgotten what kind of person he was. But one who looks...and abides by it...shall be blessed in what he does." (James 1:23-25).

M. Morpheus says that the Oracle “has been with us from the beginning”.

S. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God...” (John 1:1). Note that Jesus is the Word personified (John 1:14) in contrast to the written Word of the scriptures. Through His Spirit, His written word, and His prophets, God has always maintained communication with mankind.

M. Speaking at the Oracle’s door, Morpheus tells Neo, “I can only *show* you the door. You have to *walk* through it.”

S. When a person is shown the Word of God, he must choose to either walk away and forget it, or listen and obey. Just to *listen* [“I can *show* you the door”] is of no benefit unless the hearer also *acts* [“you have to *walk* through it”]. To paraphrase Christ’s parable: Whoever hears God’s words and *does* them is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock; the storms will not move it. Whoever hears the word of God and *does not put it into practice* is like a foolish man who builds his house on sand, and the floods destroy that house (see Matthew 7:24-27).

M. Morpheus describes the Oracle: “She would say she knows enough.”

S. Just because a newspaper does not describe every single event that happened around the world does not mean that the information in the newspaper is not true. In the same way, God’s Word is true. But it does not describe everything that ever was or will be. Even the gospel of John ends with this verse: “And there are many other things which Jesus did, which if they were written in detail, I suppose that even the world itself would not contain the books which were written.” (John 21:25).

The truth that God gives in His Word is enough for humanity. It tells us exactly how to have eternal life - trusting only in Jesus Christ to save us from our sin. The antidote for poison only needs to describe the antidote - it does not need to tell you how to bake a cake as well! The Oracle will tell Neo just what he needs to know. In the same way God’s word is designed to tell humanity all we need for this life. A Christian will have an eternity to know the rest.

M. The oracle does not look fancy; she looks simple and plain.

S. Truth does not need to parade itself. The content is important, not the fanciness of the package. Even Jesus Himself did not come to earth as a handsome man. Isaiah 53:2 prophesied that Jesus would have no “beauty or majesty to attract us to Him, nothing in His appearance that we should desire Him.” God did not want people attracted to image and charisma, but to substance and truth. God’s Word is perfect Truth, packaged simply.

M. The Oracle prophesies to Neo, “Don’t worry about the vase.” Neo asks, “What vase?” just before breaking the vase next to him. The Oracle’s ability to predict the future is *supernatural* - something the machines will not be able to do through their natural means!

M. Two things are paralleled here: 1) The supernatural power of God and 2) the grace and mercy of God.

1) God’s Word contains many prophecies, many of which have already come to pass, and others that are for the end of the ages. Verifiable prophecy indicates supernatural power and gives great credibility to the other statements in the Word of God. As an example of fulfilled prophecy from scripture, Daniel chapters 2 and 8 correctly prophesied the sequence of 4 world empires: Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, and Rome. There are also many fulfilled old testament prophecies about Christ - that he was to be born in Bethlehem, be called out of Egypt (after his family fled from Herod’s butchery), come from Nazareth (as Jesus grew up there after returning to Israel), etc. God obviously has the ability to control the future, which comforts the believer and builds faith in the instructions he receives from God’s Word.

2) As to grace and mercy, the Oracle said, “*Don’t worry* about the [broken] vase.” God paid for all of a Christian’s sins at the cross. A Christian thus receives infinite mercy for his mistakes as he grows in the Lord. This is not to be taken as a license to sin, but to serve. God disciplines a rebellious child to correct his path, and He gives grace to mistakes of the child already trying to do right.

M. The Oracle says, "I'm going to let you in on a little *secret*."

S. The Word of God reveals the mysteries (secrets) of God to the Christian, as God enables the Christian to spiritually comprehend what is written. "Behold, I show you a mystery...." (1 Corinthians 15:10 and many other references.) Sensitivity to the Spirit of God is crucial to the Christian as He reads the scriptures. "For to us God revealed them through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches all things, even the depths of God." (1 Corinthians 2:10).

M. The Oracle shows Neo the Latin phrase "Temet Nosce", which means "know thyself". The Oracle says that when you know yourself, "you just know it, through and through."

S. The scriptures tell a Christian many things about who he truly is in Christ. By having faith in God's word, a Christian learns that he is not to *pretend* he is new in Christ, but to *know* it as a fact. Over time and through much faith, this "knowing" becomes automatic for the maturing Christian and is key to his strength in God, just as Neo's relaxed "knowing" resulted in total, calm power at the end of the film.

M. The Oracle examines Neo. Specifically, she looks at his mouth, eyes, and hands.

S. Although the Oracle's actions reek of the pagan practice of palm reading, we can parallel these 'examinations' to the way that God's Word examines the Christian. "The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). As king David asked God, "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts." (Psalm 139:23). As to the body parts the Oracle searched, the book of Proverbs in the Bible contains many convicting instructions as to the speech (mouth), what we look at and focus on (eyes), and do with our hands (actions, labor, etc).

M. The Oracle *confirms* to Neo, "You've *got* the *gift*..."

S. One of the things the Word of God does is confirm salvation to the believer's soul. "These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, in order that you may *know* that you *have* eternal life" (1 John 5:13). "The free *gift* of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 6:23b).

M. The Oracle says that Neo "looks like [he's] waiting on something...[his] next life, maybe."

S. In a Messianic allegory, this can be a prediction of the resurrection, similar to John 12:14. But in the allegory of Neo as Christian, it can mean that Christians must die daily to selfish living (1 Corinthians 15:29) and live according to the new people they are in Christ. "Lay aside the old self...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth" (Ephesians 4:22). "...if by the Spirit you are putting to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live." (Romans 8:13)

M. The Oracle warns Neo that a difficult choice will arise - that either he or Morpheus will die! Regarding Morpheus, the Oracle tells Neo, "without him, we are lost." She tells Neo that he will have to choose to "sacrifice your life for his."

S. In this stunning revelation, the Oracle's words parallel the two greatest commandments of all scripture! If we put Morpheus in the role of God (which he can play at many points in the allegory), then the statement, "without Him we are lost" gives Neo the greatest commandment of all: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment" (Matthew 22:37).

When we put Morpheus in the role of a mature Christian who helps to disciple Neo (another role Morpheus can easily fill in the allegory), then Neo will have to choose to lay down his life for his brother, fulfilling the second greatest commandment: "...and a second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:29). This also fulfills the verse, "No greater love has anyone than this: that one lay down his life for his friends." (John 15:12).

4. TRAPS: Contamination, Conspiracy, and Consequences

4a. A PARABLE OF A PARABLE?

The Matrix can also be a parable of a parable!

There are three 'traps' that defeat people:

1. Never coming out of the Matrix, being 'oblivious' to truth, rejecting the truth ("the mind has trouble letting go")
2. Becoming tired of the trials that come with freedom (Cypher is tired)
3. Becoming wrapped up in the temptations the Matrix offers (Mouse is focused on the lady in red)

But a fourth type of person is the successful, faithful person:

4. A person who avoids the traps, perseveres in the war, and frees others.

There is a parable in Matthew chapter 13 that has the same four types! A sower scatters seed on the ground. There are four things that happen to the seed:

1. The seed falls beside the road and the birds take it away. Jesus explains that this is someone who hears the truth and will not receive it, so the birds (the "evil one" vs. 19) come take it away. These are like the people still 'inert' and 'dependent on' the Matrix, who are kept 'oblivious' by the evil Agents.
2. The seed falls on hard, rocky ground. The seed takes a shallow root, but when the heat comes, it dies away. Jesus explains that this is someone who receives the truth with joy at first (like Cypher, who used to love Trinity), but falls away when "affliction or persecution arises", such as Cypher saying, "I'm tired, Trinity. Tired of this war."
3. Thorns choke the seed. Jesus explains that the thorns are worries and deceitful riches of the world. Mouse is distracted by his 'lady in red', and it possibly costs him his life.
4. The seed takes root, and through perseverance is victorious. Neo, Morpheus, Tank, and Trinity all endure pain but are victorious in the end.

We have already studied condition #1 when Morpheus describes the people still in the Matrix. But now let's look in detail at conditions #2 and #3 - the traps that killed Mouse and Cypher.

4b. MOUSE

(Mouse represents the 'seed' that was lost to temptations; see part 4a)

M. The food on the Nebuchadnezzar is "everything the body needs", but Mouse does not agree.
S. Mouse is not satisfied with basic necessities. He also wants to fulfill his lusts. He is like the Israelites in the old testament who were tired of manna and craved exotic foods.

M. Mouse "wrote the program" for the lady in red; he "designed" her.

S. Sin begins from a person's own lusts. "Each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his *own* lust, and when lust is *conceived*, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death" (James 1:15). We see the 'lady in red' do two deadly things: 1) In the simulation, she transforms into an Agent pointing a gun at Neo. 2) The 'lady in red' pinup distracts Mouse, who possibly could have avoided a deathtrap otherwise.

M. At the dinner table, Mouse's ears are extremely red.

S. This sly metaphor links Mouse's red ears to the 'lady in red'. We cannot dabble in sin without it infecting us. "...you are slaves of the one you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness..." (Romans 5:16).

M. Mouse tries to make Neo stumble by 'pimping' his sensual creation to Neo. Mouse says, "If you'd like to meet her, I can arrange a much more personalized milieu [setting]." Neo shows no interest in this temptation, keeping his focus on the war rather than using Matrix technology to pleasure himself.

S. What if Neo had allowed himself to become distracted by the virtual pleasures Mouse offered? Perhaps the whole human race might have remained enslaved in the Matrix! "Whoever causes one of these little 'ones' [neo = anagram for 'one'] to stumble, it would be better for him if, with a heavy millstone hung around his neck, he had been cast into the sea" (Mark 9:42). Neo demonstrates the focused Christian. "...be all the more diligent to make certain His calling and choosing you [like the chosen 'one'], for as long as you practice these things, you will never stumble..." (2 Peter 1:10).

M. Mouse tells Neo, "Pay no attention to these hypocrites, Neo. To *deny* our own impulses is to deny the very thing that makes us human."

S. Mouse uses deceptive language to make his pursuit of pleasure during war seem like a noble statement, while calling others 'hypocrites' for their diligence and restraint. To contrast, Jesus said, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, let him *deny* himself, take up his cross daily, and follow Me," indicating a soldier's life of hardship in service of the Master in the war for truth.

M. Mouse's 'lady in red' is possibly the cause of his death. Instead of being alert and focused like Apoc and Switch waiting outside the Hotel, Mouse is relaxed - his feet are propped up - and he is entranced in his own lust for the lady in red. We notice Tank's alarm at the changes in the Matrix. Perhaps the 'lady in red' kept Mouse from being alert enough to avoid the coming trap. Mouse might have possibly noticed a "deja vu" as the trap was setting and gotten out of the building before bricks replaced the exits.

S. In the old testament, king David committed his most famous sins of adultery and murder when instead of going off to war, he stayed behind in Jerusalem and admired Bathsheba as she bathed. David suffered greatly as a consequence of his sins that began with focus on temptation instead of war.

M. Just before he dies, Mouse is wearing a black T-shirt with a human skeleton design on it.

S. In addition to foreshadowing his physical death, the skeleton symbolizes a state of vulnerability. A Christian who is focused on lusts is not shielded in the spiritual "armor of God" described in Ephesians 6:10-20. Sin can cause physical death, but sin also brings internal death to the soul (Romans 6:21). Sin does not give life; it creates an unsatisfiable craving that destroys the sinner.

4c. CYPHER

(Cypher represents the 'seed' that was lost to difficulties and trials; see part 4a. Cypher can represent a 'Judas' type, a betrayer, a false Christian, or a so-called 'carnal Christian' who enthrones his selfishness over the welfare of others.)

M. The betrayer character is named Cypher, a play on the word 'cipher'. In the dictionary, some interesting meanings of 'cipher' are 'zero' and 'one that is without value'.

S. Cypher demonstrates that he is indeed without value; he is a selfish murderer. Jesus said about Judas, "it would be better for him if he had never been born" (Mark 14:20) - in other words, better off a zero.

M. From the beginning, Cypher never believes! Even as the film begins, Cypher says, “We’re going to kill him, do you understand that?” Cypher also expresses his cynical attitude when Neo is trying to jump from tower to tower in the training simulation. As Cypher talks to Neo alone at night, he says, “Actually, I’ve been thinking it [the blue pill option] *ever since I got here* [meaning that Cypher *never* did appreciate the red pill].” Even Cypher’s last words are “No. I don’t believe it.”

S. A lack of faith is deadly; it is a guarantee of self-destruction. As another parallel, It is interesting that Judas Iscariot is never recorded as personally calling Jesus Christ by the title “Lord,” indicating that Judas never believed.

M. When Neo walks up to him, Cypher is frightened. Cypher then turns off some of the monitors.

S. Fear is the opposite of faith. Cypher also shows deception by turning off the monitors, where righteousness has nothing to hide. Constant patterns of fear or secrecy indicate that someone is not walking in the truth, but in sin.

M. Neo asks Cypher, “Do you always look at [the Matrix] encoded?” Cypher answers, “Well, you have to.”

S. Not true, Cypher. Neo sees the Matrix as it truly is at the end of the film in the hallway. He understands the code. Like Cypher, an unbeliever never gains spiritual eyes. “Unless a man be born again, he cannot *see*...” (John 3:3). The Spirit of God gives understanding to the believer, but things still remain a mystery to the unbeliever.

M. Cypher asks Neo if he wants a drink. We see Cypher has been drinking from a large jug.

S. A sinful person will often try to tempt a true Christian from his devotion. Cypher was not sipping from a cup, but guzzling from a large jug, indicating overt drunkenness and lack of self-control.

M. Cypher tries to destroy Neo’s faith by saying, “You know, I know what you’re thinking, because right now I’m thinking the same thing. Actually, I’ve been thinking it ever since I got here. Why, oh why didn’t I take the blue pill?”

S. Cypher tries to make Neo think that they are of the same opinion. But was Neo regretting the red pill? No! Evil people lie to make the Christian doubt his or her dedication during the trials of truth.

M. Cypher discourages Neo, “What a mind job. So you’re here to save the world. What do you say to something like that?”

S. The Christian’s goal is that of Christ: to see the entire world saved. This is a difficult goal because of the hardness of so many hearts. Evil will always tempt a Christian to despair of the work of helping others to come to salvation in Christ. Famous author C.S. Lewis once proposed that if Satan were limited to one weapon, it would be discouragement.

M. Cypher gives Neo “a little piece of advice: You see an Agent, you do what we do. Run!”

S. This is another lying attack on the faith of the Christian, telling him that Satan is stronger than his position in God.

M. We see Cypher meeting with Agent Smith, setting up terms of betrayal over wine and a rare steak.

S. Steak strongly metaphors the flesh, the carnal nature of man. A Proverb says, “When you sit down to dine with a ruler, carefully consider what is before you; and put a knife to your throat if you are a man of great appetite. Do not desire his delicacies, for it is deceptive food.” (Proverbs 23:1). In other words, a king (like Satan as prince of the world or Agent Smith as ‘prince’ of the Matrix) will often use delicacies to sway a good man toward evil. Cypher ignores such warnings and gorges himself with the Agent’s steak and wine. The steak is also a bloody rare - a foreshadowing of the blood that will be spilled by Cypher’s betrayals. The surreal restaurant harp is suggestive of enchantment, the deception of the enemy to lull the Christian into complacency.

M. Cypher says, "Ignorance is bliss." Even though he knows the "steak doesn't exist," he still prefers the falseness of the Matrix to the truth of the real world.

S. See the comment above about 'deceptive food' ['steak doesn't exist'] and how it can destroy you. Voluntary ignorance is not bliss; it is enslavement that ends in destruction.

M. Cypher wants to be rich in the Matrix.

S. Cypher chooses the temporary riches of the fallen world, a pitfall for humanity. God said to a shortsighted rich man, "You fool! This very night, your life is required of you, and now who will own what you have prepared for yourself?" (Luke 12:20). Cypher also values money more than the lives of people. He is the epitome of selfishness.

M. Cypher desires the pride of life, wanting to be "someone important...like an actor."

S. Scripture speaks of the "boastful pride of life" as a sin in I John 2:16. Cypher's ideal of 'an actor' as an important person is tragically comical. Not that actors do not add value to society (or even become American presidents - grin), but in the strictest sense, an 'actor' is someone who merely imitates others. An 'actor' has no self-substance; he is a simulacrum. 'Actor' can be a synonym for 'hypocrite', meaning someone who pretends to be what he is not. Cypher is indeed a hypocrite who 'acts' like a willing part of the Nebuchadnezzar crew - when he is not betraying their very lives.

M. Agent Smith grins and says, "Whatever you want, Mr. Reagan [Cypher's Matrix name]."

S. Satan will make any deal as long as it diverts someone from truth. Did Agent Smith love Cypher and want him to enjoy steak? No. Smith hated Cypher as much as any other human; he was just doing whatever was necessary to achieve his goal. "Satan disguises himself as an angel of light" (2 Corinthians 11:14) who hates the very souls he uses and entices. Also note that Cypher does not object to being called "Mr. Reagan," which is his false persona in the Matrix illusion, indicating the hypocrite's acceptance of lies. (And was this a possible political statement?)

M. Cypher admits that he does not know the codes to Zion's mainframe.

S. A lost person claiming to be a Christian does not really understand salvation - the 'way to heaven / Zion', etc.

M. Cypher will kill and harm many people to satisfy his own selfishness. Not counting many of the people in the Matrix (policemen, people at the market, etc.) who are harmed in the conflicts resulting from Cypher's betrayal, at least 4 people are injured and 5 people are killed, and the Nebuchadnezzar is damaged! To summarize:

- 1) At the beginning of the film, Cypher holds on the line to give away Trinity's position ("the informant is real"). Trinity is bloodied in the chase and almost killed.
- 2) Because Cypher gave him away ("we have the name of their next contact") Neo is tracked and tortured by the Agents at his Metacortex office.
- 3) Mouse dies in the hotel building because Cypher left a cell phone giving away the hotel location.
- 4) Morpheus will be captured and tortured at the hotel betrayal.
- 5) The Agents arrange a car accident - including an ambulance - to cover Cypher's escape. Many innocents were probably killed or injured.
- 6) Cypher burns Tank and kills Dozer.
- 7) Cypher kills Apoc and Switch.
- 8) Because of Cypher giving away the group's location, the Agents are able to capture Morpheus, trace his physical location and deploy sentinels ('squiddies') that do great damage to the Nebuchadnezzar.
- 9) Cypher himself is killed as a result of his choices.

Finally, think of all the people that Apoc, Switch, and others might have saved if they had lived! Cypher arguably did more damage through betrayal than the Agents could have done without him!

S. It is a sad but true fact that most of the damage done to Christianity comes not from the obvious enemy lines, but from the inside - through hypocrites, carnal Christians, deceivers, fakes, infiltrators, etc. After all, it was Judas - a longtime traveling companion of Jesus - who betrayed Christ into the hands of His killers.

M. The Matrix setting for Cypher's betrayal is a metaphor of death. The televisions in the repair shop are "dead"; they have "*no vision*", they are dead, broken, in need of repair. Neo even says that the phone "went dead".

S. "Where there is *no vision*, the people perish." (Proverbs 29:18a). Cypher's lack of vision causes him to kill Dozer, Switch and Apoc - and then ultimately 'perish' himself. A lack of spiritual vision is always deadly.

M. As Cypher makes his betrayal speech and kills Switch and Apoc, we notice that Cypher's red jersey has a big hole in it - over his heart!

S. Judas was 'heartless'. Someone who is selfish has no love, no heart for God or others.

M. Cypher tells Trinity that for a long time, he "thought [he] was in love with [her]." Notice that this is a past tense statement, indicating that he no longer loves her.

S. Jesus warned that the "love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12). Cypher is now a "lover of pleasure rather than a lover of God" (2 Timothy 3:4).

M. Cypher says he is "tired of this war."

S. Cypher is like the seed that cannot weather trouble or persecution (Matthew 13:21). "Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we shall reap if we do not grow weary." (Galatians 6:9)

M. Cypher says that Morpheus lied and "tricked" them all, otherwise they would have never taken the red pill.

S. Cypher again falsely speaks for the group, all of which appreciated taking the red pill and finding truth. And Morpheus "tricked" no one. Even as Neo was choosing the pill, Morpheus warns him, "All I'm offering is the truth. Nothing more." Truth is often hard to accept. But it will always be the best route to take. The Christian life is full of difficulties; Jesus promised that. But the end result of that hard path is eternal glory.

M. Cypher challenges his freedom. "Free? You call *this* free? All I do is what he tells me to do."

S. We are either slaves of sin, a fallen world, and Satan, or we are slaves of God (Romans 6). The choice of enslavement to God is enslavement to freedom, for God is infinite; He is a God of liberty. The path of following only what God wisely tells us to do may seem hard at times, but "the present suffering is not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed in us." (Romans 8:18).

M. Cypher says, "If I had to choose between that [truth] and the [illusionary] Matrix - I choose the *Matrix*."

S. "And this is the judgment - light has come into the world, but men loved the darkness instead of light, because their deeds were evil. (John 3:19). That Light is Jesus (see John 9:5) who claims to be the Truth (John 14:6). Men "suppress the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans 1:18). "Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:22).

M. Cypher says, "I think the [illusionary] Matrix can be more 'real' than this [real] world."

S. One of the greatest deceptions of all is to prefer lies over truth. Like the Agents who created the lie of the Matrix world, Satan is the 'father of lies' (John 8:44). Thus, to embrace lies is to embrace the father of them. To choose truth is to align with the living Truth (John 14:6). To choose temporary things instead of permanent things is foolish. "For Demas has deserted me, having loved this present world..." (2 Timothy 4:10).

M. Cypher says that he will “go back to sleep”.

S. ‘Sleep’ is a term the Bible uses to describe both the unsaved person and a sinful, disobedient ‘Christian’.

M. Switch looks up, knowing she is about to die. “Not like this,” she says in quiet horror. “Not like this,” and she dies.

S. One of the most devastating trials a Christian can face is betrayal from one thought to be a friend. If the greatest act of love is to lay a life down for a friend (John 15:12), then what is it to *betray* a friend?

M. Cypher does not believe in miracles. He says that “there would have to be some kind of a miracle” to stop him from pulling out Neo’s cyberjack and killing him.

S. Cypher is openly challenging the truth here. An unbeliever rejects the notion of a God that can effortlessly do miracles and control any event. Rebelliously challenging God’s ways is always a wicked choice, just as Cypher’s challenge involved the murder of Neo.

M. Cypher’s last words are, “I don’t believe it.” Then Tank kills him, as far as we can discern.

S. Cypher cements his role as unbeliever. And unbelief leads to death.

M. Tank tells Cypher that regardless of what his beliefs are at this point, he is “still gonna burn.”

S. Just because a person does not believe in God, Satan, heaven, and hell, does not mean that these things do not exist. If you jump off a building, close your eyes, and believe the ground does not exist, you will be shortly corrected in your error. Truth IS, whether we believe it or not. Both the believer and the unbeliever will come face to face with God one day, because God IS. The believer will receive eternal life, and the unbeliever will receive eternity in hell (‘gonna burn’) as a just penalty for sin and rejection of God’s sacrifice of His Son to make an available payment for that sin.

5. TRANSCENDENCE: Confrontation, Conflict, and Conquest

5a. THE MISSION

M. Neo knows that he must return to the Matrix to 1) save humans and 2) fight Agents.

S. To review, Jesus asked that Christians be left in the world to continue His work of bringing men to God, knowing that it also means warfare against a spiritual enemy. Jesus prayed about the disciples - and all believers in John 17:20 - to God the Father: “I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one...as You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them...” (John 17:15-21). Again, “we do not wrestle against flesh and blood...but against spiritual forces of wickedness...” (Ephesians 6:12).

M. Tank calls Morpheus “our father”. Trinity adds shortly, “Morpheus sacrificed himself so he could get you out.”

S. The term “father” can have two parallels here. One is as God the Father, who sacrificed Himself so he could get us out of a fallen world if we choose to accept him. Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” in John 10:30, meaning that it was indeed the Father who also died on the cross in the Trinitarian sense (also see Isaiah 9:6). As stated before, Morpheus can sometimes represent God in the film - but not in the sense that Agents can hold him captive!

The other idea for “father” can be that of a mentor or trainer (disciple-maker), which fits this scene better. The Apostle Paul called his disciple Timothy “my true child in the faith.” (1 Timothy 1:2). The Apostle Paul was often persecuted or imprisoned for his ministry, and Timothy ministered to his mentor Paul in these afflictions, much as Neo will go to rescue his trainer Morpheus.

M. Neo and Trinity decide to rescue Morpheus, even if it costs their lives.
S. “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:13).

M. Tank warns Neo that attempting to rescue Morpheus is “suicide”, and lists out the forces against him: a military controlled building, and three Agents. Neo goes in anyway.
S. Faith does not consider obstacles; God can overcome anything. As Abraham said in the old testament, “Is anything too difficult for the Lord?” (Genesis 18:14). “Nothing is too difficult for Thee [God]...” (Jeremiah 32:17).

M. Neo says, “Morpheus believed something and he was ready to give his life for what he believed. I understand that now.”
S. A Christian must mature to the point that he is willing to die for Truth. As the old saying goes, “if you have nothing to die for, you don’t have anything to live for.” Being willing to die for the truth means not only physical death, but also dying daily to self in favor of following Christ.

M. Neo says, “I *have* to go [back into the Matrix to save Morpheus]”. “Why?” asks Tank. “Because I believe in something,” says Neo.
S. Neo *must* go *because* he believes. True belief demands action. Faith produces works just as naturally as fire produces heat. Someone who claims he has faith, but has no works to prove it, does not have faith at all, but has a dead, false ‘faith’. (James 2:14-26).

M. Agent Smith attempts to break Morpheus’ faith by telling him that he is a victim of evolution.
S. The theory of evolution, which makes man a mere animal, is not of God. “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1, etc.) Satan will attempt to damage a Christian’s faith with the lie of evolution.

M. Agent Smith adamantly tells how much he *hates* humanity, and how much he wants to be free of the prison of the Matrix as well!
S. Satan *hates* mankind with an utter hatred. And like Agent Smith, Satan is not free. God already limits Satan’s activity, and it will only get worse for Satan. Currently, Satan may be allowed even in heaven at times to talk to God (see Job 1 and 2), but in the last days, God will restrict Satan to earth (see Revelation 12). God will eventually further confine Satan to an eternal lake of fire (Revelation 20:10).

M. In the hovercraft, Tank encourages the tortured Morpheus.
S. Christians must encourage each other in the spiritual battles they face. Tank’s actions could also represent prayer for one another, which is a powerful weapon in the spiritual war (James 5:16).

5b. THE MAYHEM

M. Neo and Trinity invade the military building, destroying the guards in the lobby and on the roof. Agent Brown ‘possesses’ a rooftop guard (Lt. Kim). When Trinity shoots Agent Brown, it is Lt. Kim’s body that is dead.

S. There is no neutral ground between God and Satan. Those who do not believe God are friends of the world system by default. God’s judgment against sin is righteous; we must either receive Christ taking the judgment for sin, or reject Christ and bear sin’s judgment ourselves. Thus, when God wars against evil, those who are not allied with God through Christ are not considered ‘innocents’. They will perish as well as the enemy (Agents), even if they are ‘oblivious’ to the enemy they serve. The people in the Matrix were not aware of the true nature of the Agents - but the Agents enslaved and dominated them nonetheless! Those who do not believe in God often do not believe in Satan either - but such unbelief does not make God and Satan nonexistent! There is no neutral ground. ‘Lt. Kim’ represents someone who is directly possessed by the enemy. Even though an Agent used him, Lt. Kim still died as part of the conflict with good. As Jesus warned, “He that is not with Me is against Me” (Matthew 12:30).

M. After Neo rescues Morpheus, Morpheus will tell Neo, “There’s a difference between knowing the path and walking the path.”

S. (see comments about this statement in the section about the visit to the Oracle)

M. Instead of running from Agent Smith in the subway, Neo turns and faces him.

S. A Christian is not to retreat from Satan, but to stand against him in faith (Ephesians 6:13).

M. As Neo takes a stand, Morpheus says, “He’s beginning to believe [have faith].”

S. Faith in God is the backbone of the Christian. “Be on the alert, *stand firm in the faith*, act like men, be strong.” (I Corinthians 16:13).

M. Agent Smith and Neo battle in the subway. Throughout the film, Agents display supernatural strength and speed. When humans fight the Agents according to the rules of the Matrix [natural laws], humans lose. Punches hurt, bullets kill, gravity pulls. But whenever Neo fights according to the *truth*, he can overcome the lie of the Matrix and defeat the enemy.

S. We cannot fight sin and spiritual forces with natural means such as willpower, political maneuvers, social agendas, wisdom of man, etc. But when a Christian uses spiritual weapons, he wins. “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the destruction of fortresses...” (2 Corinthians 10:3). Spiritual weapons are faith, the scriptures, the Holy Spirit, and many more.

M. In the subway fight, Agent Smith calls Neo “Mr. Anderson” four times. Smith is trying to use Neo’s “old” Matrix name to destroy his faith, telling him he is no different than he ever was. Neo growls, “MY NAME IS NEO!” and defeats Agent Smith in this round of battle.

S. Satan, sin, and the fallen world system will always try to make a Christian think he is merely his former self in the natural, denying that he was changed to a neo/new creature by faith in Christ. But a Christian must not walk by sight, or by deception. He must have faith in God’s truth, which gives him strength to resist the lies and walk in victory.

5c. THE MURDER

M. At room 303, Agent Smith shoots Neo and kills him. When Neo is flatlined, Trinity tells Neo she loves him. She kisses him, causing him to revive and fight to a victory.

S. The love of 'Trinity' (which can represent the divine Trinity here) kept new-man ('Neo') going even through the shadow of death itself. "Neither *death*, nor life, nor angels, nor [many other things]...shall separate us from the *love* of God in Christ..." (Romans 8:38,39). "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for You are with me..." (Psalm 23:3)

M. Despite deadly danger, Trinity demonstrated calm faith in the truth – that although Neo was dead, she reasoned in the truth that he could not stay dead because it had been prophesied that Neo was the one who would save mankind.

S. If we now allegorize Trinity as a mere person, this scene parallels a person's salvation by faith in Christ and His resurrection. "If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord, *and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead*, you shall be saved." (Romans 10:9). This is faith in the word of God (oracle) as well.

Like Trinity in the film, Abraham in the old testament was required to have the same faith in a similar situation. God promised Abraham that 1) his son Isaac that would be the father of a great nation, and then 2) told Abraham to kill Isaac. Hebrews chapter 11 shows that Abraham 'put one and two together', reasoning that 1) in order for Isaac to be the father of a nation meant that 2) God would have to raise sacrificed Isaac from the dead. So, he acted in faith by obeying God's orders - but God stopped the sacrifice of Isaac, although God would *not* stop the sacrifice of His Son Jesus that Abraham's prophetic act foreshadowed. God was having Abraham provide a living demonstration of faith in the resurrection - a picture of what a man must have to become a Christian (see Romans 10:9 above).

M. Trinity says, "Neo, I'm *not afraid* any more. The Oracle told me..."

S. Faith in the true word of God banishes fear.

5d. THE MASTER

M. Neo revives, and the Agents shoot at him. Neo stops the bullets in midair by faith [relying on the truth].

S. This is a literal portrayal of "taking up the shield of *faith*, with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles [bullets] of the evil one." (Ephesians 6:16). "No weapon formed against you shall prosper." (Isaiah 54:17).

M. As Neo looks down the hallway, he now sees the code of the Matrix - the green streams of data. This lets us know that Neo fully sees the Matrix world as it truly is.

S. God gives a Christian understanding through His Spirit and His word, to identify the true nature of things. "Unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God (John 3:3)", nor can he grasp the false and temporary nature of the fallen world that opposes it. Also, in respect to Satan [the Agents], Christians "are not ignorant of his schemes [like the machine's scheme of using the Matrix to control humanity.]" (2 Corinthians 2:11).

M. Neo does not destroy Smith by physically fighting him, but by entering him and *destroying* him.

S. Spiritual enemies must be fought not with natural means, but with spiritual means: prayer, faith, submission to God, using the Word of God, truth, walking controlled by the Spirit of God, etc. God honors these weapons and will use them powerfully against the enemy. "For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh, but divinely powerful for the *destruction* of fortresses..." (2 Corinthians 10:3).

M. A summary of this sequence: When Neo revives, Trinity commands Neo, “*Now get up!*” Neo obeys and rises. The Agents fire at Neo, and Neo says, “*No!*” stopping the bullets in midair by relying on the truth. Neo destroys Agent Smith, and the other Agents flee.

S. This sequence is a literal portrayal of the verse “Submit therefore to God [‘Trinity’], resist the devil [Neo saying ‘No’ and fighting Agent Smith] and he will flee from you [the remaining Agents flee].” (James 4:8)

M. When the film began, Trinity was in room 303. Neo’s room was 101. Neo now exits the Matrix from room 303.

S. We can perhaps allow ‘3’ to be representative of God (the Trinity of Father, Son, and Spirit). ‘1’ can represent fallen man, who is lower, single, and apart from God. When Neo ends the story in room 303, this shows that he has completed his journey from isolated, unsaved man (‘1’) to being reconciled with God (‘3’).

M. Neo speaks into a phone at the end of the film, saying that he is going to show the people the truth and set them free.

S. Jesus Christ gives every Christian the commission of sharing His truth with a lost world, so that people can be set free from sin and death by faith in Christ.

M. The song that plays when Neo finishes his phone call is *Wake Up* by the group Rage Against The Machine.

S. A fitting title. A Christian’s commission is to be used by God to help others wake from sleep, just as Trinity was calling Neo to “wake up!” at the beginning of the film. The band name “Rage Against The Machine [Matrix]” can suggest God’s anger against the corrupt world system.

M. In the final scene, Neo soars victoriously into the sky. Compare this to his earlier fear of heights!

S. Neo flying up to the sky can represent a Christian going to be with God after the earthly life is over (John 14:1-3). Also, as history comes to a close, God will one day take all Christians up to be with Him in an immediate ‘rapture’ into the sky (1 Thessalonians 4:15-18). Neo now has no fear of heights - he is truly victorious in his faith. Notice that Neo looks UP before flying - symbolizing focus on God, not on obstacles.

III-C. SHORTCOMINGS IN THIS PARABLE

Although the story of Neo has many parallels to the journey of a lost man finding salvation in Christ and then maturing in faith, there are some shortcomings in the allegory as well. To provide a healthier picture of Christianity, here are some of the shortcomings:

• **CHRIST WAS DEPERSONALIZED.** Although Morpheus or Trinity may at times represent God in the allegory of Neo as a lost man who becomes a Christian, there was only a red pill to represent the blood of Christ. Christ is not a thing, but a living Being. Salvation is an act of embracing Christ by faith; it is a direct relationship with Him. “To as many as received *Him*, to those who believed in His name, to them gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:12). Because there was only a red pill instead of a Person, ‘salvation’ therefore seemed impersonal and formulaic. To be saved from sin, there is no ‘magic red pill’ – a certain act of penance, a ritual, a ‘magic or special prayer’, etc – that a person must do. Instead, salvation comes from a personal, relational faith transaction between a lost man and the living Christ, as man repentantly trusts Christ alone as his only means of escape from sin and death to righteousness and life. A Christian’s walk is then a constant reliance on God, not on a lifeless set of concepts or dogma. It is a close relationship. God is Father; the Christian is child.

• **NO REAL CONCEPT OF SIN.** ‘Salvation’ in the film (taking the red pill) had nothing to do with a change in morality. There was no transformation from ‘sin’ to ‘righteousness’, or from ‘wrong’ to ‘right’, but merely from illusion to reality. If Neo lived immorally in the Matrix world, he might still do the same in the real world. The concept of true repentance and moral purification from sin is absent, shown most clearly by Mouse, who pimps his lady in red to Neo.

• **NO TRUE CONCEPT OF ATONEMENT.** If someone were going to get hit by a car, and you pushed him out of harm’s way, but were struck and killed by the car, you have saved the person’s life. But you have not *atoned* for wrong things he had done, or made payments for debts that he owed. ‘Atonement’ is the full payment of a due penalty; a reparation for a wrong done; the satisfying of rightful judgment. God’s holiness demands a death penalty for sin. Christ paid that penalty, offering justification through Him as a free gift for all who will believe. Christ didn’t *merely* offer a way from this world into another – there’s much more to it than that. The main thing He did was to atone for our fallen, sinful condition so that we could be forgiven by faith in Him and be spiritually reborn. Christ came “to give His life as a *ransom* for many.” (Matthew 20:28).

• **NO ETERNITY IN FIRE.** The concept of eternity in heaven can be paralleled by Zion - the place where the ‘party would be’ if the war was over. But there seemed to be no counterpart of hell. In the Matrix, once a human died, existence was over. Because of this, it was logical for Cypher - or anyone - to return to the temporary pleasures of the Matrix rather than face the ‘desert of the real’, as there was no eternal penalty (lake of fire) afterward for his choice, nor paradise for choosing the truth (Zion was probably not a paradise in *The Matrix*). In another contrast, when a Christian comes into truth, it is the fallen world that is the desert, and the truth is a constant oasis that carries the Christian through that desert.

• **NO HOLY SPIRIT.** When a person is saved by faith in Christ, God’s Spirit then literally takes up residence in that believer. The Holy Spirit indwells, empowers, convicts, controls, teaches and guides the believer in Christ from within. There were external characters such as Tank and the Oracle that had some of these properties, but no direct parallel. In the film, Neo relied on himself, not on the power of another Being within him. Neo was humanistic in that sense.

• **GOD IS NOT AN ‘UNDERDOG’.** In the film, evil (machines) rules the world, and good (man) is a desperate underdog. In truth, God is all-powerful, and has fully won the victory. God is simply allowing Satan some leeway for a time, just as he still allows man to sin in his free will. Christians are by no means ‘underdogs’ or desperate.

IV. THE MATRIX AS MESSIAH MOVIE (Neo allegorized as Christ figure)

A. JEWISH MESSIAH OR CHRISTIAN MESSIAH?

Some may choose to type Neo as a Jewish concept of the Messiah figure. But Neo may better parallel the Christian Messiah, depending on how we view the film. Here’s some food for thought:

Neo is not interested in righting the wrongs inside the artificial Matrix society. He does not seek to rid the Matrix simulation of Agents merely so that humanity can live a happy illusion in the Matrix. For example, all systems of government within the Matrix are illusions. For Neo to politically become ‘benevolent world emperor’ in the Matrix simulation would not free people; they would still be captive in the womb-like pods of the ‘power plant’.

Instead, Neo wants to extract people from the Matrix illusion into the real world, even as he was extracted. He wants them to exit and experience the real Zion, not to live in 'better bondage'. Consider this: For Neo to simply remake the Matrix into a paradise *would be no different than when the A.I. did that in the first Matrix!*

To parallel, many Jews of Jesus' time hoped that the Messiah would be a political one who would free them from the oppression of the Roman empire and set up an earthly kingdom immediately.

But God's plan was much bigger, and it dealt with the root of all problems. The problem of man was not simply politics or society, but enslavement to sin in a corrupted world. God has condemned the entire fallen world system because of sin. Jesus came down and died that humanity could be saved from sin through faith in His atonement, thus given the way to be in God's eternal kingdom, which is not of this current corrupted world. And one day God will do away with fallen creation, creating a new heaven and earth to be enjoyed by those who have trusted Christ. But God's kingdom is also a spiritual one, not merely a physical cleanup.

Jesus came to save Christians from sin and the coming condemnation of the fallen world; He did not come to merely adjust the systems of the fallen world. Similarly, Neo wants to rescue humanity out of the Matrix into reality; he did not come to merely correct the systems of the false Matrix world. In this sense, Neo parallels the Christian type of Messiah.

B. CAUTIONS ABOUT COMPARING NEO TO CHRIST

In a few aspects, Neo can be allegorized as a type of Christ. But not every part of Neo's journey should be adapted to fit this theme. For example, to propose that everything Neo does in the film is explicitly figurative of Christ then produces a crude Messiah who is initially clueless, is a criminal (hacker), is tortured by the enemy, needs to be saved, must be trained by his own disciples, has a girlfriend, and likes to curse - a sacrilegious set of suggestions, to say the least. Neo is not intended to be an accurate portrayal of the Christian Messiah; instead, there are simply parts of the fiction that can be paralleled to the life of Christ if we strongly filter the material.

C. ALLEGORY OF NEO AS CHRIST FIGURE

PART 1: The birth and earthly ministry of Christ

- *The Matrix*, which contains a death and resurrection scene, was released near Easter of 1999. From a business standpoint, this April release date avoided box office competition with the May 1999 release of *Star Wars: The Phantom Menace*, but the timing was interesting nonetheless.
- At the beginning of the film, Cypher says, "We're going to kill him, do you understand that?" It is the sin of humanity that caused Jesus to have to die on the cross.
- Also at the beginning, Trinity says, "Morpheus believes he is the one." Cypher responds, "Do you?" During the film, Trinity must decide who she believes Neo is. Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" "The Christ," answers Peter (Matthew 16:15), just as Trinity will later answer "Yes" to Cypher during the betrayal scene.
- In Neo's apartment, Choi says, "Hallelujah. You're my savior, man. My own personal Jesus Christ." This heavy-handed giveaway alerts the casual viewer to look for Messianic parallels.

- Neo warns Choi not to let people know about how he helped him. Choi responds, “Yeah, I know. This never happened. You don’t exist.” This reflects the warnings of Jesus in his early ministry on earth, as he did not want to be the center of a public frenzy. For example, Jesus gave sight to some blind men, but warned them not to tell people (Matthew 9:30). Jesus also warned His disciples early in His ministry to keep silent for a time about Him being the Christ (Matthew 16:20), but later commanded them to tell it worldwide (Matthew 28:18-20).

- Agent Smith tempts Neo to obey them and turn against Morpheus. Satan also tempted Jesus to obey him instead of God. (Luke 4:7). (Of course, Jesus was victorious in this trial, unlike Neo who was tortured and ‘bugged’.) There is another scene with Cypher that might be paralleled to Satan’s temptation of Christ. Cypher has a goatee to trigger cultural notions of the Satan caricature. Cypher also wears snakeskin later, reminiscent of the tempting serpent in the Garden of Eden, or Satan as the ‘dragon’ in Revelation 12:9. (Using Cypher as both a Satan and a Judas figure fits well in that Satan himself entered Judas in Luke 22:3!). Cypher tells Neo in a devilish way, “So you’re here to save the world? What do you say to something like that? A little piece of advice...Run!” Satan similarly tried to discourage Jesus by saying in effect, “You don’t have to suffer; make stones into bread and stop suffering! My advice is to run away from the suffering of the cross to save the world! Just take the easy way out and worship me instead, and I’ll give you the fallen world I own.”

- Morpheus tells Neo on the phone, “I’ve spent my entire life looking for you.” Morpheus can represent not only John the Baptist here (John was ordained from birth to be forerunner of Christ - Luke chapter 1 and John 1:23), but also Simeon and Anna (Luke 2:25-38), and the prophets of the old testament (1 Peter 1:10). He can represent all people who believed in the promised Messiah and awaited Him eagerly.

- When he meets Morpheus, Neo says, “It’s an honor to meet you.” “No,” corrects Morpheus. “The honor is mine.” We can play Morpheus as a John the Baptist figure here. John said he was not worthy to untie the sandals of Christ (John 1:17). Later, Christ asked John to baptize Him, but John responded in honor, “I have need to be baptized by You, and yet You come to me?” (Matthew 3:14).

- The Oracle foretold the coming of the One, saying that “his coming would hail the destruction of the Matrix and the war, bring freedom to our people.” If we allegorize the Oracle as the scriptures, the Bible many times prophesied that Jesus would come first to make a way of salvation, then come again in glory and victory. He will then destroy the fallen world system [Matrix], throwing Satan and the demons into hell along with unbelievers [end the war], and establish a perfect paradise for those who love God [‘our’ people; the people of Zion].

- Neo experiences a ‘virgin birth’ metaphor of sorts. He wakes up in a womb-like pod, with ‘umbilical’ cables in his body. Neo is hairless and weak, like a baby. Covered in ‘afterbirth’ slime, he is ‘delivered’ down a watery tube. To parallel, Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary, who was overshadowed by the Holy Spirit of God to miraculously cause her pregnancy with the Messiah.

- Tank is excited to see what Neo is capable of, saying that it is an “exciting time!” This parallels the excitement of those who realized that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Son of God. Peter expressed similar excitement when Jesus appeared briefly in glory during the mountaintop transfiguration (Matthew 17). The elderly Simeon praised God when he first held the baby Jesus, saying, “Lord...my eyes have seen your salvation.” (Luke 2:28).

- The crew of the Nebuchadnezzar gathers around Neo, wondering if he is the 'one'. Morpheus believes. Others are skeptical, and Cypher does not believe. Jesus also had disciples who went through varying stages of belief. Peter trusted. Thomas doubted for a while but believed later, and Judas never believed.
- Two members of the crew are brothers named Tank and Dozer. In his group of disciples, Jesus also had pairs of brothers (James and John, Peter and Andrew).
- Neo eats dinner with Mouse, a small man. Jesus once stayed at the house of a very short man named Zacchaeus, who became a believer (but Zacchaeus did not tempt Jesus like Mouse tempted Neo!).

PART 2: The betrayal of Christ

(Note: For a detailed study of Cypher from a different angle, see the allegory of Neo as a Christian in section II of this document. There is some necessary overlap, but each allegory has some different material as well.)

- The betrayer character is named "Cypher", a play on the word 'cipher'. In the dictionary, some interesting meanings of 'cipher' are 'zero' and 'one that is without value'. Cypher demonstrates that he is indeed without value; he is a selfish murderer. Jesus said about Judas, "it would be better for him if he had never been born." (Mark 14:20).
- Cypher the traitor is not just betraying Morpheus, who has the codes to Zion, but Cypher is betraying the entire human crew as well, which includes Neo. Cypher almost pulls Neo's plug to kill him, which is a traitorous act directly against Neo. In this sense, Cypher can be typed strongly as Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus.
- From the beginning, Cypher never believes Neo is "the One". Even as the film begins, Cypher says, "We're going to kill him, do you understand that?" Cypher also expresses his faithless attitude when Neo is trying to jump from tower to tower in the training simulation. As Cypher talks to Neo alone at night, he says, "Actually, I've been thinking it [the blue pill option] *ever since I got here* [meaning that Cypher never did appreciate the red pill]." Even Cypher's last words are "No. I don't believe it." To parallel, Judas Iscariot did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. It is interesting that Judas is never recorded as personally referring to Jesus as "Lord".
- Neo drinks from a cup, then hands it to Cypher, who drinks from the same cup (we see that Cypher was originally drinking from a jug before Neo came). At the 'last supper' before he was captured and killed, Jesus identified Judas by saying, "He who dipped his hand in the bowl with me is the one who will betray Me" (Matthew 26:24).
- Cypher meets with Agent Smith to betray the humans, just as Judas met secretly with the religious leaders who wanted Jesus dead. Cypher wants to be rich, just as Judas asked for thirty pieces of silver (perhaps the steak cost thirty silver dollars?) Cypher arranges the deal while eating a rare piece of steak. The steak is symbolic of the carnal, fleshly nature of Cypher, and the blood in the rare steak can foreshadow the blood that will be spilled because of his betrayal. 'Blood money', so to speak.

- Cypher wants to be an ‘actor’, but Cypher is already an ‘actor’ - a ‘hypocrite’ who acts like a willing part of the Nebuchadnezzar crew, just as Judas was an ‘actor’ or ‘hypocrite’ who faked loyalty to Jesus and the disciples. Judas even pilfered money from them as they traveled - see John 12:6!
- Agent Smith acts friendly to Cypher while making the deal, but we know that Smith hates all humans. In the same way, the Pharisees were receptive to Judas when he offered to betray Christ, but they spurned Judas after the betrayal was complete (Matthew 26:15 and 27:4).
- When standing outside the hotel after Neo has seen the Oracle, Cypher knows the Agents are tracking the cell phone nearby, so Cypher gives Neo a big, nervous *smile* - a false gesture of affection. Jesus said to Judas, “Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” (Luke 22:48).
- While Cypher walks around the hovercraft killing Switch and Apoc, we notice Cypher’s red jersey has a big hole over the heart, just as Judas had no heart for people (John 12:6), and not even a heart for Christ. Judas Iscariot was a ‘heartless’ man.
- Cypher dies as a result of his traitorous work, just as Judas committed suicide after betraying Christ.

PART 3: The death, resurrection, victory, and ascension of Christ

- This is quite a stretch, but after Trinity brings Neo dinner and goes outside with Cypher, there is a pattern of a cross on Neo’s door, which can foreshadow what is about to happen to Neo.
- Like Jesus becoming a human being and entering the world, Neo ‘incarnates’ into the Matrix world to save Morpheus and humanity.
- Like Jesus giving himself on the cross as a substitute for our sins, Neo ‘substitutes’ his own life for that of Morpheus. Morpheus escapes judgment by a ‘leap of faith’ and ‘receiving’ Neo’s hand, just as it takes faith to receive Christ. “To as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God...” (John 1:12). Neo escorts Morpheus to safety (escape in the phone booth), while Neo remains behind to die instead of Morpheus.
- Neo remains alone in the Matrix subway; not even Morpheus (who is like a ‘Father’) or ‘Trinity’ are there to help. Facing the Agents alone, Neo dies, defeats the Agents, and then comes back to the Nebuchadnezzar. In the same way, Christ had to face his death alone - the disciples scattered in fear, and Jesus even cried out to the Father, “Why have You forsaken Me?” as God placed the sin of the world upon His sacrificed Son.
- Agent Smith strikes Neo, who falls and spits blood, just as Jesus was struck on the mouth during the beatings before the cross. Trinity says, “Jesus - they’re killing him,” as either a prayer or use of the Lord’s name in vain - but it has double meaning for the allegory. In other words, “They’re killing Jesus.”
- Neo dies as Agent Smith shoots him. If we consider that the man created the Artificial Intelligence, then man effectively killed Neo, just as our sins demanded Christ’s death. (For technical purposes: even though Satan unwittingly played a role in God’s redemption plan by possessing Judas and also stirring up the crowds to crucify Jesus, it was truly God who chose to ‘crush’ his own Son for our sins on the cross; see Isaiah 53:10)

- Neo resurrects from the dead, just as Christ did. (Some of you clever mathematicians out there might stopwatch how long Neo was dead and figure some way to equate it to 3 days. Perhaps 72 seconds = 72 hours = 3 days?)
- The Oracle had said that Neo was maybe waiting on his “next life” as a form of hinted prophecy. The Word of God also predicted the resurrection of the Messiah, which Christ fulfilled.
- ‘Trinity’ arguably is the one that brought Neo back from death by her love. In parallel, God the Father, who is love (John 4:8a) raised Christ from the dead (Galatians 1:1).
- In a different aspect, a woman (Trinity) was the first one present at Neo’s resurrection, just as it was a woman who first saw Christ raised (Mary Magdalene in John 20:14 and 18).
- Earlier in the film, Morpheus describes the Agents as the ones “guarding all the doors, holding all the keys.” After Neo revived in the Matrix, he could see and understand the Matrix code all around him. He ‘had the key’ to the Matrix that kept humanity in a deathlike state. Neo also entered Agent Smith and defeated him, just as Jesus defeated Satan. The risen Christ now holds the keys of death and Hades (Revelation 1:18) because of his crucifixion, “that through death He [Christ] might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is the devil.” (Hebrews 2:14). And as for Agents “guarding all the doors”, Jesus said, “I am the door, if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved.” (John 10:9).
- When Neo destroys Agent Smith, he stands as a brilliant, shining figure of light. In the same way, Jesus said, “I am the Light of the world,” (John 9:5). And, “The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it” (John 1:4), just as shining Neo overpowered evil Agent Smith.
- Neo displays total power over both the Matrix environment and the Agents. Jesus now wields unlimited power. “All authority in heaven and earth has been given to Me,” said the risen Christ in Matthew 28:18.
- Neo speaks into a phone at the end of the movie, apparently telling the enemy machines that “I’m going to show them a world without you, a world without rules...” Christ will give his believers an eternal paradise, free from sin and the rules of the fallen world. Christ sets the believer free from the law of sin and death, and writes God’s ways upon his heart. In heaven the believer will not need rules against sin, as he will have been perfected forever by God.
- Neo’s speech into the phone has aspects of Jesus Christ’s last earthly speech that tradition calls the “Great Commission.” Neo says he is going to free the people of the Matrix, representing every nation of the world (note that the green code of the Matrix has characters from many languages). Just before His ascent into heaven, Jesus commissioned his followers to go make disciples of all nations.
- Neo victoriously ascends into the sky at the end of the film. After Jesus Christ’s ministry on earth was complete, He ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9).
- The name “Neo” is an anagram, meaning the letters can be rearranged to make different words. There are three different anagrams possible - a ‘trinity’ of meanings! ‘NEO’, ‘ONE’, and ‘EON’.
- “NEO” means ‘new’, just as Christ says “Behold, I am making all things new” (Revelation 21:5) and makes a lost person a “new creation” when he trusts Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).

- “ONE” can refer to Jesus as the promised One, the Messiah - just as Neo was “the One”.
- “EON” can be defined as “an indefinitely long period of time,” i.e., eternity. Christ is eternal!

V. CONCLUSIONS AND PERSONAL REMARKS

In a word, the remarkable achievement of *The Matrix* is flexibility. The film is drenched in hints and references, but the story is never lost at sea. The rich variety of nuance circling the central plot enables the creative viewer to see the tale through many imaginative lenses, tinting the theme with each lens.

The Matrix is not a Christian film by design, but much of it can be adapted to parallel the conversion and walk of a Christian, or even the life of Christ to some extent. And yet eastern thought can find many parallels also. *The Matrix* is not merely a study of society, but a theme of man versus technology is easily available, and a theme of nihilism too. Or perhaps the film simply suits you as a hi-tech twist of Alice in Wonderland! And so it goes, as long as there are fresh lenses to be found.

But there is one theme that seems prevalent in many of the lenses: the theme of a single truth, and a single path to find it.

Neo constantly faced one-way choices on the single path to truth. Obey Morpheus, or be captured. Go to the Adam Street Bridge, or stay home. Stay in the car, or get out. Take the red pill and find truth, or take the blue pill and be lost forever. “This is your last chance,” warns Morpheus.

We instinctively know that Morpheus is a hero and that he is telling the truth. Morpheus proves his goodness when he is willing to sacrifice his own life so that Neo might be saved. But in this world, what would you do if Morpheus came to you? What would you do if someone told you that there was only one way to come to the truth?

Would you believe Morpheus and thus be ‘narrow-minded’? Or would you “believe whatever you want to believe” and be what many questionably call ‘open-minded’?

It is interesting how many viewers interpret the film’s catch phrase “free your mind” to mean, “don’t ever let anyone tell you what truth is.” But what did Neo have to do in the film? In order to be completely *free* of the Matrix, he had to make a stand – to choose to stay on a *single path* to truth, time and time again! He had to allow himself to be guided, told what to do, controlled. He had to trust and to obey.

The concept we sometimes find hard to accept is that the path to freedom is narrow and often difficult. But as an example, consider a slave who must follow a narrow course of ‘safe houses’ to a country where he or she can truly be free! Or consider a person who is sick with a terminal disease for which there is only a single known cure. To refuse the one cure means to die. But to be ‘narrow minded’ and take the single cure means to be healed – and therefore be *free* to live a healthy, robust life!

Many people say that if you believe something and are not willing to abandon it, that you do not have an ‘open mind’. If you hold something as true, they accuse you of being ‘dogmatic’ and ‘closed-minded’. But to firmly declare that there is no single path to truth is also a dogmatic statement!

And is it wise for you to never make a firm stand on what you know is true? Are you willing to be ‘open minded’ to the idea that the world might really be flat? Or that you don’t really have a head?

Again, many people twist 'open-minded' to mean that you should never hold on to anything or stand on anything, so that you can keep your options 'open'. This is like saying that instead of landing your plane on a solid runway, you should continually 'keep your options open' – and just circle the airport until your plane runs out of fuel and crashes! To never make a choice is to lose your choice. To never choose a path is to never go anywhere at all. Is there nothing to trust in? Why spend a lifetime standing on nothing - and die in that confused, uncertain state when you run out of time? It takes just as much faith to say there is no knowable truth as it does to believe that a truth is there!

Scripture gives the correct definition of what an 'open mind' should be: "Examine everything carefully; hold on to what is *good*" (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God doesn't want you to hide your head in the sand, or to swallow everything you hear. He encourages you to be wise, to examine things and think hard about them. But an 'open mind' does not mean holding on to everything you see! And on the opposite end, an 'open mind' does not mean refusing to hold on to anything and drifting in uncertainty forever. An 'open mind' is being willing to honestly consider everything - but then taking a stand only on what is true!

In the film, was Morpheus arrogant for saying he had the truth? No! Morpheus *did* have the truth; he was simply being honest! Was he 'narrow-minded'? Yes! Morpheus *knew* that there was only *one way* for Neo to enter the truth. Were Morpheus' warnings about the Agents to Neo just cheap threats or scare tactics, or were they simple truth out of concern for Neo's own good? You know the answer. And as ultimate proof that Morpheus was a good man, he was willing to lay down his own life to save Neo.

Jesus Christ claimed to be the truth and the only way to God. Because of that, He and those who believe Him are often labeled 'arrogant' and 'narrow-minded'. But Jesus is not arrogant; He simply has the truth. He *is* the truth. Thus there is only one way to find truth – through faith in Christ alone. Are God's warnings of what sin will do us just cruel games, or are they are simply the truth for our own good? God doesn't want us to keep driving if the bridge ahead is broken in two, so He warns us. And God demonstrates his goodness and love for us in that while we are all sinful, Christ humbly died for our sin to freely give us a single way out through faith in His blood (like Neo taking the red pill). This is our life-or-death choice, our great chance to be rescued. One narrow way - but it leads to eternal freedom that God longs to give us.

What was it that gave Neo the ability to take that red pill? Where did he get his trust? Had Morpheus shown him all the answers yet? No, Neo was taking a step of faith. But Neo had some things to go on. He had felt that something was wrong with himself. He became aware of the enemy coming against him, and in contrast had sensed that 'Trinity' was for him when she put a comforting hand on his shoulder in the car and expressed sympathetic concern for his future – not wanting him to waste his life down an empty road of lies and enslavement. Neo's conscience was the final key, even over the evidences he had seen.

God provides fingerprints of evidence also - such as creation itself, fulfilled prophecy in scripture, the evidence for the resurrection of Christ, the unique characteristics of the Bible, changed lives, answers to prayer, and much more. But the main draw toward truth will always be God's inward call to us.

The living Trinity, God Himself, has compassion for us, just as 'Trinity' did for Neo in the car. Even now, in the spiritual realms we cannot see, God bears witness to our souls that we are in danger because of our sin, and compassionately pleads that we accept the costly sacrifice of His own Son as the only way to be saved.

If we are honest, we will feel God bearing witness to our conscience, and know that He is good. We can think of other leaders and dismiss them from our minds with ease – but we cannot easily dismiss Christ. We must either receive Him or force Him away, because He is the living Truth that continually knocks patiently at our hearts. Does your conscience hear His knocking? He is there now, even as you read these words. And He will still be there, when you look at your ceiling tonight before falling asleep, if you listen. God’s concern is for our good future and happiness; He knocks to offer us the way.

Sin hurts us and hurts others, so God must destroy sin. But God loves the sinner! For Morpheus and the other free people to go to destroy all of the machines would mean that those people who were still enslaved in the ‘power plant’ would die. So the free humans had to leave the ‘power plant’ alone so that they could first save the people still trapped in it. God is doing the same thing. He could destroy sin now, but we as sinners would be destroyed with it. So God gives us a chance, patiently extending to us a way to be saved through faith in His Son, who died in our place to pay a penalty for our sin, a penalty He did not owe. This is love.

There will always be hypocrites to distract us and give us a false excuse. Cypher was a hypocrite. Even Mouse was tempting those who were focused on freeing humanity. But the presence of hypocrites did not mean that Morpheus and Trinity were not good! In the same way, Jesus even had a hypocrite named Judas as one of His twelve closest disciples. And there always will be hypocrites parading as ‘Christians’, talking the talk but not walking the walk. But again, the presence of hypocrites does not mean that there is no truth! What if Neo had allowed hypocrites to discourage him from the truth? Should we allow hypocrites to turn us away from Truth, or to determine our destiny for us?

In the end, it all comes down to our focus. Are we looking at the blue pill, angry that God will punish sin? (Think about it – if God didn’t do away with evil someday, then eternity would be forever polluted by it! Do you want that?) Instead, why don’t we focus on the fact that God is generously offering to us a ‘red pill’, out of His compassion for our own good? That ‘red pill’ cost Christ everything He had. The blood of Christ was shed lovingly on your behalf by the God who wants you to be pure from sin and enjoy eternal freedom. Repentance is painful because we must swallow our pride. But our sin hurt Christ a lot more than it hurts us – it demanded His cruel, bloody death to take the penalty for it! And He loves you still. Why not put your faith in Christ right now? Why not take the cure?

I did, years ago - and it has made all the difference. God is wonderful; He is not a prison! Why think that a God who died for you must be boring and stale? That is a lie from the enemy who wants you dead.

All it takes to be free is a simple act of faith.....
to humbly talk to God and receive the living Christ as Lord.
But I can only *show* you the Door – *You* have to *walk* through it!
Jesus said, “I am the Door. If anyone enters through Me, he shall be saved.” (John 10:9a).

He loves you. And He’s waiting for you! Red pill or blue pill. Which will it be?

