

Evangelism Handbook Of New Testament Christianity



Phil Sanders

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In Search of the Lord's Way

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Preface

In 1992 five members of the Walnut St. Church of Christ traveled to Minsk, Belarus, to teach the gospel to this republic of former Soviet Union. We entered a republic that had forsaken the knowledge of God for seventy years. We knew we had a challenge to teach for long hours. Knowing our own weaknesses we sought a resource to help us face the many questions awaiting us.

Since no single book in addition to the Bible fit the challenge, we decided to create our own. We wanted a concise, concentrated reference book that would cover many subjects adequately for the task. When we could find no single book in our library, we sought to make a notebook with many articles on a variety of topics. Since the first notebook was poorly arranged, we determined to organize and complete the project for future campaigns. From 1992 to the present, the Evangelism Handbook grew in form and content. Its sole purpose was to provide quick reference material to those who evangelize and teach.

Through the years we have provided thousands of copies to teachers and soul-winners in America and in many foreign countries. Since this book has been on the internet, it has been downloaded many thousands of times. The author has freely shared this material and has no intent to sell it. It is copyrighted and should not be sold by others. Those who use it may freely copy materials so long as they remain unchanged and proper credit given. Please let me know of your use or distribution of these materials.

There can be no more noble work than preaching the gospel and persuading men to follow Christ. God had only one Son, and He was an evangelist. He preached repentance, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Mt. 4: 17). Though the kingdom is now here in the church (Col. 1: 13-14), we must still appeal to men to repent of their sins and to enter the kingdom through baptism (John 3:3-7; 1 Cor. 12: 13; Gal. 3:26-27). The effective evangelist will spare no effort to prepare his heart and mind for the task. We pray this volume may offer help in that preparation and pursuit.

We offer this resource to all who, "knowing the fear of the Lord," would persuade others of the unsearchable riches in the grace of God. May all that we do be done to His glory and honor.

We offer our thanks to Pollock Printing for the printing of this book. We give our thanks to the churches of the Parkersburg, West Virginia, area for their foresight to have a campaign and prompt the printing of this book.

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Phil Sanders

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THE CONVERSION PROCESS

Coming out the world and becoming a fruitful Christian is a process in which there are many steps. Occasionally, a method of evangelism is developed that centers on the steps of salvation and does not give proper consideration to the changes that must take place in the heart and mind of a person before he is ready to believe, repent and obey. Nor do some methods of salvation consider the things that must happen in order for a person to become a functioning part of the body of Christ so that he may produce fruit. This section will discuss the pre-conversion changes and the post-conversion changes of a new disciple of Christ.

Discipleship is an unending process whereby a believer submits to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and lives in such a way that this profession permeates every aspect of his life. One begins the process of discipleship at the time he decides to follow the Lord's way. Salvation comes at the point of obedience to the gospel by submitting to baptism in water for the remission of sins. But God expects the disciple to be taught 'to obey everything I have commanded you' (Matt. 28:19). The work of the evangelist is not done at the waters of baptism. The one completely safe and dependable manual on personal evangelism is the New Testament; yet the more one studies the New Testament, the less one can deduce from it a system of personal evangelistic methods. Jesus employed a different approach with different persons. He assessed their needs and spoke to them on the basis of their understanding. One might take for example Jesus' approach to Nicodemus as being very different from his approach to the woman at the well. Paul made a much different appeal at Mars Hill than he did at Agrippa's court or at Ephesus. Circumstances differ, and the evangelist must be prepared to approach his listeners in such a way as to speak to their understanding of God. It is hoped that this section will serve as a measuring stick for the evangelist to evaluate his students and to know where to begin to speak to their spiritual needs. The task of the evangelist is not merely to inform his students of the gospel story; it is also to persuade them to accept and obey the gospel.

"Knowing therefore the fear of the Lord, we persuade men," Paul says (2 Cor. 5:11). The evangelist must not only know the story, he must also know how to make the story pierce the hearts of those who are listening in the hope that they will respond. Knowing why one must respond is surely as important as knowing what one must do to be saved. With this in mind, let's consider these steps or tasks that are part of the conversion process. Each step has a crucial place in the process. Soil must be prepared before one may plant the seed and expect a fruitful harvest. The planted seed must be watered and protected if it is to grow. The harvested fruit must be cared for and stored before it is ready to eat.

PRE-CONVERSION TASKS

Conversion is the change of the whole person: the intellect, the emotions and the will. These three inter-related aspects of the heart are important in knowing how one changes. It takes true change in all three areas for conversion to take place. Conversion is a change in what one believes; it is repentance; and it is a change in one's love.

I. In Relation to God

1. The student must realize the existence of God. (Intellect)

God made His "eternal nature and divine power" known through the world that He has created (Rom. 1:18-21). Yet there are many hearts that have been darkened by not acknowledging or giving thanks to God. Evangelists need to know enough about Christian evidences to demonstrate that God exists beyond a reasonable doubt. The Christian evidences section of this book will be helpful. Further, the student must realize that the one true and living God is the God of the Bible. The apostle Paul at Mars Hill spoke to men who believed there were gods and worshiped idols but did not know the true God. It is not enough to believe there is a God if that God is some other than the God of the Bible. Evangelists may need to address the fact that God is a Person, that He is Spirit, that He is Infinite in power, or that He is unique. The evangelist

must respond to the modern tendency in our world toward a pluralistic theology (believing in any god, for one god is as good as another). He must be able to give a reason why Jesus Christ is the only way to heaven, and Mohammed or Confucius is not.

2. The student must have a favorable attitude toward God. (Emotions or Heart)

The problem of human suffering is a difficult hurdle for many people. One may believe that the God of the Bible is the one, true God; yet one might be angry at God or hold a low view of God because of the suffering one has experienced or observed. It is necessary for the evangelist to be able to help the student overcome this hurdle in order for the student to embrace God in submission and love. Furthermore, the student must come to understand how much God has love and blessed him throughout his life. We love, because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). There is no greater love than that of God nor more powerful motivation than the message of the cross. The love of God must motive the student to want to change. God's kindness should lead one to repent (Rom. 2:4).

3. The Student must Submit to the Authority of God and the Lordship of Christ. (Will)

The call of Jesus for obedience abounds in the New Testament. Among them are Matt. 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but who does the will of my Father, who is in heaven." John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." John 14:15 "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments" Heb. 5:8,9 "although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered; and having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal life."

Jesus taught that a personal commitment must be made to Him as Lord. On the last day all men will bow the knee and confess Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father (Phil. 2:5-11). The Lordship of Christ means that we belong to Him and that He has a right to make decisions affecting our lives. We are to deny

ourselves, to take up our crosses daily, and to follow Him (Luke 9:23).

In Relation to Sin and Self:

1. The student must have an understanding of what sin is and the consequences of his own personal sin. (Intellect)

The message of the cross must not only show the love of God for mankind but also the Lord's utter abomination for sin. The wages of sin has always been death (Rom. 6:23), an eternal damnation. Sin is the enemy of every man. Each student must understand that sin is the violation of God's law (1 John 3:4), and that God takes that violation seriously. It is a momentous occasion in the life of any person when he comes to acknowledge that he has sinned against God and that God will hold him responsible. People will not change until they want to change, until that change is seen as beneficial in terms of their basic needs and desires. They need to understand that their sins have consequences in this life, and that no one escapes the consequences of his sin (Gal. 6:7,8). The life of the transgressor is indeed hard (Prov. 13:15). He must clearly see that by his own sin he has hurt God, hurt others and hurt himself. He must become sorry for his sins, that the sorrow might lead him to repentance (2 Con 7:8-10).

In a relativistic society, many people have no concept of an objective standard of sin. They too often consider themselves as 'good people' because they have not committed some horrible crime (murder, rape, adultery, treason, etc.). They tend to justify their small sins (white lies, petty thefts, etc.) as human mistakes but not worthy of eternal damnation. It should not surprise the evangelist to hear someone say, "I haven't ever sinned," since many people have such a limited view of what sin is. Some have dismissed the concept of sin altogether. There are those who cannot see any moral wrong in the Nazis' killing of six million Jews. In some societies people do not see the wrong of sin. They believe that if they have not hurt anyone with their behavior, then they have not sinned. The concept of sin has been removed from some vocabularies. We hear of "victimless crime" and one's right to do whatever one wishes as long as one doesn't harm anyone else. This

permissiveness is in reality lawlessness. There can be no sin where there is no breaking of the law (Rom. 4:15). If one does not like the law or agree that it should be a law, then one must take away its force as a law. This, some imagine, will justify one's behavior. The deceitfulness of sin is in its effort to justify itself. The evangelist must be aware of this scheme of the devil to deceive men and so rob them of the truth. The gospel will make little sense if a person has no understanding of morality. The evangelist cannot assume that his student feels guilt for his sins.

2. The student must have a change of heart toward sin and have hope in God to overcome the sin problem. (Heart or Emotions)

Embracing Jesus Christ means that I must deal with my desire or love for sin. One cannot love God and Mammon. One cannot hold to sin and still love God. James asked, "do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God" (4:5). John said, "Do not love the world, nor the things of the world. If any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). The person who loves the Lord learns to love the things of God and to despise sin. Sin is an enemy to all mankind. Rom. 12:9 admonishes us to "Abhor what is evil; cleave to what is good." Changing our attitudes toward sin may lead to a change in friends. A person who repents to follow Christ may find that impenitent and rebellious friends are no longer willing to associate with him. Peter observed, "For the time already past is sufficient for you to have carded out the desire of the Gentiles, having pursued a course of sensuality, lusts, drunkenness, carousals, drinking parties and abominable idolatries. And in all this, they are surprised that you do not run with them into the same excess of dissipation, and they malign you" (1 Pet. 4:3,4). Changing my moral life by admitting and repenting of my sins is not an easy thing to do. Many people would rather do anything than admit their guilt. The dynamic of guilt is a serious one for a person considering becoming a Christian. An individual's realization that he is guilty of sin and lost disturbs, alarms and frightens. He knows that he

has sinned and that he is weak to sin. He may wonder if he can overcome sin. There are some sins a person can forsake in a day and others that take years. The student has been told he must forsake his old way of life. He may have tried before on his own and failed. He may not think he can overcome the temptations to continue in sin. With some students the evangelist will have a hard time convincing them that sin exists, and with others he will struggle to convince them that God can help them overcome their sin traps. The evangelist must help the student realize that he does not act alone in repentance, but that God will be his helper. Passages such as I Cor. 6:9-11; 10:13 and 1 Tim. 1:12-16 are beneficial in giving hope. God is faithful and will help us overcome whatever temptations we face. One can do all things through Christ who strengthens him (Phil. 4:13).

3. The student must determine to leave sin and to embrace righteous living. (Will)

The call to repentance is twofold: (1) it is a determination to leave sin behind; and (2) it is a determination to embrace righteous, Christian living. His heart and will turns away from sin and toward Christ. He now loves the Lord and everything associated with the Lord, and sinful things have become disgusting and repugnant. He applies these feelings and determinations to the world and to himself. He seeks to become a new man "who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the One who created him" (Col. 3:10).

Repentance begins with a sorrow for sin against God (2 Cor. 7:10), for his sins against others (Matt. 18:6-9), for his sin which hurts himself (Psalm 32:1-5; 5 1:3-7), and for the false teachings he believed or taught (2 Tim. 2:17; 2 John 9-11). Repentance is not only a turning away from sin; it is also a turning toward God. The changed sinner wants a clean heart (Psalm 51:10). He leaves the far country and comes home to the Father (Lk. 15:11-24). A change of life and behavior complete repentance. Jesus told the woman caught in adultery to "go and sin no more (John 8:11). Paul told Agrippa that he taught the Gentiles that "they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds appropriate to repentance" (Acts 26:20). The penitent son of the vineyard owner changed his mind and went

to work in the vineyard (Mt. 2 1:28-30). Christians do not merely talk the talk, they walk the walk. James urged Christians, “Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says” (James 1:22). No one is blessed who sees that there is a need to change but fails to make that change (James 1:25; 4:17).

III. In Relation to Christian Living and the Church

1. The student must form and change his beliefs and attitudes concerning Christ and the church. (Intellect)

Beliefs are the ideas that an individual holds to be true. Every person has basic beliefs, which influence the way in which he looks at life and how he behaves and relates to others. Secular values are different from sacred ones. One who embraces God will find that when God is added to the picture, every aspect of his life will change (2 Cor. 5:16,17). All things have indeed become new. Some examples of the attitudes within a secular belief system include these ideas:

God, if He exists at all, is just an impersonal, moral force.

There are no absolute moral values.

Man basically has the capacity within himself to improve morally and make the right choices.

Happiness consists of unlimited material acquisition.

There really is no objective basis for right and wrong.

The supernatural is just a figment of someone’s imagination.

If a person lives a “good life,” then eternal destiny is assured.

The Bible is nothing other than a book written by man.

The church is filled with weak people who need a crutch.

Modern, secular man is self-centered. He considers fulfilling his own needs and desires as his prime motive in life. He has little room for that which he considers as a limit to his personal freedoms or desires. He may or may not recognize this mindset. The devil has told these lies for so long that many people now regard them as the truth. The message of the gospel

may make little sense to a student until such beliefs are challenged, changed and brought into accord with reality. The task of the evangelist is to help his student to come to a Christian mindset, to have the mind of Christ. He must awaken from the darkness (Eph. 4:17-24). We must insist that the student “no longer live as the Gentiles do.”

God is a personal, holy, loving Father who created and sustains the world.

Sin is transgression of God’s eternal law and brings about death.

Man, though a free moral agent can do nothing without Christ.

True joy consists in a faithful, loving relationship with Jesus Christ.

The supernatural is real and actively working in the world today.

Each one will be judged according to his deeds by the word of God. The blood of Jesus is necessary for salvation.

The Bible is inspired of God and is an authority for our lives.

The church is filled with struggling people who love the Lord and want to do right. Beliefs influence attitudes, and both matter because ideas have consequences. One becomes what he believes. A change in beliefs will see a change in attitude, which will cause a change in behavior. A student who sees the difference between his own actual life and the ideal life described in Scripture will desire change.

2. The student must have a positive attitude toward becoming a Christian and the church. (Emotions or Heart)

The evangelist must be a sensitive listener to his students. The devil, our enemy, has sowed an incredible number of deceitful seeds about Christianity and the church. One such lie is that a person can be a ‘good Christian and never be a member of the church (most people in America now believe this). Another is that the church is filled with hypocrites. It may be that some students have been mistreated by Christians or had a bad experience at church. One new convert saw a fistfight between two officers of a church the first time she ever attended. Some congregations are spiritually cold and others are apathetic. Some congregations are cold toward outsiders and newcomers. Such attitudes throw

ice water on the person whose heart is beaming with the love of Christ. A Christian who sets an ungodly example through the week can hardly make a positive impact on the new convert who knows him for what he is.

The evangelist today must realize that he must not only convert a sinner from the error of his ways but also prepare him for life in the church. While the church is divine in origin, it is filled with humans who do not live up to the ideal. Nearly all churches have a variety of people who live at different spiritual levels. Encourage the student to follow Jesus and to be patient with human weaknesses found in the church. Everyone deserves time to grow. Love for others means having to put up with their faults (1 Cor. 13:4-8; Eph. 4:1-6; 4:25-32; Phil. 2:1-8; Col. 3: 12-17; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; 4:8,9). The evangelist needs to be a friend to those whom he seeks to bring to Jesus. He must comfort, support and love them. Like a shepherd he needs to bind the wounds of, care for, protect, and feed struggling new lambs.

3. The student must recognize and submit to the inspiration and authority of the Scriptures. (Will)

The evangelist must show God's Word to be true and entirely trustworthy (Psa. 19:7-11). He must have absolute confidence that God's Word is wiser than men and that He means what He says. The gospel is a personal message and is indeed good news. It is good news because of the terrible condition man is in because of his sin. When men do not want to deal with their sins, they often challenge the credibility of the Scriptures. It is here that the inspiration and authority of the Word of God comes into focus. Some presume to sit in judgment of the laws of God rather than to allow God to judge them through His word (John 12:48). Jesus wishes his disciples to obey "everything" he has commanded (Matt. 28:19), which means that disciples cannot pick and choose which commandments they will follow and ignore the rest. The student must recognize his amenability to God's Word. Unless he is willing to recognize God's authority and submit to Him, he can never be truly converted to the will of God. Like Jesus one must be willing to say, "Thy will be done." Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount with the

parable of the wise man and the foolish man. The distinction between foolishness and wisdom is not one of hearing but in how one responds to what he hears (Matt. 7:24-27). This passage is an excellent one to help the student realize that his response matters.

At the appropriate time the student needs to be called to commit himself to Jesus Christ. When the student is ready, the evangelist should ask him to obey the gospel. When the people at Pentecost realized their sin and need for atonement, they asked, "what shall we do?" Peter replied, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you!" (Acts 2:37,38). Peter with many other words warned them and pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation" (2:40). There is urgency to the gospel message; those who accepted the message responded that day in baptism (2:41). The Eunuch sought an opportunity to be baptized when he passed some water (Acts 8:36-39). The Philippian jailer and his household were baptized in the middle of night after Paul preached to them (16:30-33). There is a time to confront a student with his need to obey the Lord.

Becoming a Christian is an all-out commitment, and an evangelist who fails to stress this point has made a mistake. Christianity is for a lifetime; Christ demands one's all (Matt. 22:37; Luke 9:23; 14:25-34; Rom. 12:1,2; etc.). Any evangelist who thinks his work is done at the waters of baptism needs to be taught himself. New converts are babes in Christ who need further training as long as they live.

POST-CONVERSION TASKS

1. Post-conversion Evaluation

It is a common experience for new converts to wonder just what has happened to them since they became Christians. They may experience doubts and confusion. They may be disillusioned, finding the church and their own Christian experience different from what they expected. They want desperately to be loved and accepted by their new brothers and sisters in Christ. This is why follow-up with the new Christian is so important. Evangelists cannot assume that their work is done at baptism.

Repeating, reminding, and reassuring are essential for the new convert to grow. A red flag needs to go up the first time a new convert misses church or appears to be dropping out. An evangelist needs to find out why and encourage the new convert to remain faithful. Babies in Christ like babies at home need the attention of those who are mature. Usually a kind word of encouragement, the answering of a question or an act of love can help a new convert work through his doubts and confusion. Nearly half of all new converts fall away within the first year of their Christian life. Church leaders and workers need to be aware that this group needs special attention for their first year.

The new convert may test those who have taught him to see if the church really does care. If he has sensed that the church has forgotten him, he may drop out of attendance and wait to see if anyone has noticed. If no one cares enough to check on him, his suspicions will be confirmed in his mind. Most people give the church a window of opportunity to check on them. The longer the time goes by that the new convert remains unattended, the more difficult it will be to restore him.

2. Facing Moral Failure as a Christian

Every Christian will sin at some time, but a crucial time for a new convert is the first time he sins after he is baptized. At baptism he has had all his sins forgiven and was freed from slavery to sin. Now he finds himself doing the same old sins he did before he became a Christian. Consequently, he is asking himself if his conversion was real. He may wonder why he isn't immediately able to handle every temptation. The evangelist has the challenge to teach the young Christian about growing in Christ, dealing with his sins as a Christian, and God's second law of pardon. The new convert must come to understand that all Christians sin and must struggle continually to keep their lives pure. He needs reassurance that he really has been saved. The feeling of embarrassment that comes from moral failure may cause the new convert to shy away from his Christian brethren and the church, because he feels as if he cannot measure up. This is the time that spiritual brethren need to humbly go and restore such a person (Gal. 6:1).

3. Incorporation in the Congregation

New converts want to feel that they belong in the church. They want to be accepted and feel that they have a function in the church. Wise leaders find ways to fellowship and to use new converts in the work of the church. It is important to assign some task to a new convert; this task will help him feel that he is needed and wanted.

4. Spiritual Growth

New converts need to know how they can develop their spiritual lives. They need to be taught not only the doctrines of the Bible but also how to study the Bible for themselves (1 Pet. 2:1,2; 2 Tim. 2:15). They need to be taught how to pray, to meditate, and to worship in private. They need to know the importance of giving their time and money in the service of the Lord. They need to understand their stewardship of what God has given to them. They need training in teaching others, in ministering to the sick, in developing their personal abilities for the Lord's work. They need to know how to add to their faith, virtue, knowledge, self-control, perseverance, godliness, brotherly kindness, and love (2 Pet. 1:5-11). As they develop, the fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22,23) should be evident in their lives. New Christians must learn the importance of worshiping with the saints. They must be taught to "consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another (Heb. 10:24). They need to know that they have an obligation to their fellow brothers and sisters in the congregation to help each one remain strong. They also have an obligation to respect and follow those men who have been charged with the leadership of the congregation (Heb. 13:17). Every Christian has the responsibility to 'speak' to his fellow Christians in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in his heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16). This means of worship not only praises God; it also edifies the brethren. Every Christian has the obligation to commune with his brethren in remembering the death of Christ in the Lord's Supper, also called communion (1 Cor. 10:16,17). These matters of worship and fellowship help keep a new convert strong.

5. Christian Service

The Lord expects those who follow him to be more than mere hearers; they are to be doers of the word (James 1:22-25). Christians have been saved by the grace of God and created in Christ Jesus for good deeds (Eph. 2:8-10; cf. Tit. 2:11-14). Christians are to “always give themselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Cor. 15:58). This service is to demonstrate the love of God for both those who are within the church and those who are without as well (Gal. 6:10). Every Christian has the responsibility of caring for his brother in Christ when there is a need (James 2:14-26). One who withholds kindness from a needy brother does not have the love of God (1 John 3:16). Older Christians have the responsibility of leading the way and of training new Christians in the work of love. Christians also have an obligation to those who are without.

They are to do good when they have the opportunity (Gal. 6:10). But Christians also have an obligation to evangelize those who are lost. New converts may be short on experience and knowledge, but they often have many friends who are still in the world. New converts can be trained to teach others. The church grows when individuals teach others who teach others who teach others (2 Tim. 2:2). Those who evangelize have the responsibility to teach the new Christian everything that Jesus commanded, including the commission to take the gospel to the whole world (Matt. 28:18-20).

The work of evangelism is not done until every new convert is able to stand on his own and reproduce in the lives of others the things which he has been taught. May the Lord help us to see clearly the great work that needs to be done over the lifetime of a new convert and never cease our growth in His cause.

The Conversion Process
Heart Changes in the Intellect, Emotions and Will
in regard to God, Sin and Christianity.

	God	Sin	Christianity
Intellect	Realize the Existence of the God found in the Bible	Understand Sin and its Consequences	Form and Change Beliefs and Attitudes toward Christianity
Emotions	Have a Favorable Attitude toward God	Change of Heart toward Sin and Have Hope in God to Overcome Problems of Sin	Have a Positive Attitude toward Christianity and the Church
Will	Submit to the Authority of God and the Lordship of Christ	Determination to Leave Sin and to Embrace Righteous Living	Submit to the Inspiration and Authority of the Scriptures
	Believe	Repent	Love

Call to Confess Christ and Be Baptized

Upon the Rock Bible Study Series
 Prelesson
 "GETTING TO KNOW THE GOD OF THE BIBLE"

**Upon the Rock Bible Study Series
 Getting to Know the God of the Bible**

What do you think?

The greatest questions of life:

- Where did we come from?
- Why are we here?
- What happens when we die?
- What is the purpose of life?

If there is a God,

- Then there is a Supreme Being to whom we must give an account.
- Then we need to learn whatever we can about the nature of God.
- Then we need to know what He requires of us and how to please Him.
- Then we have a reason for existence and a purpose in life.

If there is no God,

- Then there is no Supreme Being to whom we must give an account, i.e., no Judgment Day, no heaven, and no hell.
- Then this life is all there is.
- Then right and wrong, good and evil hardly matter.
- Then no one has any reason for existence or purpose in life.

Is there any evidence for the existence of God?

Hebrews 3:4

Can a house build itself?

T F

Does a house show intelligent design?

Y N

Psalm 19:1

Do the heavens declare the glory and intelligent handiwork of a Supreme Being?

Y N

Genesis 8:22

Do the seasons indicate order and intelligent design?

Y N

Isaiah 40:26

Does the universe display order and design?

Y N

Does the order in the universe point to an intelligent Being for that order and design?

Y N

Romans 1:20

Could ordinary matter without intelligence bring about the order and design seen in the universe?

Y N

Psalm 139:14

Does the human body show order and intelligent design?

Y N

If there is intelligent order and design in the universe and in a human body, does it make sense to believe that there is a designer.

Y N

Would this designer have to possess great intelligence?

Y N

Would this designer have to possess great power?

Y N

Is man intelligent enough to create the universe and the human body?

Y N

Is man powerful enough to create the universe and the human body?

Y N

How could inanimate matter so design and arrange itself to bring about the intricate workings of the human body?

Romans 2:14-15

How do you feel when someone does something to hurt you?

How do you feel when you do something to hurt or sin against someone else?

It is reasonable to believe that inanimate matter gave rise to the moral nature of rational man.

T F

The fact of God's existence gives the best reason why man has a moral nature.

T F

Man has a spiritual side, which cannot be explained by matter.

T F

Can We Trust the Bible?

2 Peter 1:16

Is it reasonable to believe that an intelligent God would communicate to all?

Y N

The Scriptures claim that men spoke from God being moved by the Holy Spirit.

T F

Isaiah 46:9,10

Can God reveal the end from the beginning and tell what will happen in the future?

Y N

Joshua 6:26; 1 Kings 16:34

Did what Joshua predict in 1400 BC come to pass in 870 BC?

Y N

How could Joshua have known the future?

Some Messianic Prophecies

Micah 5:2

Was Jesus born in Bethlehem (Matt. 2:1-10)?

Y N

How can a person decide where he is going to be born?

Isaiah 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25 (cf. Gen. 3:15)

Was Jesus to be born of a virgin?

T F

How could Isaiah know this 750 years before the birth of Jesus?

How could they know these things about Jesus?

tribe of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
 seed of David (Psalm 132:11)
 would teach in parables (Psalm 78:2)
 Jewish rulers would reject him (Psalm 118:22)
 Flesh would not decay (Psalm 16:8-10)
 would enlist Gentiles (Isaiah 42:10)
 would be scourged (Psalm 35:15)
 casting lots for his garments (Psalm 22:18)
 bones not broken (Ex. 12:46; Psalm 34:20)
 given gall and vinegar (Psalm 69:21)
 buried with the rich (Isaiah 53:9)

Many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as: (1) place of birth, (2) time of birth, (3) manner of birth of a virgin woman, (4) betrayal, (5) manner of death in crucifixion, (6) people's reactions at his death, (7) piercing, and (8) his burial.

Concerning these eight prophecies, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in 10¹⁷. That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing we take 10¹⁷ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

If Jesus were not from God and the Scriptures were not true, how could these prophecies have been fulfilled?

Upon The Rock Bible Study Series
 Lesson 1
"THE SON OF GOD"

1. Matthew 7:24-27

The _____ man built his house upon the rock. He showed wisdom by _____ "these words of Mine" and _____. The foolish man hears but does not _____. Which foundation will you choose? _____

WHO IS JESUS?

2. Matthew 1:18-25

Jesus was to _____ his people from their sins. Immanuel means _____.

3. John 1:29-34

Jesus is the _____ of God who takes away the sins of the world.

4. Hebrews 1:1-4

God in these last days has spoken to us by _____ whom He has appointed _____ of all things, and through whom He made the _____. Jesus, the Son, is the _____ of God's glory and the _____ of His nature or person.

When Jesus made purification of our sins, He sat down at the _____ of God.

WHY DID HE COME?

5. John 3:16,17

6. John 10:10

7. John 18:37

WHY SHOULD I BELIEVE HIM?

8. John 20:30,31

John's gospel was written so that

9. John 3:1-3

How did Nicodemus describe Jesus

Why did He believe this? _____

10. John 11:43-53

Did the people believe Jesus could raise the dead?

_____ Did the enemies of Jesus recognize that Jesus could work signs?

_____. "If we let him go on like this, _____ will believe in him."

11. 1 Corinthians 15:1-8

List those to whom Jesus appeared after his resurrection:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.
- e.
- f.

12. John 20:19,20

Where were the disciples hiding?

Why were disciples hiding?

What did they do when they saw the Lord?

13. Acts 1:1-3

How long did Jesus show himself alive after his resurrection? _____ Were the disciples convinced of his resurrection? _____

14. Acts 5:26-32

Did the apostles state that they were witnesses of the resurrection? _____ What caused this group, who was at first afraid, to openly disobey the Council (Sanhedrin) and preach the gospel of Jesus?

Would you break the law, knowing you would be punished, to preach a belief that you knew was a lie? _____

15. Matthew 28:18

Jesus has been given _____ authority in heaven and on earth.

16. John 3:35-36

The Father has given all things into the hands of the _____. Can one disobey Christ and still please God? _____

17. John 12:48

By what will we be judged on the last day?

18. John 16:12,13

Did Jesus tell his disciples everything during his earthly ministry? _____ The Spirit of truth was to guide them into _____ truth.

19. 2 Timothy 3:16,17

All Scripture is _____ by God. The Scriptures thorough equip (or furnish) the man of God for _____ good work. If the Scriptures furnish man for every good work, is there any need for additional revelation? _____

20. 2 John 9-11

Can one add to, take away from, or change the teaching of Christ and still please God?

21. Galatians 1:6-10

How many gospels have come from Christ? _____ What will happen to anyone preaching a different gospel?

We should always seek to please _____.

22. John 12:48

By what will we be judged?

creeds of men?

preachers?

the old and new covenants?

the words of Jesus in the new covenant?

What do you think of the following statement of C. S. Lewis?

"I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A

man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic--on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg--or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come away with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to."

Matthew 16:13-19

"But who do you say that I am?"

“UPON THE ROCK” BIBLE STUDY SERIES
Lesson 2
“THE GREAT SALVATION”

THE DOWNFALL OF MAN

1. Romans 3:23
Every person has _____ and _____ of the glory of God.
2. 1 John 1:8-10
If we say we have not sinned we deceive _____ and make Him a _____.
3. What is sin?
James 4:17

1 John 3:4

1 John 5:17

4. What are the consequences of sin?
Romans 6:23

Galatians 5:19-21

5. Matthew 26:41
The spirit is _____, but the flesh is _____.

SALVATION IS IN CHRIST

6. Romans 5:6-10
While we were still _____, Christ died for the _____.
7. 1 Peter 2:21-25
Jesus bore our _____ in his body on the tree (cross) that we might _____ to sin. By his _____ we are healed.
8. John 3:16
God so loved the _____ that He gave His only begotten Son that _____ believes in Him should not perish.
9. Matthew 7:13,14
_____ will go the broad way to destruction. _____ will find the way to life.

SURVEY OF YOUR LIFE:

Are you saved? _____
 When were you saved?

When were you baptized?

 Why were you baptized?

 Were you saved before or after baptism?

10. Matthew 7:24-27
What distinguishes the wise from the foolish man? _____

11. John 14:15
If you love Me, you will _____ My _____.

12. Romans 6:17,18
Is obedience to God inward only, outward only, or both inward and outward?
 _____ The Romans obeyed from the heart a _____ of doctrine. What is a form? _____
 Were they freed from sin before or after they obeyed the form of teaching? _____

13. Hebrews 11:6
We cannot _____ God without faith in Him and His promises.

14. James 2:24
One is justified by faith (Romans 5:1) but not by faith _____

15. Luke 13:1-5
Along with faith and love, one must repent or he will _____

16. Matthew 21:28,29
Which son repented? _____
 Is repentance good intentions only? _____

17. Luke 15:11-24
When the lost son came to himself or came to his senses, he decided to go to his _____ and said, " _____ against heaven and in your sight." *What sins in your life cause you sorrow?*

18. Matthew 10:32,33
Christ wants us to confess _____ before other men. Could I do all these (love, believe,

repent, and confess) except one and still please God? _____

19. Matthew 28:20 (Matthew 23:23)

Will God be pleased if we do only part of what He commands? _____

20. Mark 16:15,16

He that _____ and has been _____ shall be saved. In this sentence which comes first "baptized" or "saved?" _____

21. Acts 2:36-41

Why were the Jews pierced to the heart?

_____ Peter told them to _____ and be _____ for the forgiveness of their sins.

Is this promise for them alone? _____

What did these who gladly received his word do? _____

Did the 3,000 understand Peter's message alike?

22. Acts 8:35-39

Was baptism included in Philip's preaching of Christ? _____ The Eunuch saw _____ and wanted to be baptized. In baptism the Eunuch went _____ the water and came up _____ the water.

23. Acts 22:16

Arise, and be baptized, and wash away your _____, calling on the name of the Lord.

24. Romans 6:3-7

We are baptized into the _____ of Christ. We are _____ with Him by baptism into death. Christ walked in newness of life when he was _____ from the dead. We walk in newness of life before or after we are buried and raised with Christ? _____ Our old self is crucified with him that our body of _____ might be done away. If baptism is a burial, could one please God without being buried in water? _____

25. Titus 3:3-7

He saved _____, not because of righteous things we have done, but because of His _____. He saved us through (by) the _____ of regeneration (rebirth) and the _____ of the Holy Spirit.

26. Ephesians 4:5

There is _____ baptism. If we obeyed the form of teaching that Paul, the Eunuch, and the Romans obeyed, could we too be set free from sin? _____

The one baptism is burial in _____ for the _____ of sins.

Would you like to have your sins forgiven today? _____

"UPON THE ROCK" BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Lesson 3

"THE BODY OF CHRIST"

1. Matthew 7:24-27

To have a solid foundation we must _____ and _____.

CHRIST AND THE CHURCH

2. Christ is:

_____ of the church. (Matthew 16:18)

_____ of the church. (Acts 20:28)

_____ of the church. (Ephesians 1:22,23)

3. Colossians 1:18

The body (of Christ) is the _____.

4. How many bodies does Christ have?

Romans 12:4,5 _____

1 Corinthians 12:12,13 _____

Ephesians 4:4 _____

5. 1 Corinthians 12:13

We are all _____ into one body.

6. 1 Corinthians 12:27

If the body is the church, then the body of Christ is also the _____ of Christ.

RELIGIOUS UNITY

7. John 17:20-23

Jesus prayed that all his people might be _____. Is religious division a stumbling block to the faith of many people? _____ Does God approve of religious division? _____

8. 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

Christians should be perfectly united or made complete in the same _____ and the same _____.

9. 1 Corinthians 14:33

God is not a God of _____ but of peace.

THE CAUSE OF RELIGIOUS DIVISION

10. Matthew 7:15-23

Beware of _____ who come in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. Will all who say, "Lord, Lord," be saved? _____ He who _____ the will of my Father will enter heaven. Some were rejected because they practiced _____.

11. Matthew 15:1-14

The disciple transgressed the tradition of the elders but the Pharisees transgressed the _____ for the sake of tradition. Isaiah said that these people honor Me with their _____ but their _____ are far from me. Their worship is _____ because they teach the _____ of men. Every plant not planted by the Father shall be _____. Can a person be blind to the truth? _____

12. Galatians 1:6-9

How many gospels are there? _____ If one teaches a different gospel, he will be _____.

13. 2 John 9-11

To have both the Father and the Son, one must _____ in the teaching of Christ. Does it please God to assist, bless, or support some who does not teach the doctrine of Christ? _____

14. John 8:31,32

If you _____ in My word, then you are _____ my disciples, and you will know the _____, and the truth will make you _____.

THE PROPHECY OF THE FALLING AWAY

15. Acts 20:28-30

Savage wolves will destroy the flock by _____ to draw away the disciples after them.

16. 1 Timothy 4:1-3

Some will fall away by paying attention to (or following) _____ and _____.

17. 2 Tim. 4:1-5

The time will come when men will not put up with sound _____. People will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to _____.

18. 2 Peter 2:1-3

False teachers will secretly introduce _____.

**THE FALLING AWAY OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT CHURCH
A BRIEF HISTORICAL STUDY**

**I. THE CHURCH AS IT WAS
ESTABLISHED**

Matthew 16:18; Acts 20:28; Romans 16:16; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13; Ephesians 1:20-23; 4:1-6.

II. THE FALLING AWAY

Unscriptural doctrines and practices began to be introduced after the death of the apostles: Holy water (113 A.D.); Lent (140 A.D.); Penance (157 A.D.); Infant baptism (185 A.D.); Intercession of the saints (240 A.D.); Sprinkling for baptism (250 A.D.); sacrifice of Mass (370 A.D.); celibacy of priests (425 A.D.); purgatory (450 A.D.); confession to priests (500 A.D.); Pope (Boniface III, 606 A.D.); instrumental music used in worship (670 A.D.).

The church continued to depart from the faith until it did not even resemble the church that Christ built. It was different in doctrine, worship, organization and in mission.

The Reformation was a step in the right direction. The reformers rebelled against many of the corruptions of Rome. They rejected many of the unscriptural practices of the apostate church; but they were inconsistent in holding on to other things which were just as unscriptural, e.g. infant baptism, sprinkling, and instrumental music.

Some reformers: Martin Luther (1530 A.D.) Lutheran Church; Luther's catechism;

John Calvin (1536 A.D.) Presbyterian Church; Westminster Confession; Henry VIII (1552 A.D.) Episcopal Church; Book of Common Prayer; John Smyth (1607 A.D.) Baptist Church; Standard Manual; John Wesley (1629 A.D.) Methodist Church; Methodist Discipline.

Today there are more than 1000 denominations that create division and confusion in the minds of men. More denominations are not needed. We have enough!

**III. THE RESTORATION OF THE NEW
TESTAMENT CHURCH**

If the church of Christ today is simply another denomination, it has no reason or right to exist. These men wanted to restore the church of Christ in its simplicity and purity as it was in the first century. This is still our plea today: James O'Kelly (1793 A.D.) a Methodist preacher; Elias Smith (1800 A.D.) a Baptist preacher; Barton W. Stone (1804 A.D.), a Presbyterian preacher; Thomas and Alexander Campbell (1830 A.D.), Presbyterian preachers.

These men said, "Let us cast aside all denominational names, creeds, doctrines and practices which divide the Christian world and just wear the name 'Christian' and be only members of the New Testament church." Their plea was, "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; where they are silent we are silent." They began to sow the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11) which produced only Christians, members of the church of Christ, as it had done more than 1900 years earlier.

Upon the Rock Bible Study Series

Lesson 4

"BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD"

**"Upon the Rock" Bible Study Series
Building a Relationship with God**

Covenants

Through the ages God has established relationships with men through covenants. Covenants are permanent, formal agreements

between two parties, wherein God pledges to keep promises and men pledge to obey His commandments. God has made many covenant promises to man but made only two major covenants with men. The first covenant was with Israel as a nation; and the second through the blood of Jesus with all men.

The First Covenant

Exodus 19:1-8

The first covenant was made at _____.

God promised to make Israel a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. T F

God would bless Israel whether they obeyed His voice and kept His commandments. Y N

The sons of Israel said, "All that the LORD has spoken we _____!"

Deuteronomy 5:1-22

God made a covenant with Israel at Sinai. T F

The Sinai covenant also included their fathers. T F

Israel remembered the Sabbath because God delivered them from Egyptian slavery. T F

Exodus 34:27-28 (Deut. 4:13)

Moses wrote on the tablets the words of the _____, the _____ commandments.

The Promise of a New Covenant

Jeremiah 31:31-34

God promised to make a _____ covenant.

Israel broke the first covenant. T F

In the new covenant, everyone will know the Lord. T F

God said, "I will forgive their _____, and their sin I will remember no more."

Hebrews 8:6-13

He [Jesus] is the mediator of a _____ covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

If that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion sought for a second. T F

When He said, "A new covenant," He has made the first _____.

Romans 7:4-7

We were made to _____ to the Law by the body of Christ, that we might be joined to another.

We have been released from the Law, having died to that by which we were bound. T F

We serve in _____ of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

Which law said, "You shall not covet"?

Galatians 3:19-25

The law was added because of _____.

The law was our _____ to lead us to Christ. Now that _____ has come, we are no longer under the _____.

Matthew 5:17,18

Jesus came to _____ the Law and the Prophets.

Romans 15:4

Whatever was written in earlier times was written for our _____, that through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have _____.

The New Covenant in Jesus

Ephesians 2:11-19

But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were _____ have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

Jesus broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the _____ of commandments contained in ordinances, that in Himself He might make the two into one new man.

Matthew 28:18-20

_____ authority has been given to Jesus. Christians are to observe _____ that Jesus commanded.

Matthew 7:24-27

The wise man hears the _____ of Jesus and _____ upon them. The foolish man hears but does not act upon _____.

John 12:48

He who rejects Me, and does not receive My _____, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

John 8:31-32

If you _____ in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the _____, and the truth shall make you free. How would you describe someone who added to, subtracted from, or changed the teachings of Jesus?

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you _____ one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

How has Jesus loved us?

John 14:15, 23

If you love me, you will _____ my commandments.

John 15:8

By this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so _____ to be My disciples.

How do Christians bear fruit?

2 John 9-11

If anyone goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, he does not have God.

T F

One who supports a false teacher participates in his _____ deeds.

Why would a follower of Jesus want to change any teaching that comes from Christ?

Colossians 3:1-17

Christians should seek the things _____ where Christ is.

Christians should consider the members of their body as _____ to immoral things.

Christians have laid aside the old self and has put on the new self, who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him.

T F

What characteristics should a Christian display in his life?

"UPON THE ROCK" BIBLE STUDY SERIES

Lesson 5

"UPON THE ROCK"

ORGANIZATION OF THE CHURCH

1. Matthew 7:24-27 (1 Corinthians 3:11)

The safe foundation is the _____. Can one be sure of any other foundation? _____

2. Acts 14:21-23

Paul and Barnabas appointed _____ for them in every church. Is the word "elders" singular or plural? _____

3. Acts 20:17-28

Paul called the _____ of the church at Ephesus. Paul said the Holy Spirit made them

_____ to shepherd the church of God. Elders are _____.

4. Philippians 1:1

T F There was only one bishop (overseer) and one deacon of the church at Philippi.

5. Titus 1:5-9

Elders and _____ are terms used to refer to the same office. Titus was to appoint _____ in every city.

6. 1 Timothy 3:1-13

T F Overseers and deacons must meet certain qualifications to hold these offices.

7. 1 Timothy 2:10-15

Women are not allowed to teach or to
_____ over a man.

NEW TESTAMENT WORSHIP

8. John 4:23,24

God seeks those who will worship Him in
_____ and in _____.

9. John 8:31,32

The true disciples of Christ abide in His
_____.

10. 1 Timothy 2:8

God wills that men should
_____.

11. 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Pray
_____.

12. Acts 17:10,11

The Bereans were noble because they
_____ the Scriptures
_____ to see whether these things
were so.

13. 2 Peter 3:18

Grow in the grace and the _____ of
our Lord.

14. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

Christians eat the bread and drink the cup in
_____ of the death of Christ.

15. Acts 20:6,7

Why did the church at Troas gather together?

When did the gathering take place?

Would it be a safe guide for us to break the
bread each first day of the week? _____

16. 1 Corinthians 16:1,2

The church was to put aside and save on the
_____ day of the week. Does this passage
mention the word "tithe?" _____

17. 2 Corinthians 9:6,7

Each should give as he has _____ in
his heart. God loves the _____
giver. Does this passage mention tithes? _____

18. Ephesians 5:19

God desires that we _____ to one another
in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. We
should make melody _____ our hearts. Is an
instrument mentioned here other than the heart?

19. Colossians 3:16

We should _____ and _____
one another with songs, hymns and spiritual
songs. Would God be pleased if we sang
without using any instruments (such as a piano)?
_____ Are musical instruments able to speak,
teach or admonish? _____

20. John 8:31

If we speak, teach and admonish by singing a
cappello, are we abiding in God's word? _____
Can one be sure he is abiding in God's Word if
he adds musical instruments to his worship?

21. Hebrews 10:23-26

A Christian should stimulate others to
_____ and _____
_____. Forsaking our own
_____ does not please God. There
no longer remains a sacrifice for sin for the one
who _____ goes on sinning.

22. Romans 12:1,2

Our bodies should be a living _____.
We should _____
what the will of God is, that which is good and
acceptable and perfect.

SUMMARY

T F The wise man builds his house upon the
rock by hearing and acting upon the word of
God.

T F Jesus is the Son of the living God.

T F Jesus died for our sins, was buried, and
arose the third day.

T F You and I will be judged by the words of
Christ.

T F God will hold us responsible for sin.

T F I have always done the will of God.

T F The wages of sin is death.

T F We should obey from the heart the
teachings of Christ.

T F One must do all the will of God to please
Him.

T F To be saved one must love, believe, repent,
and be baptized.

T F True baptism is burial in water for the
forgiveness of sins.

T F God wants all who believe to be one.

T F God wants each church to have elders and
deacons.

T F God wants churches to pray, study, give,
sing, and partake of the Lord's supper.

T F I want to build my house on the rock.

T F I know I have a loving and right relationship with God.

T F I want to be right with God today.

Acts 2:41

They that gladly received his word were _____ . Did they wait for another day?

James 4:13-17

Do you have assurance of tomorrow? _____ It is _____ to fail to do what you know is right.

MOTIVATING PEOPLE TO OBEY THE GOSPEL

Our purpose is to bring the lost to an obedience of faith (Rom. 1:5; 16:25,26). The apostles did more than merely teach the basics of the gospel; they also attempted to convince those they taught to obey. There is never any good reason for manipulation or coercion in teaching the gospel, but there is a need for persuasion which is Biblical:

1. 2 Cor. 5:11 Therefore knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men
2. Acts 2:40 with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation."
3. Acts 18:4 he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks (cf. 19:8)
4. Acts 28:23 he was explaining to them by solemnly testifying about the kingdom of God, and trying to persuade them concerning Jesus

Bobby Bates: "If we know that people are lost in sin, doomed to eternal condemnation in a Devil's Hell forever and forever, and then we do not try to persuade them to obey the gospel, are we really fulfilling our obligation to God and to the lost? No! A thousand times, no!"

In order to reach people we must help them through their spiritual decision process to make a life-long commitment to deny themselves and take up their crosses daily and follow Jesus. We must help them count the cost of discipleship and count the cost of rejecting Jesus.

SOME WAYS TO APPEAL FOR OBEDIENCE:

I. Ten Reasons Why You Should Become a Christian

1. The Bible teaches it
2. Happiness (Acts 8:40)
3. God's help (Heb. 4:16)
4. Influence on loved ones
5. Time is short.
6. Death is certain
7. Heaven is too good to miss
8. Hell is real
9. Jesus wants you to obey
10. You'll never regret it.

Psalm 116:12 "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits toward me?"

Question: "Can you think of any good reason why you shouldn't become a Christian? Why don't you write down your reason for not being a Christian? Would you be willing to give this to Jesus on Judgment Day?"

II. Some choice questions:

1. Will you choose going to bed tonight having done right or wishing you had obeyed?
2. Would you rather be a member of a church that follows the New Testament or a church that has good people but practices things not taught in the Bible?
3. Would you rather follow the Bible plan of salvation or following some plan not like any New Testament teaching?
4. Did you ever find a time in life when you regretted doing the right thing?
5. If Jesus could come here to you now, extend His hand to you, and ask you to be a Christian, what would you do?

6. Suppose you had a friend who was asking you what to do to become a Christian, what would you advise him to do? (Let him answer.) Can you take your own advice? If it is right for him to do that, it is also the right thing for you to do. Can you see this is what YOU ought to do?

III. Giving the Best You Have to Offer

"John, I believe that if it were in your power, you would give Mary and your little ones the very best life could offer."

(Wait for an answer.)

"But, John, you cannot give them the best life has to offer until you give them a Christian husband and father, and that IS within your power tonight."

"I don't doubt you are a good husband and father, but we are talking about giving them the BEST. Your family thinks you are great and wonderful, the best that ever lived. But your little ones will very likely turn out like your example. To be the best example you need to give them a devoted Christian father."

PSYCHOLOGICAL APPEALS BETWEEN SALVATION AND CONDEMNATION:

1. Appeal to Self Preservation:
 - a. Acts 2:40 "Save yourselves from this crooked generation."
 - b. It is nonsense not to teach people the dangers of spiritual procrastination or indifference.
2. Appeal to the Highest Quality of Life
 - a. John 10:10; Matt. 11:28-30
 - b. Jesus is the answer to the problems of anxiety, guilt, fear, meaninglessness, and death. He gives grace, peace, purpose and life.
3. Appeal for Recognition and Acceptance
 - a. God loves us (Rom. 5:6-11; John 3:16; Rom. 8:32)
 - b. God accepts us (Luke 15:11-24)
4. Appeal to the Yearning for Freedom
 - a. freedom from sin (John 8:31-36)
 - b. freedom from the consequences of sin (in God's eyes)
5. Appeal to Fulfillment
 - a. John 10:10; Eccl. 12:13
 - b. Eph. 2:8-10; Tit. 2:11-14
6. Appeal to Influence

- a. Matt. 18:6-10 stumbling block to a little one
- b. opportunity to make our world a better place

7. Appeal to Gratitude

- a. Have you thanked Jesus for dying on the cross for you?
- b. In turning down Jesus, one is turning down God's greatest gift.

SOME HELPFUL SUGGESTIONS IN MOTIVATING OTHERS:

1. Use words and questions that produce a positive reaction from your friend's mind.
 - a. "Why?" is often a good question to ask
 - b. "Let's. . ." is unselfish and cooperative
 - c. "When?" is a good word to use in response to a person who is "someday" oriented.
 - d. "Which?" is a good word to use in comparisons:
 - Which one is according to the Bible?
 - Which one pleases God?
 - Which foundation do you want to build your life on?
2. Use vivid and clear illustrations that help a sinner see the need for obedience. He must see himself as God sees him. You may want to use his name in the illustration. It is not enough merely to know the truth. He must apply it to his life and to his soul.
3. Reassure the person you are teaching by quoting from God's word. "If God said it, it has to be true." "Can you go wrong if you do what God says to do?"
4. Do not be afraid to be gently persistent. Salesmen often have several ways they ask people to buy their products. If an approach is unsuccessful, try a different approach. Customers often say "no" early, when they are not yet fully convinced. What they need is a little more gentle persuasion.
5. Sometimes silence can be very effective in persuasion. Ask the sinner to respond and then remain silent until he breaks the silence. Don't be afraid to wait. Let him think and act.
6. Persuasion will be much easier if you have done these things to lay a foundation:
 - a. believe with all your heart that people are interested.

- b. be convinced of the things you are asking him to accept
- c. pay attention to the person you are teaching
 - *listen to them when they are speaking
 - *focus on what they are saying
 - *encourage them to talk
 - *ask questions and pay attention to their answers
 - *look them in the eye
 - *don't try to out-do their jokes or stories
- d. be generous with honest praise
- e. be courteous and polite
- f. let them know that they are important to you
 - g. dress neatly and be well-groomed (watch out for mouth odor)
- 7. Be enthusiastic and positive about your message.
- 8. Be thorough in your teaching.
- 9. Be clear about what you want them to do.

<p>Crucial Questions Converts Ask</p>
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1. Will my commitment to Christ do for me what you say?

It is not always easy to make up your heart and mind whether or not you are willing to commit yourself wholly to Christ Jesus. There is one thing you can be sure about: God keeps His promises. From the time of Abraham, those who are devoted to God could be certain that whatever God had promised, He was also able to perform (Rom. 4:20,2 1). Paul knew the God whom He believe and was convinced that God was able to guard His soul until the day of judgment (2 Tim. 1:12). God does not stutter, does not tease, and does not forget His promises. Whatever God has promised you, He is able to perform. Jesus Christ challenges us in John 7:17, "If any man is willing to do His will, he shall know of the teaching, whether it is of God, or whether I speak from Myself." God is asking you to commit yourself to Him. He will honor His promises to you.

2. Is this the best solution for my life?

The Christian life is truly the best life to live. Many Christians wonder how anyone could live without Jesus Christ as an active, everyday part

of their lives. Life with prayer to a Lord who loves you is certainly superior to life with no help from above. Life with the truth is certainly better than living with a lie. Life with hope in Christ is certainly more happy and fulfilling than life without God (Eph. 2:12). Life with a moral foundation is certainly more peaceful and stable than life without rules. Someone has well said that there is no problem that is bigger than God and you together can handle. When one puts his trust in God, he need not worry about being put to shame or disappointed (Rom. 5:1-5).

3. Will this decision help me for the rest of my life?

Christianity is a life-long faith built upon a life-long love. God loves you and has provided for your spiritual needs in this life and in the life to come. Paul said that in Christ we have all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places (Eph. 1:3). Christ Jesus is One who understands the temptations and struggles you face, and can help you face whatever trial that lies ahead (Heb. 4:14-16). The firm promise of God in the Scriptures is, "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you" (Heb. 13:5). As long as you hold to God, you can be sure of His blessing and presence in your life.

4. Will I be able to hold out?

Jesus Christ has asked us to remain faithful until death (Rev. 2:10); there is no turning back for the person who commits himself to Jesus (Luke 9:57-62). Should we decide to forsake the Lord, we can lose what we have gained in Christ (2 Pet 2:20-22). We should not think, however, that the Christian life is one that we live alone and without the help of God and others. God has provided the church as a family for us to grow spiritually strong. He has provided prayer and His grace to sustain us through difficult times (2 Cor. 12:7-10). Worship services, Bible classes, fellowship with our church families, daily prayers, and faithful Christian service will be sources of spiritual nourishment and refreshment for as long as you live. When you need God, He will be there for you. The Word of God can strengthen you (Rom. 16:25,26).

5. If I should fail, what would happen to me then?

Although you may become a Christian, you will still have to deal with sin in your life from time to time. The Scriptures teach that when a Christian sins, he is to confess his sins (1 John 1:9; James 5:16) and to repeat of his sins, asking God for forgiveness (Acts 8:18-24). You can feel certain that when you are penitently asking Gods forgiveness, that you are continuing to walk in His light and can enjoy His fellowship (1 John 1:6-10). But should you forsake the Lord and walk in darkness, you will lose the blessing of His cleansing blood (Heb. 10:26,35-39). Each Christian needs to keep guard on his heart and life to see that he is continuing to follow he Lord.

6. Do I have to change my whole life? Will I have to give up my friends?

A person who begins loving the Lord will find his desires change. He wants to draw close to God and learns to love the things of God. At the same time, sinful things that separate one from God tend to lose their appeal. As a Christian one doesn't see sin as an attractive thing anymore. The young Christian who wants to please God may find that his old friends may not want to have much to do with him (1 Pet. 4:1-4). The young Christian should seek for people who will help him build his faith rather than destroy it. The great challenge for the new Christian is to share the gospel with his old friends, so that they may experience a change of heart and life. You may want to share this program or another Bible study with a friend.

7. Why does it seem there are so many hypocrites in the church?

Someone has defined a hypocrite as a person who "does not intend to be what he pretends to be." A hypocrite is an actor or a pretender; he is not genuine in his faith or his desire to follow Jesus Christ. Jesus described the hypocrites of his time as whitewashed tombs, pretty on the outside but full of uncleanness on the inside (Matt. 23:25-28). There are some hypocrites in the church, but one should be careful not to confuse hypocrisy with weakness. Ad! Christians have their weaknesses, in which they are especially vulnerable to temptation and sin (Heb. 4:15; Gal. 6:1). As Christians, each of us must be patient with each other and help each other to overcome the temptations we all face (Heb. 12:12,13). Further we must guard that we do not exalt ourselves as judges (James 4:11,12).

8. I've never done anything really bad; I'm not sure if I died that God would send me to hell? Men often downplay their sins. They often do not look at sin the way God does. God does not think the way we do (Isa. 55:6-9). While we may not see the harm or the offense in sin, God is offended by all sin. Every sin is a breaking of His law (1 John 3:4). God has declared that the soul who sins must die (Ezekiel 18:4; Rom. 6:23). We usually forget how much we have sinned. If a person only sinned once a day, he would have accumulated more than 20,000 sins by age seventy. God hates sin. He sent His only begotten Son Jesus to die on a cruel cross to pay the penalty for our sins. The Bible teaches that God is both just in condemning those who reject the blood of Jesus and the justifier of those who will be obedient to Him (Rom. 3:24-26). Our God is a loving God, but He is also just and will condemn those who remain in sin.

REACHING THOSE WHO HAVE FALLEN AWAY

"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted" (Gal. 6:1). To restore the fallen is to reconcile them to the Lord and to the church. Some general statistics about dropouts:

1. Almost one of every two Americans, 46%, will drop out of active church participation sometime during their lifetime.
2. One third of all dropouts occur during the teenage years; 60% by age 24.
3. Eight in ten of those who drop out do so in the first year after they are converted.
4. Most people who drop out of church fail to receive a caring visit within the first two months.

5. Up to 80% of those who drop out will return to active participation in the church sometime during their lives.

6. Half of all dropouts can be reached again by a caring, compassionate visit from a Christian brother.

I. WHY PEOPLE DROP OUT

1. The failure to establish close, warm relationships with members of the church is the primary reason. If people have 5 or 6 close friends in the church, they will probably never drop out.

2. Another reason is the failure to have his needs met. In some cases it is the failure to have expectations met. He may be bored with church, uninvolved, or unedified. He may be tired of being put down or shamed at church. He may be disillusioned, finding that the church was not what he expected it to be.

3. He may have personal problems. In some cases an individual is caught up in sin and does not want to face it (Heb. 3:12-14). In other cases a devastating illness can create a faith problem. We should never take for granted that personal difficulties can be easily borne.

4. He may face major changes in life that make him vulnerable. A change in job and moving from one town to another often leaves people vulnerable to falling away. About half of those who move and find a new church home change from the religious group they were attending to a different fellowship. Many who move are very slow to find a church home within churches of Christ. Newcomers to town are among the most fruitful converts; but moving offers an opportunity for weak Christian to fall away.

5. False teaching can lead souls away from the truth (2 Tim. 4:2,3; Gal. 5:1-4).

6. Harsh treatment by crude brethren can drive weak Christians away from the church (3 John 9-10).

7. A loss of faith in God or in Christ can lead one to deny the Lord (Heb. 6:4-6). This is in a context of severe persecution.

8. Marital problems at home, divorce, or parental problems can destroy an entire family's commitment to the church and the Lord. Many times the embarrassment is overwhelming to a

family, to the extent that they will not return. The loving acceptance of brethren is never more needed than in family failure.

9. Personality clashes with other members, preachers or elders can lead people to stop attending altogether. In some cases, people never quite "fit in" with the whole congregation. Sensitivity to this problem and efforts to incorporate the brother or sister need to be made.

10. Occasionally a brother or sister works very hard in the church and receives very little appreciation. A lack of appreciation, sometimes criticism, and exhaustion can lead to burnout. Those who lead need to be sensitive to hard-working volunteers, who need feeding and appreciation. No one can live forever with manipulation and guilt-trips. Those who feel they can not live up to expectations or can not please others will eventually cease trying.

11. Occasionally a person will drop out because he does not agree with "church doctrine."

II. HOW A PERSON WHO DROPS OUT FEELS AND ACTS

1. He often is deeply hurt and usually wishes he were not dropping out. What he wants is that someone care!

a. When someone is offended or hurt, he generally tests his brethren by dropping out to see if anyone notices. The most crucial time in this period is the first few weeks.

b. If after six weeks to two months no one has noticed that he has ceased active participation, he regards the lack of attention as a confirmation that he is not needed or wanted. This is a devastating, hard-to-overcome, blow to an offended brother. Prov. 18:19 "An offended brother is more unyielding than a fortified city, and disputes are like the barred gates of a citadel."

2. There are generally *two reactions* to the deeply felt hurt in one who has fallen away:

a. **Anger.** In his mind, the church is the offender, filled with hypocrites, who hurt him and do not care about him. Our approach to such a one is usually critical of his behavior

(dropping out is wrong). We are often surprised, then, to find hostility.

b. **Guilt.** This is the person who blames himself for failing and is eaten up with guilt. Filled with despair, doubts and hopelessness he quits. He does not see any possible way he can come back.

3. After a period of time a dropout will usually reinvest themselves, their time and effort, into some other project. It may be family, a civic organization, or a volunteer program. He will find himself useful in his newly found project and believe that his faith is better than ever before. He may portray a life of great spirituality without the need for church. His spiritual life is all vertical, not horizontal. Many people who drop out never know they have not been faithful to God. They still consider themselves "faithful" members of the church. (80% of the people of the U.S. believe you can be a good Christian and not be a member of any church.)

III. WHAT WE CAN DO TO BRING THEM BACK

Lost is a terrible condition for the fallen child of God (2 Pet. 2:20-22). The Bible gives us some instruction about the need to restore the fallen:

*Gal. 6:1 restore, considering yourself (Matt. 7:12)

*James 5:19-20 save a soul from death

*2 Tim. 2:24-26 gentleness

*Jude 22,23 have mercy on them

1. *We must go to them, gentle and compassionate.* It may take some weeks of building trust with them before we can get them to open up and talk about their hurt and problems with the church. Usually it takes one visit for every year they have stayed away from the Lord. One must use friendly visits to build rapport and trust and earn the right to talk to them about their souls. Many people can be restored if a loving, caring, compassionate visit is made.

2. *We must listen to them.* We must, after gaining their confidence, tactfully ask what prompted them to leave. We must then listen, neither condoning nor judging their answer for the time being. It is important to allow them to fully speak their hearts.

3. *Once they have finished speaking, kindly ask them what they think could or should be done to change matters.* Don't tell them; let them tell you. They usually know:

- confession of sins: James 5:16; 1 John 1:9; Psalm 32:1-5
- repentance: Acts 8:22-23
- prayer for forgiveness
- "What can I do to help you?"
- Pray with them

4. *Suggest positive alternatives as solutions.* What most people need in life is a little hope for change. Let them know there is something they can do to make things better.

5. *Show the love of Christ to them.* Encourage them and help them to resume their lives in Christ.

6. *Ask them to commit themselves again to the Lord.*

We must be careful never to allow little problems to become big ones before we seek a solution to them.

God

There are a great many views of God today: a Supreme Being, a Higher Power, "the Force," or the "Man upstairs." Some say there are many gods. Others say "we are all becoming gods"; and still others worship the devil as god.

In Paul's day there were Pantheists who believed that God does not go beyond what you see in nature. Panentheists thought all is in God and that God was the soul of the universe; and Superstitious people, who worshiped demons and the spirits of dead men as gods. Idolatry was rampant in the days of Paul, and some thought God was material.

God is A Person

God is described in Scripture as one who thinks, feels, acts, loves, wills and judges. He has the emotions of a person. He can be grieved (Gen. 6:6,7), become angry (2 Thess. 1:7-9), love (1 John 4:7-11), rejoice (Luke 15:7,10), plan (Eph. 3:10,11), reason (Isa. 1:18), and do all that a person can do. When Jesus prayed, He prayed "Our Father." Christians have a relationship with God as a child to his father.

God is Spirit

John 4:21-24 God is spirit, not limited by space or time

Luke 24:39 "a spirit does not have flesh and blood"

Acts 17:24-25,28-29 God is not made with hands or material. God created man; man did not invent God.

Heb. 12:9 God is the "father of our spirits," that eternal part of us that is not flesh and blood.

God is Self-Existent

Acts 17:28 "for in Him we live and move and have our very being"

John 1:1-4 in Him is life (John 14:6)

Col. 1:15-17 He is the creator and sustainer of all things

Psa. 38:33:8,9 He spoke and it was done; He commanded and it stood fast

God is Infinite

God does not have the limitations of men. He is not limited by space or time.

Time: 2 Pet. 3:8; Rev. 1:8; Psa. 90:2 (Eternal)

Space: Psa. 139:7-12; Prov. 15:3; Matt. 28:20 (Omnipresent)

God is Omniscient (All-knowing)

God's knows and understands all things about people, nature, animals and the universe. See Psalm 147:5; Isa. 46:10; Psa. 139:1-6. The eyes of the Lord are in every place keeping watch on the evil and the good (Prov. 15:3).

God is Omnipotent (All-powerful)

With God all things are possible (Mark 10:27); God can do all things (Job 40:2); and "nothing is too hard for Him" (Jer. 32:17). This would not include logical impossibilities such as a square circle or a stone so large it could not be moved.

God is Supremely Holy

"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts" (Isa. 6:3). It is impossible for God to lie (Heb. 6:18; Tit. 1:2). God cannot be tempted nor does He tempt any man with sin (James 1:13). God commands His children, "Be ye holy, for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). God's eyes are too pure to approve sin (Habakkuk 1:13; cf. Isa. 59:1,2). It is God's holiness that demands justice for sin. God is incapable of sin (Tit. 1:2; Heb. 4:15).

God is Impartial

God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right (Acts 10:34,35). See also Deut. 10:17; 2 Chron. 19:7; Rom. 2:11; Gal. 2:6; Eph. 6:9; Col. 3:25; 1 Peter. 1:17; Rev. 20:11-15.

God is Sovereign Lord

God rules the nations, plants and uproots (Acts 17:26; Jer. 18:7-10). God now commands that all men everywhere repent (Acts 17:30). God is able to destroy our souls in hell (Matt. 10:28). At the end of the world God will judge each of us according to our works and according to His Word (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15).

God is Unique

There is but one God and there can be no other (Deut. 6:4-6). Man's whole duty in life is to fear God and keep His commandments (Eccl. 12:13). Man-made gods are forbidden because they never reflect the true grandeur and glory of the eternal God who does not live in temples made with hands (Acts 17:22-31). Man's sin

problems begin when they do not acknowledge Him as God or give thanks (Rom. 1:18-32).

God is Unchangeable (Immutable)

About Himself, God declares, "I am the Lord, I do not change" (Mal. 3:6). God is not a man that He should lie or repent. "Has He said, and will He not do it? Or has He spoken, and will He not make it good? (Num. 23:19; cf. 1 Sam. 15:29) In God there is no variation; He does not change (James 1:17).

God is Merciful

Christians are to be merciful, "just as your Father is merciful" (Luke 6:36; Matt. 5:45). Even though men were foolish and disobedient, God's kindness and love appeared in Christ Jesus. He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy (Tit. 3:3-7). God's mercy can save the worst of sinners (1 Tim. 1:12-16). See also Deut. 4:31; Ex. 34:6; Psa. 116:5; 145:8,9; Luke 15:11-24.

God is Love

God is love, and one must know God to know love (1 John 4:7-11). We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19). God demonstrated His love by giving His Son Jesus to die for our sins (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9). See also Eph. 2:4-7; Heb. 12:6-7; 1 John 3:1.

God is God

Whether men accept Him or approve of Him, He is still the one true and living God; and He cannot deny Himself (2 Tim. 2:11-13).

Question:

Paul referred to the God of the Bible as "my God" (Phil. 4:19). Is He your God? Have you given your life to Him?

Jesus Christ

Christianity is centered in the person of Jesus Christ, His teachings and His actions. The nature of Jesus is unlike any other person to live on this earth, for He was both God and man. He has always existed (John 1:1) and yet became a man (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5-8) so that He could sacrifice Himself for our sins (1 Cor. 15:1-4; Heb. 10:8-10; 1 Pet. 1:21-25).

The Deity of Jesus

* Matt. 1:21 "Immanuel" means "God with us"

* John 1:1-4 the "Word" was God (cf. 1:14,18)

* John 3:16 only begotten Son of God

* Heb. 1:1-4 Jesus is heir, creator, sustainer, and exact representation of His being

* Heb. 1:8,9 "Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever"

* Phil. 2:5-8 Jesus "being in very nature God" emptied Himself

* Col. 1:15-20 creator, sustainer, supreme, the beginning and firstborn*

* 2 Cor. 4:4 Christ, who is the image of God

* John 20:28 a believing Thomas said, "My Lord and my God"

* Rom. 1:4,5 Jesus declared with power to be the Son of God by resurrection

* Isa. 9:6 prophecy that Jesus would be "mighty God"

* John 10:30 Jesus said, "I and the Father are one"

* Matt. 16:16 "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" ("son of" partakes of same nature)

* John 14:8,9 "Anyone who has seen Me, has seen the Father"

* Acts 2:34-36 God made Jesus, whom you crucified, both 'Lord' and 'Christ'

* Col. 2:9 in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form

* Tit. 2:13 our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Pet. 1:1)

* Rev. 17:14 Lord of lords, and King of kings

Jesus was sinless: Mark 14:55,56; Luke 23:22, 47;

John 8:46; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:16; 1 Pet. 1:19;

2:22.

Jesus performed undeniable miracles: John 3:1-3;

11:47,48; 20:30,31; Matt. 27:62-66; Acts 4:16.

The Humanity of Jesus

- John 1:14 The word became "flesh" and dwelled among us
- Phil. 2:5-8 emptied Himself, being made in human likeness
- John 8:40 "you are seeking to kill me, a man who has told you the truth"
- Acts 2:22 "Jesus the Nazarene, a man attested to you by God"
- Rom. 5:15 "the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ"
- 1 Tim. 2:5 "one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus"

- Matt. 4:1-10 Jesus could be tempted (cf. Heb. 2:18; 4:15; God cannot be tempted, James 1:13)
- Heb. 2:17 Jesus was made in all things like his brethren
- Characteristics of Jesus as a man:
 - hungered (Matt. 4:2; 21:18);
 - thirsted (John 19:28);
 - tired (John 4:6);
 - slept in a boat (Luke 8:24);
 - fell under the weight of the cross (Luke 23:26);
 - suffered pain (Luke 22:44).

Human emotions Jesus showed:

- sorrow (Jn. 11:33);
- compassion (Matt. 9:36);
- strong crying (Heb. 5:7);
- anger (Mark 3:5);
- love (John 21:20).

Jesus humanity supremely shown in his death: (Heb. 2:8; 1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24) Were he not a man, Jesus could not have died.

Jesus had a human body (John 1:14; Heb. 2:14); had a true human body after his resurrection (Luke 24:39; John 20:27; 1 John 1:1-4); and has a glorified, human body in heaven (Acts 7:55,56; Matt. 26:64; Phil. 3:21; 1 John 3:2).

The Nature of Jesus today:

- Non-fleshly glory (1 Cor. 15:50; 2 Cor. 5:16; Psa. 24:7-10)
- King of Kings (Acts 2:29-33; Eph. 1:20-23; 1 Tim. 6:15)
- Head of the church (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,24)
- High Priest (Heb. 4:14-16; 8:4; 10:21; 1 John 2:2)
- Preparing our eternal dwelling place (John 14:1-3; 1 Pet. 1:3-5)
- Judge (John 5:22; Acts 17:30; 2 Cor. 5:10)
- Glorious (Rev. 1:12-18; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 John 3:2)

Characteristics of Jesus That Make Him Worthy to Follow:

I. His Power

The marvelous miracles of Jesus amazed people. Lazarus was raised from the dead (Jn 11);

a noteworthy miracle which could not be denied. People knew the stories of the healing of blind, lame, deaf, and the demon-possessed. Jesus was powerful because God was with Him. He walked on water, stilled the storms, turned water to wine, and withered the fig tree. He was Lord over nature. He fed the multitude, healed every sick person, caused a great load of fishes. He was Lord over life. He cast out demons and raised the dead. He was Lord over the underworld

His Compassion

One of the greatest beauties of Jesus is that he understands the needs and pains of men. Every person is important to Him. In our world we tend to rank people's importance by their position. Jesus never did that. Children, slaves, women, and foreigners were important. The sick, the afflicted, and the downtrodden were important. Jesus did not work miracles to build himself up in the eyes of the world but were acts of compassion.

His Humanity

We can identify with Jesus, and Jesus was One who can identify with us! Jesus, when He became a man, took to Himself all the weaknesses of mankind:

- physical vulnerability: hunger, thirst, sleep, suffer pain
- emotional vulnerability: betrayed, lied about, rejected, grieve
- spiritual vulnerability: prayed, could be tempted,

Heb. 4:15,16 says: "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need."

His Honesty

Many demand that people be real or genuine, and they despise pretense. Jesus never taught anything that he himself did not live up to. Jesus never taught anything he had to take it back. In a world of pretenders, Jesus taught against pretentious religionists (Matt. 6:1-18). Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for their hypocrisy (Matt. 23:25-28). He embodied truth (Jn 14:6; 18:37).

His Courage

In a world that liked to side-step immorality, Jesus spoke out against the real evils of our world--those that come from the heart: anger, hatred, selfishness, adultery, lust, corruption in high places, greed, and false swearing. Jesus did indeed cleanse the temple, to restore it to what God intended for it to be (Mk 11:15-17). Jesus did not compromise about truth; He was not a "mush God." He taught the difference between a narrow and a broad way (Matt. 7:13, 14). Jesus had more to say about hell than any other person in Scripture. (All but one reference to hell is from the lips of Jesus). If there is no hell, Jesus is a liar; but if there is a hell, Jesus would be no friend if he did not warn us of its presence.

His Promises

Jesus promised to care for our physical needs (Matt. 6:33); to care for our emotional needs (Matt. 11:28-30); and to care for our spiritual needs (John 14:1-3).

His Uniqueness

Jesus was unlike any other person to live throughout all history. The great prophets before Him pointed to Him, and all history since that time dates from His birth. The greatest truth of the Old Testament is that man was created in God's likeness; and the greatest truth of the New Testament is that God became man's likeness. He is:

- to have first place in everything (Col. 1:16,17)
- both God and man (John 1:1-3, 14)
- only one by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12; John 14:6; 1 Cor. 3:11)
- "One Lord" (Eph. 4:5)
- the first to be raised to die no more (Rom. 6:9)

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit goes by several different names: the Spirit, the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, and the Spirit of Truth. The Scriptures consider the Holy Spirit as a person, a spirit, and Divine. The Holy Spirit should never be considered as some kind of "force" or influence, as if he had no personality. In the section on the

Trinity is a list of passages, which show that the Holy Spirit is mentioned as one of the three persons of the Godhead (Matt. 28:19; 2 Cor. 13:14; Acts 15:28).

The Holy Spirit is a Person

- He speaks (1 Tim. 4:1)
- He witnesses (John 15:26)
- He teaches (John 14:26)
- He guides (John 16:13; Acts 16:6-10)
- He possesses a mind (Rom. 8:27)
- He has knowledge (1 Cor. 2:11)
- He has affections (Rom. 15:30)
- He possesses a will (1 Cor. 12:11)
- He can be grieved (Eph. 4:30; Isa. 63:10)
- He can be resisted (Acts 5:3)

The Holy Spirit is God, is Divine

- eternal (Heb. 9:14)
- omnipresent (Psa. 139:7-10)
- omniscient (1 Cor. 2:10,11; Rom. 8:26,27; cf. Isa.40:13,14)
- omnipotent (Micah 2:6; 3:8; cf. Matt. 12:28; Luke 11:20)
- Holy (100 times in Bible)
- has foreknowledge (Acts 1:16; 11:27,28)
- Sovereign (2 Cor. 3:17,18; Rev. 2:7)
- creator (Gen. 1:2; Psa. 33:6; 104:30)
- regenerator (2 Cor. 3:6; Tit. 3:5; Rom. 15:16)
- able to resurrect (Rom. 8:11; 1 Pet. 3:18,19)

The Holy Spirit Inspired the Word

1. The writers of the Old Testament claimed to be spokesmen for God, empowered by the Holy Spirit (2 Sam. 23:2; Isa. 59:21; Ezek. 11:5).

2. Jesus and the apostles agree with this claim, that the Spirit was involved in the writing of the Old Testament (Matt. 22:42-46; Mark 12:35-37; Acts 1:16; 18:25; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

3. Jesus promised Divine guidance and teaching to His apostles concerning themselves and the things that they would teach (John 14:26; 16:12,13; Matt. 10:19,20).

4. The apostles and prophets of the New Testament repeatedly claimed that they were speaking and writing the eternal truth of God through the Holy Spirit which was given to them (1 Cor. 2:6-13; Eph. 3:1-5; 1 Thess. 2:13; 1 Pet.

1:10-12; 2 Pet. 1:16-21). Paul calls the Word of God the sword of the Spirit (Eph. 6:17).

The Apostles and Others Received Miraculous Gifts of the Spirit

Jesus promised the apostles that they would receive power when the Holy Spirit came upon them (Acts. 1:8). On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit filled them and they began to speak with other tongues (foreign languages which they had not learned), as the Spirit was giving them utterance (Acts 2:1-12). The apostles by means of the Spirit were also able to work miraculous signs and wonders through the power of the Spirit (Acts 2:43; cf. Heb. 2:3,4) so that the people had a great sense of awe.

In 1 Corinthians 12:4-11 Paul lists nine miraculous spiritual gifts that come from the Holy Spirit: word of wisdom, word of knowledge, (miraculous) faith, gifts of healing, miracles, prophecy, distinguishing of spirits, tongue speaking, and interpretation of tongues. The Holy Spirit gave these gifts "just as He wills" (12:11), and not everyone possessed miraculous gifts (12:27-31). For further study of miraculous gifts, see the section "Does Anyone Have Miraculous Gifts Today?"

The Holy Spirit Indwells the Christian

Peter promised those who were baptized that they would receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). This was a non-miraculous gift. This promise was not merely for them, Peter and the apostles remarked that God has given the Holy Spirit to all who obey Him (Acts 2:39; 5:32). That the Holy Spirit dwells within the Christian cannot be doubted. Paul said that our bodies are "the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you have been bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body" (1 Cor. 6:19,20).

God has sealed each Christian in Christ with the Holy Spirit of promise. The Spirit has been given as a pledge (earnest or guarantee) of our inheritance, with a view to our redemption as God's own possession (Eph. 1:13,14; cf. 2 Cor. 1:22). This sealing took place when the Christians at Ephesus obeyed the message of truth--the gospel of your salvation. The Holy Spirit has been sent into the hearts of Christians

because they are sons of God to assure them of their adoption as sons; and this Spirit cries, "Abba! Father!" (Gal. 4:5,6). The "Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Rom. 8:16).

Paul told the church at Rome, "However you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him . . . But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who indwells you" (Rom. 8:9,11).

We are strengthened by the Spirit in the inner man (Eph. 3:16). The love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given us (Rom. 5:5). Christians are to be filled with the Spirit by speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in the hearts to the Lord (Eph. 5:18,19). When Christians are led by the Spirit (through the Word of God), they will manifest in their lives the fruit of the Spirit: "love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:16-23; 1 Pet. 1:10-12).

The Trinity

The word "trinity" is not found in the Bible but is certainly a Biblical concept. The word refers to the concept that God is one in essence or substance and three in person. God is one but is known as Father, Son, and Spirit.

The Scriptures teach clearly that God is one and there is no other:

- Deut. 6:4 "the Lord our God is one Lord"
- Mark 12:29 "the Lord our God, the Lord is one"
- Deut. 4:35,36 "the Lord is God; there is none else besides him"
- Isa. 43:10,11 "before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I even I, am Jehovah, and there is no savior."
- Isa. 44:6 "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."
- Isa. 45:5 "I am God, and there is none else; besides me there is no God."

- 1 Cor. 8:4,6 "there is no God but one. . .yet to us there is one God."
- Rom. 3:30 "God is one."

Yet we have just as positive teaching that the Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Spirit is God.

Father

1 Cor. 8:6
Gal. 1:1
John 6:27
Phil. 2:11
John 20:17
Mark 14:36
John 11:41

Son

Rom. 9:5
Col. 2:9
John 20:28
John 10:30
John 1:1,18
Phil. 2:6
1 John 5:20

Holy Spirit

Acts 5:3,4
Matt. 28:19
2 Cor. 13:14
2 Cor. 3:17,18
1 Cor. 2:10-13
Rom. 8:9,11

We are not saying that one God is three Gods; we are saying that there is but one infinite Spirit Being, but within that one Spirit essence there are three personal distinctions, each of which may be, and is called God. Each is capable of loving and being loved by the others (John 14:31). Each has a distinct part to play in the creation of the universe, and in the creation and salvation of mankind.

The Scriptures speak of God as a united one as in the case of Gen. 2:24 where a man and a woman are said to become "one flesh" or in Ex. 26:6,11 where many pieces are put together so that the tabernacle may be one. This same word is used to describe God in Deut. 6:4,5 where the Bible says, "the Lord our God is one Lord." This is a united one. Three persons united into one God.

In Matt. 3:16,17 while Jesus was being baptized into the Jordan River, the Father spoke from heaven; and the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove. We are compelled to distinguish each of these persons. In John 15:26 Jesus said, "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth."

Again we clearly see distinctions between the persons of the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Other passages which show this distinction: Matt. 28:19; Acts 7:55; Rom. 11:36; 8:11; Eph. 2:18,21,22; Gal. 4:6; Heb. 9:14; and Jude 20,21. Eph. 4:4-6 makes it clear that there is one God and Father, one Lord, and one Spirit.

These Divine Three are equal. This does not mean we cannot arrange them with the Father

first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. This is not a difference in glory, power, or length of existence, but simply one of order.

The idea of three in one is somewhat mysterious. One might find analogies helpful to understand how three things can be of the same substance but different. H₂O is the same in substance whether it is solid, liquid or gas in form. Yet ice, water and steam are different in temperature and in function. We might think of an apple. The same genetic makeup of an apple is in the tree, the fruit and the seed. Each has its own distinction and function, yet all may be truly regarded as "apple."

Note: For more information see Roy H. Lanier, *The Timeless Trinity*, pp. 45-59. This source provided much help for this section.

Making God in Our Image Exodus 20:4-6

Idols are the means by which we can make God in our image, to do our bidding. Rom. 1:20-26 tells us that when men don't appreciate God for who He is, serve the wrong God, they begin to live the wrong way. Wrong belief leads to wrong living.

Why Would Anyone Worship an Idol?

An idol is worshipped not for its shape but for its imagined power. One can own an idol, whereas one cannot own God. I can control my idol, whereas I cannot control God. People make

idols for themselves, for their own benefit. An idol is personal, whereas God is everyone's God; my idol loves me but it doesn't love you; it answers my prayers but not yours. To own an idol was to own an image of a "god." In ancient times people would bathe, dress, and feed their idols. They felt they could by this means manipulate their god to their own interests.

What is Wrong with Idolatry?

Idols are not just harmless, inanimate objects. What harm can they do? A gun is also an inanimate object, but look what men can do with it! God is spirit (John 4:24) and not physical. Idols start with a mental picture and later become metal. Idolatry poses limits on the nature of God, but God cannot be limited or confined to the physical. Solomon, awestruck over the magnificence of the temple of God prayed: "But will God indeed dwell on the earth? Behold heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built!" (1 Kings 8:27) Instead of accepting himself as a man made in God's image, the idolater tries to remake God in his own image." He brings God down to a comfortable size! Idolaters destroy reality, the God of the Scripture, and make one that they prefer. Isaiah asks, "is there anything like God?" (Isa. 40:18-20) Habakkuk asks, "What value is an idol?" (Habakkuk 2:18-20) When they are worshipped, things become more important than the Person of God! All that God reveals to us was designed to make an impact on us and to improve our minds and hearts. Idolatry turns the focus of our relationship away from God to a "thing." God is jealous and demands first place. (Jealous: "a zealotry for what is right, an utter, total, burning, consuming commitment to hold on to that which is right.") God is jealous with a holy jealousy--for that which rightfully belongs to Him exclusively (Isa. 42:8). Jesus asked, "Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?" (John 21:15) We all might ask ourselves that same question about covetousness (Col. 3:5), our jobs, alcohol, television, computer, sex, or money (Luke 12:15f.). Good things can become overly important to us (Luke 14:33). The real horror of idols is that they not only give us nothing; they take away even that which we possess! We think we control them; they end up controlling us (1

Cor 6:12)! Money is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim 6:10). Can you imagine waking up in eternity and finding out that all the time what you worshipped couldn't do you any good?

What kind of God do you have? What controls your life?

Does God Want Men to Worship with Images or Icons?

What is an Icon?

An icon is an image of Jesus Christ, a holy person, or the cross in picture or sculpture form. Icons are used in prayer in the belief that God is too busy to hear our prayers, but the being in the icon is not too busy. The being represented by the icon will then relay our prayers to God.

Members of the Russian Orthodox Church are permitted to pray only when the priest reads a prayer in the worship services. They have not been trained in how to pray to God on their own. Consequently, they often pray to icons.

May Christians Worship with Icons?

1. *The Ten Commandments forbade the use of graven images:* "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them to worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God," (Ex. 20:4,5; Deut. 5:8-10).

2. *The Nature of God argues against it.* God is a spirit (John 4:24), and those who worship Him, must worship Him in spirit and in truth. Paul said to the men of Athens: "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And He is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.... Therefore since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone--an image made by man's design and skill" (Acts 17:24,25,29).

3. *There is only one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus* (1 Tim. 2:5). There is, for this reason, no need for an icon. Our access to the Father is through Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:18). Christians themselves are God's dwelling place in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:19-22).

4. *God is never too busy to hear our prayers.* In Luke 18:1-8, God is contrasted with the pestered, unjust judge in that He will listen to our prayers. God invites His children to ask, seek and knock; and He promises us that we will be given, will find, and will be answered (Matt. 7:7-11). God does not grow weary or tired (Isa. 40:28).

5. *The Holy Spirit helps us in our weaknesses.* When we do not know how to pray as we ought, we have the Holy Spirit who intercedes for us in accordance with God's will (Rom. 8:26,27). Christians do not need man-made icons to do what the Holy Spirit is already doing for us.

Christian Evidences

The Existence of God The Cosmological Argument

Heb. 3:4 “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.”

Gen. 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”

Psalms 19:1 “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.”

Rom. 1:20 “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead”

Heb. 11:3 “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.

I. The Essential Argument

1. Everything is an effect of some cause.
2. Unless there is “infinite regression,” there must be a first cause, a first mover or an unmoved mover.
3. But because there is no perpetual motion, because matter ceases to exist, and because of the law of entropy, there cannot be an infinite regression. All we know of matter is finite.
4. Nothing comes from nothing, and something cannot arise from nothing.
5. As a result, since there is a world, there must be some infinite force behind it.

II. Four Alternatives to the World’s Origin

1. It is an illusion
2. It spontaneously arose out of nothing
3. It had no origin but has existed eternally
4. It was created (Either inanimate matter with its incorporated energy, or a Personal Creator is eternal and caused the existence of everything else.)

An assessment of these four alternatives:

- a. #1 and #2 are absurd

- b. “The laws of thermodynamics (heat) indicate that the universe is running down. In infinite time this state of entropy would already have happened. The hot sun and stars, the earth with its wealth of life, are complete evidence that the origin of the universe has occurred in time, at a fixed point in time, and therefore the universe must have been created.” (Dr. Frank Allen)¹

- c. Dr. Edward Luther Kessel: “Science clearly shows that the universe could not have existed from all eternity. The law of entropy states that there is a continuous flow of heat from warmer to colder bodies. . . . Therefore the universe is headed for a time when the temperature will be universally uniform and there will be no more useful energy. Consequently there will be no more chemical and physical processes, and life itself will cease to exist. But because life is still going on, and chemical and physical processes are still in progress, it is evident that our universe could not have existed from eternity, else it would have long since run out of useful energy and ground to a halt. Therefore, quite unintentionally, science proves that our universe had a beginning. And in so doing it proves the reality of God, for whatever had a beginning did not begin of it self but demands a Prime Mover, a Creator, a God.”²

6. An Objection: “If everything must have a cause, then God must have a cause. If there can be anything without a cause, it may as likely be the world as God.’

- a. God is not matter but spirit; He is self-existent. By definition God cannot be made or created.
- b. The law of entropy does not apply to God as it would the universe, for God is self-perpetuating. He does not run down.

THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

1. The universe demonstrates order, purpose, and design; this implies that there must be One who arranged this order, purpose and design. Beauty, form, design, and purpose

in nature all imply a creative mind, an intelligent architect. It suggests that the force that brought the Universe into being is an intelligent, planning, thinking being.

2. This design and purpose argues against the possibility that the universe arose by mere chance or accident.

EXAMPLES OF ORDER AND DESIGN

THE HUMAN BODY:

Psalms 139:14 “I will praise Thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knows right well.”

Your body has 100 trillion cells; 3 billion die and are replaced each minute

Your brain continuously receives and sends signals far more sophisticated than the best of computers

eyes: 130,000 light receptors

ears: 100,000 hearing receptors distinguishing 2,500 different tones

taste: 3,000 different receptors in your mouth

30,000 receptors for heat

250,000 receptors for cold

500,000 receptors measuring pressure of touch

4 million pain sensors

10 billion nerve cells

100 billion brain cells for storing memory.

The human eye is the most perfect camera ever known to man automatically adjusts to light and distance, and focuses instantly. Two eyes on a horizontal plane are able to measure distance can distinguish between one million colors, can increase its ability to see 100,000 times. The eyes have brows, lashes, tears and a nose for protection.

Unlike any other creature, the human can speak and understand 3,000 languages and millions of words.

Your heart beats an average of 72 times per minute. Each year it pumps five quarts of blood through 60,000 miles of veins and arteries (total 600,000 gallons).

If you cut yourself, your blood has a clotting system

You have a well-engineered skeletal system of 206 bones

You have a rugged yet sophisticated digestive system

You have a sensitive, analytical, taste-smell system

You have a marvelous muscular-connective tissue system

You have a programmed glandular-hormone system

Your lungs filter and warm the oxygen it places in the blood and take away the carbon dioxide

You have skin that both insulates and ventilates

You have a waste disposal system

You have a system to take oxygen and nutrition to every cell

You have a white cell defense system to fight disease

Your body has a self-restoring, self-healing system

Your two and one-half pound brain is the most complicated structure known to the universe with each cell connected to every other cell

The Human Eye

Then there is that wonder of wonders: the human eye! How could anybody look at a human eye and suppose that it just happened? Evolutionists tell us that where there is want, nature will provide what is needed. Can you imagine that we needed sight? No one had ever seen anything, but there was a need to see something. So nature created an eye. Imagine creating two eyes on a horizontal plane so that we not only can see but we also have a range finder that determines distances.

Did you ever wonder what happens to your tears that continually flow across your eye? Dr. William Paley wrote a classic work entitled *Natural Theology* in which he discusses the eye. “In order to keep the eye moist and clean—which qualities are necessary to its brightness and its use—a wash is constantly supplied by a secretion for the purpose; and the superfluous brine is conveyed to the nose through a perforation in the bone as large as a goose quill. When once the fluid has entered the nose, it spreads itself upon the inside of the nostril, and is evaporated by the current of warm air which in the course of respiration is continually passing

over it. . . It is easily perceived that the eye must want moisture; but could the want of the eye generate the gland which produces the tear, or bore the hole by which it is discharged—a hole through a bone?” Let the atheist or the evolutionist tell us who bored the hole in the bone and laid a water pipe through it for the dispersion of our tears.

Sir Charles Scott Sherrington, famous English physiologist of Oxford who wrote a classic work on the eye, said: “Behind the intricate mechanism of the human eye lie breathtaking glimpses of a Master Plan.” When confronted with darkness the human eye increases its ability to see one hundred thousand times. The finest camera ever made does not even vaguely approach such a thing, but the human eye does it automatically. Furthermore, the eye will find the object it wants to see and focus upon it automatically. It will elongate or compress itself. Both eyes moving together must take different angles to fix themselves upon what is to be seen. When the eye got ready to create itself, it also had the forethought for its own protection, and built itself beneath the bony ridge of the brow, and also provided a nose on which to hang the glasses that most of us need. Then it provided a shutter to protect itself from any foreign object.

The Ozone Layer

Forty miles up there is a thin layer of ozone. If compressed it would be only a quarter of an inch thick, and yet without it life could not exist. Eight killer rays fall upon this planet continually from the sun; without ozone we would be burned, blinded and broiled by them in just a day or two. The ultraviolet rays come in two forms: longer rays which are deadly and are screened out, and shorter rays which are necessary for life on earth and are admitted by the ozone layer. Furthermore, the most deadly of these rays are allowed through the ozone layer in just a very thin amount, enough to kill the green algae, which otherwise would grow to fill all the lakes, rivers, and oceans of the world. How little we realize what God is continuously doing to provide for our life. We see that we live with a tiny ozone layer protecting us from an unseen deadly bombardment that constantly comes down upon our heads. Beneath us is a thin rock

crust, thinner than the skin of an apple in comparison.

Lava

Beneath that is the molten lava that forms the core of this earth. So man lives between the burning, blackening rays above and that molten lava below, either of which would burn him to a crisp. Yet man is totally oblivious that God has so arranged things that he can exist in such a world as this.

Red Blood Cells

Within human beings, there are many things that tell us God has made us. Our life is based upon the blood that flows in our veins. The amazing red blood cell, created in the bone marrow, immediately gives up its nucleus when it reaches the bloodstream. For any other cell, this would mean death, like cutting the heart right out of a man. A red blood cell is farmed like a doughnut with a thin membrane across the hole. Without a nucleus it is able to carry more oxygen for the body because of this membrane and the shape of the cell. If it were shaped like other cells, it would require nine times as many cells to provide oxygen for the human body.

Some Concluding Remarks:

Consider what Dr. A. Cressy Morrison, a physician and former president of the New York State Academy of Science, has to say:

The evidence is strongly suggestive of this directive purpose back of everything. . . . We have found that the world is in the right place, that the crust is adjusted to within ten feet, and that-if the ocean were a few feet deeper we would have no oxygen or vegetation. We have found that the earth rotates in twenty-four hours and that were this revolution delayed, life would be impossible. If the speed of the earth around the sun were increased or decreased materially, this history of life, if any, would be entirely different. We find that the sun is the one among thousands which could make our sort of life possible on earth, its size, density, temperature and the character of its rays all must be right, and are right. We find that the gases of the atmosphere are adjusted to each other and that a

very slight change would be fatal.... Considering the bulk of the earth, its place in space and the nicety of the adjustments, the chances of some of these adjustments occurring is in the order of one to a million, and the chances of all of them occurring cannot be calculated even in the billions. The existence of these facts cannot, therefore, be reconciled with any of the laws of chance. It is impossible, then, to escape the conclusion that the adjustments of nature to man are far more amazing than the adjustments of man to nature. A review of the wonders of nature demonstrates beyond question that there are design and purpose in it all. A program is being carried out in all its infinite detail by the Supreme Being we call God.³

SOME POSITIVE EVIDENCES OF THE RESURRECTION

Men who were eyewitnesses of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection wrote the Scripture. No other source of evidence can be considered as authoritative.

1. *Jesus predicted his resurrection and the day he would rise.*

John 2:19-21 "Destroy this temple (body), and in three days I will raise it up."

Matt 16:21 "From that time on Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day." See also Matt 17:9,22,23; 20:18,19; 26:32; 27:63; Mark 8:31; 9:10,31; 10:32-34; 14:28,58; Luke 9:22-27; John 10:17-18.

2. *The suffering of Jesus shows that he actually died.*

Mark 15:15-20 Jesus was beaten and scourged by the Roman soldiers. Such scourging was often enough to kill a man.

Mark 15:21,22 So weak was Jesus that Simon a Cyrenian was compelled to bear his cross. "They brought Him to the place Golgotha" (he needed assistance to get there) Lk. 23:26

John 19:31-37 Jesus was found to be dead already when the soldiers came to break his legs and hasten death. One of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, "and immediately blood and water came out." Mark 15:42-45 Pilate marveled that Jesus was dead and would not release the body until he found out for sure from the centurion John 19:38-42 If Jesus were not dead the burial procedures of wrapping the body in linen cloths and the mixture of myrrh and aloes would have suffocated him.

3. *Jesus appeared to women and men, to people alone, to two disciples, to the ten disciples in the upper room, then to the twelve, to the seven by the lake and to more than 500 at one time.* The appearances occurred in many different places and under different circumstances. Not one person who witnessed the appearances ever denied what he saw, heard and touched.

4. *Jesus was touched.* The resurrection body was a real body: Luke 24:39-43; John 20:27,28; 21:9-13. See also John 20:16,17 (NASV; NKJV): "Stop clinging to me." Luke 24:42,43: "And he took it and ate it in their presence."

5. *The guard at the tomb and the seal of the governor is strong evidence.* Matt. 27:62-66. "Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone, and setting the guard." To break the seal was a criminal offense. The fact that Jesus' enemies asked for a guard showed that they took his prediction seriously. After the raising of Lazarus, they were afraid that all men would believe in Jesus (John 11:45-53).

Matt. 28:11-15 The guards witnessed the resurrection but were bribed to lie that the disciples stole the body. They claimed they were asleep. But the penalty for sleeping while on duty was very severe. This is why the promise to appease the governor and make them secure.

6. *The heavy stone covering the grave was moved.* Matt. 27:60; Mark 16:3,4; Luke 24:2; John 20:1. The wording of Matthew and John seem to indicate that there was a slope up, which the stone was rolled. Matt. 28:2-4 "an angel of

the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door."

"The guards shook for fear of him and became like dead men."

How could a weakened Jesus (if he had not died) have been able to move the heavy stone, if he had not died? How did the disciples and Jesus evade the guards at the tomb, if the disciples stole the body?

7. *The grave clothes were left orderly.* John 20:3-9. When Peter and John entered the tomb they found the grave clothes left orderly. If Jesus were dead, the grave clothes would have been left on him. If the body were stolen, they would not have taken the time to leave the grave clothes. How did Jesus get out of the grave clothes in his weakened condition? Lazarus was unable to remove his grave clothes (John 11:43,44).

8. *No evidence of a dead body was ever found by the enemies of Christ.* If the body of Christ could have been produced, the enemies of Christ would have done so and exposed the disciples as false witnesses. We may be sure that no stone was left unturned in the many efforts to disprove the resurrection and stop Christianity.

9. *The remarkable change in the disciples.*

BEFORE (weak, cowardly and unbelieving)

Matt. 28:16,17 "when they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted."

Mark 16:9-14 they did not believe the women or the two; "He rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart"

Luke 24:10-11 the women's words seemed to them like "idle tales, and they did not believe them."

Luke 24:19-27 the despair of the two on the road to Emmaus; the doubt of Peter and John because they did not see him

John 20:19 "the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews"

John 20:24-29 Thomas said, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe."

AFTER (convinced, determined, bold)

Acts 2:31-32 the boldness of Peter and the eleven at Pentecost preaching about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection, "to which we are all witnesses"

Acts 3:13-22 Peter and John refused to listen to the council (Sanhedrin) which condemned Jesus Acts 5:17-21 apostles imprisoned but delivered by an angel went out to preach again

Acts 5:26-32 the apostles brought again before the council; Peter responds, "We ought to obey God rather than men."

Acts 7:59,60 Stephen stoned for preaching Jesus as the Christ

Acts 12:1-4 James killed with the sword, Peter imprisoned for preaching Jesus Christ

10. *The existence of the church.* The church did not just happen, it was caused by the power of God. Jesus predicted that the gates of Hades would not prevent his building his church (Matt. 16:18). The early church turned the world upside down (Acts 17:6). The only adequate cause for this event is the resurrection.

11. *The faith and the preaching of the apostle Paul.* Paul (Saul of Tarsus) was originally a persecutor of the church and a scholarly man of the Jews (Acts 7:58-8:4). As a witness to the

None of the disciples ever denied the resurrection, but they died preaching it. According to the traditions of history, they were all martyred for their faith except John. Would you die preaching something you knew was a lie? It is certainly not in the character or teachings of Jesus that one should lie.

resurrection his testimony is especially important in view of his previous zeal against Christianity (1 Tim. 1:12-14). His testimony of the resurrection in 1 Cor. 15:3-9 is the earliest documentary evidence we have. Paul's conversion and subsequent life cannot be satisfactorily explained except in the way he himself explained it--he had seen the risen Christ.

THEORIES OF THE RESURRECTION ANSWERED

I. THE SWOON THEORY

Theory: Christ did not really die but fainted from exhaustion. When he was laid in the tomb he revived and later showed himself to the disciples.

Answer:

1. Jesus was in a weakened condition and did actually die. The Roman soldiers were experts in killing and knew when a man was dead. Pilate had a centurion to reassure him of the death.
2. Jesus' body had gone through preparations for burial
3. How did Jesus remove the burial wrappings if he were alive and in a weakened condition?
4. How could Jesus have moved the huge stone in his weakened condition? How did he move it unnoticed by the guards?
5. After the 40 days of appearances, how did Jesus disguise himself for the rest of his life? His disciples went into all the world.
6. If Jesus were a hoax, why didn't the disciples disavow him? Why did they die for their faith in the resurrection?

II. THE VISION/HALLUCINATION THEORY

Theory: Christ appeared to His disciples but only in (a) spiritual visions or (b) hallucinations. Since the disciples were expecting to see Jesus, it would seem only natural for them to think that they did. The vision took the form of a bodily appearance.

Answer:

1. A vision is a miracle. This theory merely substitutes one miracle for another.
2. Why did the disciples think they saw a body if it were only a vision? Jesus in his appearances could speak, hear, eat, touch and be touched. See 1 John 1:1-4. Jesus proved himself alive by "many infallible proofs" (Acts 1:3).

3. How did the same vision occur to more than 500 people at one time?
4. The vision theory does not explain what happened at the tomb. What happened to the body of Jesus? What frightened the guards? Who rolled away the stone? Why were the linen wrappings left behind?
5. The disciples did not expect to see Jesus. In spite of his prophecies, the disciples were skeptical and unbelieving.
6. Why did the visions only last 40 days?
7. Why did the disciples agree to announce a lie? Why would they continue to lie until they were all killed?

III. THE LEGEND THEORY

Theory: Legends developed in Palestine some years after Christ's career that he rose from the dead. The resurrection was one of the legends.

Answer:

1. The Bible claims that the resurrection story was based on eyewitness accounts.
 - *Matthew and John were apostles and eyewitnesses
 - *2 Pet. 1:16 no cleverly-devised tales
 - *1 John 1:3 "that which we have seen and heard we declare to you"
 - *John 19:35; 20:30,31 John writes from first-hand experience
 - *Luke 1:1-3 Luke interviewed eyewitnesses
 - *Acts 26:24-26 "this thing was not done in a corner"
2. It is impossible to suppose that the early church did not know its own history; the very fact of the early church of the Bible account is evidence of its truth.
3. Wouldn't the Jews have shown the accounts to be false? See John 11:43-48; Acts 4:16,17.
4. What would cause the scholarly and zealous Saul of Tarsus to forsake Judaism and embrace a legend?
5. The evidence demonstrates that all the New Testament was written within 70 years of the time of Jesus. Most of it was written within 40 years. This is not enough time for stories to develop into legends. Legends usually take centuries to develop.

IV. THEORY THAT THE BODY WAS STOLEN BY THE DISCIPLES

Theory: The high priests and Roman soldiers were correct in their response to the Christian claim.

Answer:

1. This is certainly out of character of the timid, fearful, unbelieving, and scattered disciples to risk their lives against the Roman soldiers at the tomb to steal his body. They were hiding because they feared jail for themselves (John 20:19).

2. A small band of Jews would not have frightened the Roman soldiers, who were under punishment of death if they failed in their duty.

3. It is impossible to believe that all the guard fell asleep at the same time.

4. The Jews were permitted to make the tomb as secure as they knew how (Matt. 27:65). There were probably several soldiers at the tomb.

5. What could a few, poor fishermen do against disciplined and well-armed soldiers? Why was no one reported wounded or killed?

6. Why did they leave the grave clothes? If the disciples stole the body, how could they have enough time to roll the stone away, take off the grave clothes, and leave undetected? Why would they undress the body? Why did they leave the clothes orderly? What did they do with the body?

7. The soldiers were either awake or asleep. If they were asleep, how did the soldier know the disciples stole the body? If they were awake, why should they allow the body to be taken?

8. Why didn't the Sanhedrin apprehend the apostles on Pentecost and imprison them until they confessed what really happened? If the disciples had stolen the body, they would likely have remained hidden themselves and would never have openly confessed to being followers of Christ. The people knew that Jesus had arisen from the dead (Acts 2:22,32; Matt. 27:63).

9. What possible motive would the disciples have for stealing the body?

10. It is not the character of a follower of Jesus to be deceptive.

The Historicity of Jesus Outside of the Writings of Believers

Cornelius Tacitus

The greatest Roman historian in the days of the Empire was Cornelius Tacitus (born between 52 and 54 A.D.). Writing about the reign of Nero (54-68 A.D.), he described the great fire which destroyed Rome in 64 A.D. and told of the rumor that Nero burned the city himself in order to gain greater glory in its rebuilding. In his *Annals* 15.44, Tacitus says:

Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians. Christus, from whom they got their name, had been executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate when Tiberius was emperor; and the pernicious superstition was checked for a short time, only to break out afresh, not only in Judea, the home of the plague, but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home.

For Tacitus, Christus would have been considered a proper name; but to the Jews and for the first Christians, it referred to the Messiah. The Jews did not believe him to be the Messiah and would have referred to him merely as Jesus. It is thought that this information came from a summary report from Pilate himself. It may surely be one of the ironies of history that the only mention Pilate receives from a Roman historian is in connection with the part he played in the execution of Jesus.

Tacitus makes a further reference to Christians in a fragment of his *Histories*, dealing with the burning of the Jerusalem temple in 70 A.D. This is preserved by Sulpicius Severus (*Chron.* 2.30.6).

Suetonius

Suetonius wrote of the lives of the first twelve Caesars in 120 A.D., from the life of Julius Caesar onward. In his *Life of Nero* (26.2), Suetonius says:

"Punishment was inflicted on the Christians, a class of men addicted to a novel and mischievous superstition."

Another possible reference to Christianity occurs in *Suetonius's Life of Claudius* (25:4), of whom he says:

"As the Jews were making constant disturbances at the instigation of Chrestus, he expelled them from Rome."

This reference to the expelling from Rome (ca. 50 A.D.) can also be found in Acts 18:2, "And he found a certain Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome." It is likely that the strife among the Roman Jews at that time was over the introduction of Jesus Christ. Suetonius wrongly infers that "Chrestus" (Christ) was actually in Rome at the time.

The prophecy of Agabus in Acts 11:28 is "that there would certainly be a great famine all over the world. And this took place in the reign of Claudius." Suetonius confirms this report in his *Life of Claudius* 18.2, where he mentions that during Claudius's reign there were "constant unfruitful seasons."

Lucian

Lucian, a Greek satirist likened to Mark Twain, wrote in the second century about Christ in these words in a work entitled, *On the Death of Peregrine*.

The Christians, you know, worship a man to this day--the distinguished personage who introduced their novel rites, and was crucified on that account. . . . You see, these misguided creatures start with the general conviction that they are immortal for all time, which explains the contempt of death and voluntary self-devotion which are so common among them; and then it was impressed on them by their

original lawgiver that they are all brothers, from the moment that they are converted, and deny the gods of Greece, and worship the crucified sage, and live after his laws. All this they take quite on faith, with the result that they despise all worldly goods alike, regarding them merely as common property.

From this same source we also learn that the Christians had "sacred writings," which they read frequently. They also spared no trouble or expense to help each other in matters affecting their community. Unfortunately, the goodness of Christians led them to be easily taken advantage of by unscrupulous people.

Mara Bar-Serapion

The British Museum possesses a manuscript of a letter written between the first and third centuries A.D. The author was Mara Bar-Serapion, a Syrian who was writing to encourage his son in prison to imitate wise men. The letter reads in part:

What advantage did the Athenians gain from putting Socrates to death? Famine and plague came upon them as a judgment for their crime. What advantage did the men of Samos gain from burning Pythagoras? In a moment their land was covered with sand. What advantage did the Jews gain from executing their wise King? It was just after that that their kingdom was abolished. God justly avenged these three wise men: the Athenians died of hunger, the Samians were overwhelmed by the sea; the Jews, ruined and driven from their land, live in complete dispersion. But Socrates did not die for good; he lived on in the statue of Hera. Nor did the wise King die for good; he lived on in the teaching, which he had given.

Pliny the Younger

An author and administrator, Pliny the Younger (62-113 A.D.), the Roman governor of Bithynia, which is in Asia Minor wrote to the Emperor Trajan (98-117 A.D.), asking for guidance in how to deal with accused Christians. At that time it was illegal to be a Christian, and some were tortured or killed. In his letter Pliny describes an early worship service:

They (the Christians) were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verses a hymn to Christ, as to a god, and bound themselves by a solemn oath, not to commit any wicked deeds, but never to commit any fraud, theft or adultery, never to falsify their word, nor deny a trust when they should be called upon to deliver it up; after which it was their custom to separate, and then reassemble to partake of food--but food of an ordinary and innocent kind. (Epistles, Book 10.96 written in 112 A.D.)

Emperor Trajan

Pliny's inquiry received the Emperor's attention and response, which is published along with Pliny's letters:

The method you have pursued, my dear Pliny, in sifting the cases of those denounced to you as Christians is extremely proper. It is not possible to lay down any general rule, which can be applied as the fixed standard in all cases of this nature. No search should be made for these people; when they are denounced and found guilty they must be punished; with the restriction, however, that when the party denies himself to be a Christian, and shall give proof that he is not (that is, by adoring our Gods) he shall be pardoned on the ground of repentance, even though he may have formerly incurred suspicion. Information without the accuser's name subscribed must not be admitted in evidence against anyone, as it is introducing a very dangerous precedent, and by no means agreeable to the spirit of the age. (Pliny, Epistles, Book 10.97)

Emperor Hadrian

Serenius Granianus, proconsul of Asia, wrote to Emperor Hadrian (117-138 A.D.) about the treatment of Christians who were being tried. Hadrian replied to Minucius Fundanus, his successor, with a statement against those who would accuse Christians falsely or without the due process of law. In a letter preserved by Eusebius, a fourth-century church historian, Hadrian says:

I do not wish, therefore, that the matter should be passed by without examination, so that these men may neither be harassed, nor opportunity of malicious proceedings be offered to informers. If, therefore, the provincials can clearly evince their charges against the Christians, so as to answer before the tribunal, let them pursue this course only, but not by mere petitions, and mere outcries against the Christians. For it is far more proper, if any one would bring an accusation, that you should examine it.

Hadrian said that if Christians should be found guilty after they had been examined, then they should be judged "according to the heinousness of the crime." If the accusers were only slandering the believers, then those who inaccurately made the charges were to be punished. (See Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, 4:9.)

Thallus

We now appeal to a lost work by an historian of the first century that was quoted in 221 A.D. by Julius Africanus. Thallus wrote about the death of Jesus in his history of the Eastern Mediterranean world covering the time from the Trojan War to his own day (52 A.D.). This work is lost, but other authors cite fragments. It is debated about whether Josephus refers to this man as a wealthy Samaritan, who was made a freedman by Emperor Tiberius and who loaned money to Agrippa I. Africanus found a reference dealing with the darkness that covered the land at the time of the crucifixion and writes:

*On the whole world there pressed a most fearful darkness; and the rocks were rent by an earthquake, and many places in Judea and other districts were thrown down. This darkness Thallus, in the third book of his History, calls as appears to me without reason, an eclipse of the sun. (Julius Africanus, *Extant Writings*, 18 in the *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 6, p. 130.)*

Africanus objected to Thallus's assessment because he could not see how an eclipse could take place when there was a full moon, as is the case when the Jews observed the Passover.

Africanus does not tell us if Thallus mentions Jesus' name or not.

Josephus

This Jewish historian, writing in about 93 or 94 A.D. in his *Antiquities of the Jews*, spoke about the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There are two versions of this statement, one in Greek and the other in Arabic. The Greek text dates as early as 315 A.D. but has been disputed. Though Josephus was not a Christian, the language he uses may very well be how a cynical Jew might refer to Jesus.

About this time there arose Jesus, a wise man, if indeed it be lawful to call him a man. For he was a doer of wonderful deeds, and a teacher of men who gladly receive the truth. He drew to himself many both of the Jews and of the Gentiles. He was the Christ; and when Pilate, on the indictment of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not cease to do so, for he appeared to them again alive on the third day, the divine prophets having foretold these and ten thousand wonderful things about him. And even to this day the race of Christians, who are named after him, has not died out. (Antiquities 18:3.)

Origen says that Josephus did not believe that Jesus was the Messiah (*Contra Celsum* 1:47). For this reason many scholars have debated whether Josephus actually penned these words. However Eusebius in his *Ecclesiastical History* (1:11) quotes the passage as genuine.

In 1972 Professor Shlomo Pines of Hebrew University in Jerusalem argued for an Arabic version of this same text which he believes to be older than the Greek one. This version was found in a church history written by Agapius, an Arab bishop in Baghdad. The Arabic version reads:

At this time there was a wise man who was called Jesus. And his conduct was good and (he) was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and from the other

nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon his discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was alive. Accordingly he was perhaps the Messiah of whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

Professor Pines believes that medieval Christian censorship was probably responsible for the differences between the two versions. Whether one accepts the Greek or the Arabic, the essential story of the death and resurrection of Jesus was known by Josephus and recorded in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.

In another passage in the *Antiquities*, Josephus writes about the martyrdom of the brother of Jesus, called James:

(Ananus) assembled the Sanhedrin of the judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others, and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned. (20:9)

The Talmud

The Talmud is a collection of Jewish traditions, which were written down by Rabbi Akiba in 135 A.D. A very significant quotation is found in Sanhedrin 43a, dating from the Tannaitic period (70-200 A.D.).

On the eve of the Passover Yeshu was hanged. For forty days before the execution took place, a herald went forth and cried, "He is going forth to be stoned because he has practiced sorcery and enticed Israel to apostasy. Any one who can say anything in his favor, let him come forward and plead on his behalf." But since nothing was brought forward in his favor he was hanged on the eve of the Passover!

It is important to note at this point that the word "hanged" is a variant expression meaning that he was crucified. Gal. 3:13 speaks of the curse on "every one who hangs on a tree."

The word "hang" is used of crucifixion also in the case of the two thieves (Luke 23:39).

Another possible reference to Jesus in the Talmud states that he was either thirty-three or thirty-four when he died (Sanhedrin 106b).

Biblical Inspiration

The Bible is no ordinary book; it is unique; there is no book like it in any time or in any place. It is unique because it comes from God; it is the Holy Book. No other book can make the claims this book makes, nor is there the evidence to support any book like the evidence for the Bible

The Bible claims to be inspired of God--it is what God wanted and intended for you to know about Him and about your redemption. This claim means that this book must be dealt with. It is either true or false; if false, this is still a remarkable book; but if true, this book will one day be your judge

The Bible Claims Inspiration For Itself

1. **2 Tim. 3:16** All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 3:17 that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

2. **2 Pet. 1:20** But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is {a matter} of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

3. **1 Cor. 2:12** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual {thoughts} with spiritual {words.}

4. **2 Sam. 23:1** Now these are the last words of David. David the son of Jesse declares, And the man who was raised on high declares, The anointed of the God of Jacob, And the sweet psalmist of Israel, "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, And His word was on my tongue.

5. **John 14:26** "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you.

6. **John 16:12** "I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear {them} now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come.

7. **John 17:7** "Now they have come to know that everything Thou hast given Me is from Thee; for the words which Thou gavest Me I have given to them; and they received {them,} and truly understood that I came forth from Thee, and they believed that Thou didst send Me. 17 "Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth. 18 "As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

8. **1 Cor. 14:37** If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment. 38 But if anyone does not recognize {this}, he is not recognized.

9. **1 Thess. 2:13** And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted {it} not {as} the word of men, but {for} what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe.

10. **1 Thess. 4:8** Consequently, he who rejects {this} is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you.

11. **Heb. 1:1** God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, 2 in these last days has spoken to us in {His} Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world.

12. **Jer. 1:9** Then the \Lord stretched out His hand and touched my mouth, and the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put My words in your mouth.

13. **Isa. 51:16** "And I have put My words in your mouth, and have covered you with the shadow of My hand, to establish the heavens, to found the earth, and to say to Zion, 'You are My people.'"

14. **Matt. 10:19** "But when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you will speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what you are to speak. 20 "For it is not you who speak, but {it is} the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

15. More than 2000 times the Scripture uses the phrase "the word of the Lord" and more than 1800 times uses "thus saith the Lord"

WHY WE CAN BELIEVE THE CLAIMS TO INSPIRATION

If God gave the Bible, we would expect Him to tell us so. Jesus endorses this very view in Matt 22:31 when he asked the Sadducees, "have you not read that which was spoken to you by God?" On another occasion he demonstrates the strength of the Bible. Jesus said in **John 10:34** "and the Scripture cannot be broken."

If God is the source of the Bible, we would expect the Bible to have unity and be perfectly harmonious. Though 40 different men wrote the Bible over a period of 16 centuries, there is amazing harmony from first to last. A common theme of the redemption of man from sin runs throughout. A common set of moral values and doctrines can be clearly seen. There is a sense of progression from age to age and childhood to maturity in the Scriptures. Each age has its own plan and purpose as part of that scheme of redemption. Remarkably, there is an incredible harmony between the books--there never has been even one proven contradiction.

Since God as the source is holy, we would expect the Bible to have an exalted moral tone. The Bible has never been excelled in morality--its eternal laws have proven themselves for centuries as the highest of morals:

- The Ten Commandments (a basis for right and wrong)
- Love your neighbor as yourself

The Sermon on the Mount

- Matt. 5: wrong to be angry
- Matt. 5 wrong to lust
- Matt. 6: wrong to display acts of righteousness (hypocrisy)

- Matt. 7:1 a man should judge himself first
- Matt. 7:12 do unto others as you would have them do unto you

- Love one another, just as I have loved you
- it is more blessed to give than to receive

Wherever the influence of the Bible is strong--people's moral lives are better; wherever it is weak there are anarchy and every evil thing. According to John Richard Green in *A Short History of the English People*:

"No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible. It was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm. As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or turned the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book. The whole temper of the nation felt the change. A new moral and religious impulse spread through every class."

Society will change when its people become a people of the Book! The Bible is a leaven that pervades the lives of men and women who will take the time to study and meditate upon it. The Bible provides the spiritual health humanity needs to live peaceful and tranquil lives.

Since God is timeless, you would expect the Bible to also be everlasting and perpetually relevant! Many books are out-of-date quickly, but the Bible is as fresh and up-to-date as today's newspaper. Yet the themes of the Bible are age lasting; they affect every generation. Themes dealing with morals, ethics, relationships and attitudes speak with relevance to every age and culture. There is no social problem, no class problem, and no sin problem that the Bible does not address clearly and correctly. One section of the Bible, the prophets, especially deal with the morals and injustices of people in any age.

Many of the ancient books have become extinct, but the Bible is the most attested book of all antiquity (5,000 Greek manuscripts that date much older than other books of that era). F.F. Bruce said, "There is no body of ancient literature in the world which enjoys such a wealth of good textual attestation as the New Testament."

Caesar's Gallic Wars (58-50 B.C.) 10 good manuscripts, the oldest of which is written 900 years later than Caesar's day.

Livy's Roman History (59 B.C.-17AD) only 35 of the 142 books survive in only 20 MSS. oldest is fourth century AD.

Histories of Tacitus (AD 100) only 5 of 16 books remain; of the *Annals* only 10 of 16

survive; the textual base comes from 2 MS: one dated in the ninth century and one in the eleventh.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) we have only 5 MSS of any one work he has written, and the oldest copy extant is 1,400 years after the author.

History by Pliny the Younger (61-113 A.D.), 7 MSS, the oldest in existence dates from 850 A.D., 750 years after the author.

The Jews preserved the Scriptures as no other manuscripts have ever been preserved. With their massora, they kept tabs on every letter, syllable, word and paragraph. They had special classes of men with their culture whose sole duty was to preserve and transmit these documents with practically perfect fidelity--scribes, lawyers, and massorettes. Whoever counted the words of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero or Seneca?

While cynics have criticized the Bible; it remains after 2,000 years the all-time best seller: millions every year! Matt. 24:35! The Bible has been translated completely into hundreds of languages and translated in part in more than 2,000 languages.

In A.D. 303, Diocletian issued an edict to destroy Christians and the Bible: "an imperial letter was everywhere promulgated, ordering the razing of the churches to the ground and the destruction by fire of the Scriptures, and proclaiming that those who held high positions would lose all civil rights, while those in households, if they persisted in their profession

of Christianity, would be deprived of their liberty." (Cambridge History of the Bible; Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* VIII: 2). The historic irony of the above edict to destroy the Bible is that Constantine, the emperor following Diocletian, 25 years later commissioned Eusebius to prepare 50 copies of the Scripture at the expense of the government. The Bible is unique in its survival. This does not in itself prove the Bible is true. It does prove that the Bible stands alone among books. A student seeking truth ought to consider a book that has such power to survive in strength.

Voltaire, the noted French infidel who died in 1778, said that in one hundred years from his time Christianity would be swept from existence and passed into history. But what has happened? Voltaire has passed into history; while the circulation of the Bible continues to increase in almost all parts of the world, carrying blessing wherever it goes. Concerning the boast of Voltaire on the extinction of Christianity and the Bible, only fifty years after his death the Geneva Bible Society used his press and house to produce stacks of Bibles.

Since the Bible comes from God, one can expect it to be free from error. John Lea in *the Greatest Book in the World* compared the Bible with Shakespeare. "In an article in the North American Review, a writer made some interesting comparisons between the writings of Shakespeare and the Scriptures, which show that much greater care must have been bestowed upon the biblical manuscripts than upon other writings, even when there was so much more opportunity of preserving the correct text by means of printed copies than when all the copies had to be made by hand." He said:

"It seems strange that the text of Shakespeare, which has been in existence less than two hundred and eight years, should be far more uncertain and corrupt than that of the New Testament, now over eighteen centuries old, during nearly fifteen of which it existed only in manuscript. . . With perhaps a dozen or twenty exceptions, the text of every verse in the New Testament may be said to be so far settled by general consent of scholars, that any dispute as to its readings must relate rather to the interpretation of the words than to any doubts

respecting the words themselves. But in every one of Shakespeare's thirty-seven plays there are probably a hundred readings still in dispute, a large portion of which materially affects the meaning of the passages in which they occur."

The Bible Lives

Generation follows generation--yet it lives
 Nations rise and fall--yet it lives.
 Kings, dictators, presidents come and go--
 yet it lives
 Hated, despised, cursed--yet it lives.
 Doubted, suspected, criticized--yet it lives.
 Condemned by atheists--yet it lives.
 Scoffed by scorners--yet it lives.
 Exaggerated by fanatics--yet it lives
 Misconstrued and misstated--yet it lives.
 Its inspiration denied--yet it lives.
 Yet it lives--as a lamp to our feet.
 Yet it lives--as a light to our path.
 Yet it lives--as the gate to heaven.
 Yet it lives--as a standard for childhood.
 Yet it lives--as a guide for youth.
 Yet it lives--as an inspiration for the
 martyred.
 Yet it lives--as a comfort for the aged.
 Yet it lives--as food for the hungry.
 Yet it lives--as water for the thirsty.
 Yet it lives--as rest for the weary.
 Yet it lives--as light for the heathen.
 Yet it lives--as salvation for the sinner.
 Yet it lives--as grace for the Christian.
 To know it is to love it,
 To love it is to accept it,
 To accept it means life eternal.

If God is true and accurate and can be trusted, we would expect the same from the Bible. Historically, geographically, linguistically it proves true! Archaeology has repeatedly shown things to be exactly where and how they were supposed to be. Though critics have charged the Bible with error, such is not the case.

For instance, when Julius Wellhausen charged that Moses could not have written the first five books of the Bible, he did so because he thought that Hebrews and Egyptians could not write in 1500 B.C. However, the "black stele" was found with the laws of Hammurabi

and dating to 2000 B.C. It is now known that writing dates back to 3100 B.C. in the ancient Near East.

On another occasion, the critics believed that there could never have been a Hittite nation, since there was no extra-biblical evidence for them. But evidence was found in Cappadocia to support the fact that there were Hittites. Evidence was also discovered in Egypt and in Haran, where clay tablets describe this sophisticated, early civilization. A.H. Sayce was the first to find monuments with the Hittite nation.

The critics said that there were no camels during the time of Abraham in the Near East. When they opened up the ancient graves, however, they found camel bones and camel hair.

In contrast to the Bible, however, when Tacitus, the Roman historian, wrote his renowned History and Description of Germany, it was filled with so many errors that modern scholars were shocked. When the Encyclopedia Britannica was first published, it contained so many mistakes regarding places in America that the publishers of the New American Cyclopedia issued a special pamphlet exposing the blunders of its rival. The Bible, however, has not had the need for someone to apologize for it. The more one knows of the Bible, the more one realizes that the Bible proves true. Note John Clayton's list of amazing facts about the Medical Accuracy of the Bible.

Conclusion:

You can trust your Bible historically, geographically, medically, and doctrinally. You can trust it with your soul. Whatever the Bible says will prove true; when men have supposed the Bible to be incorrect, they have always been found to be wrong. God is not wrong about life, and He is not wrong about your soul or the judgment to come.

Your Bible is the most wonderful book you will ever possess--but if it remains unread on your shelf, it will do you no good! You've got to read it, love it, meditate on it, memorize it, and live it if you are to get the good out of it!

Can We Trust The New Testament?

Harvey W. Everest in *The Divine Demonstration* lists seven criteria by which historical testimony may be tested. Testimony is judged to be the truth when it meets these criteria:

1. When the witnesses are honest, competent and have opportunity to know. (See 2 Pet. 1:16-18) Peter said they were not attempting to deceive but were eyewitnesses of the things they proclaimed.
2. When the witnesses agree in the general statement, although they may differ on minor points.
 - a. Acts 2:22-32 Peter and the apostles were witnesses and stood together in proclaiming the facts
 - b. Acts 26:26 Paul argued that the things Jesus did were well known and "not done in a corner."
3. When there is no known motive for imposture. The apostles and preachers of the first century did not become rich or honored by men because of their testimony. In fact, history records their numerous persecutions by the Romans, their opposition from the Jews, and the difficult lives they faced to preach Jesus as the Christ.
4. When the facts recorded are strongly against the faith or interest of the narrator. The books of Acts records the persecution of the church and those who suffered for their faith, including Stephen and James who became martyrs. Traditions teach that all the apostles suffered death for their teachings (except the apostle John, who was imprisoned on the isle of Patmos [Rev. 1:9-10]).
5. When such witnesses are numerous. Jesus made several appearances in the forty days after his resurrection and demonstrated himself to be the Son of God by many convincing proofs (Acts 1:1-3). Paul said that Jesus appeared to more than 500 brethren at one time (1 Cor. 15:1-10).
6. When the recorded facts and the existing facts are related as cause and effect. The places, people, culture and circumstances recorded by

the authors represented the way things really were. The New Testament is not filled with nameless, mythical people, who could never have lived. Rather, archaeology and secular historical records support the credibility of the New Testament. The dates of the New Testament match historical realities in the world of that era.

7. When the facts recorded are sustained by existing monuments, coins, games or other public institutions. The fact that the church exists is a marvelous testimony to the resurrection of Jesus Christ and to the truth of the apostles' teaching. There would never have been a church had the apostles not believed in the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The fact that churches to this day meet on the first day of the week, the Lord's resurrection day, is a testimony to the fact that the events of the New Testament are real.

The New Testament witnesses to the life of Christ meet all these criteria.

You Can Trust Your Bible

There are very good reasons to believe your Bible. It is not a book of fairy tales or myths or fables; it is a book of truth! This is significant because the Truth is important to our souls and our eternity. When we ask ourselves and ask others to give their lives to follow the Lord in accordance to His teachings, we better believe those teachings are true! If these teachings are not true, then we have little comfort or hope. But if these teachings are true, and if they come from God, then we would be foolish to ignore them.

WHY YOU CAN TRUST THE BIBLE:

I. PREDICTIVE PROPHECY

1. God has made a test for us to know if the message has come from Him: "I will raise up a prophet from among their countrymen like you, and I will put My words in his mouth, and he shall speak to them all that I command him. And it shall come about that whoever will not

listen to My words, which he shall speak in My name, I Myself will require it of him. But the prophet who shall speak a word presumptuously in My name which I have not commanded him to speak, or which he shall speak in the name of other gods, that prophet shall die. And you may say in your heart, 'How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?' When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing, which the Lord has not spoken. The prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him. (Deut. 18:18-21)

2. Only God knows the future; many who pretend to know do not know at all "Remember this, and be assured; Recall it to mind, you transgressors. Remember the former things long past, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is no one like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning And from ancient times things which have not been done, Saying, 'My purpose will be established, And I will accomplish all My good pleasure' (Isa. 46:8-10).

In all the writings of Buddha, Confucius or Lao-tse, there is not one single predicted prophecy. In the Koran (Islamic writings of Mohammed) there is one instance of a specific prophecy, a self-fulfilling prophecy, that Muhammad would return to Mecca. He did; but this is quite different from the prophecy of Jesus that He would return from the grave. Muhammad could easily go back to Mecca on his own ability, but it takes God for one to come back from the grave.

Modern prophets like Jean Dixon, the most famous seer in America, make some clever guesses; but do they come true as the Bible prophecies do? In 1952, 1956, and 1960 Dixon prophesied who would be the presidential candidate in each major party and who would be elected President of the United States. How did she do? She missed every candidate and every election.

A Christian lady saved a National Enquirer from a few years ago. It had an article where the ten leading psychics, seers or prophets were to predict the events of the next six months. There were 61 prophecies, but not one came true! It seems to me that if a person predicted 61 things, he would be lucky enough to get one. Perhaps

God wanted to show people how unlike God they are!

Historians know how difficult it is to predict the future, because the events of life turn on so many "ifs." Eccl. 7:14 says, "In the day of prosperity be happy, But in the day of adversity consider--God has made the one as well as the other So that man may not discover anything that will be after him." Eccl. 9:11 "I again saw under the sun that the race is not to the swift, and the battle is not to the warriors, and neither is bread to the wise, nor wealth to the discerning, nor favor to men of ability; for time and chance overtake them all."

Nor are these prophecies of the Bible vague generalities like some of the ancient prophets of Greece, the Oracle at Delphi or the Sibylline Oracles. For example, Maxentius, Emperor of Rome, is said to have come to one of the Sibylline Oracles and asked what would happen if he attacked the army of Constantine that was approaching Rome on the other side of the Tiber River. The Oracle's answer was: "In that day, the enemy of Rome will be destroyed." So, confident of victory, he attacked Constantine's army, but it was Maxentius who was destroyed. The oracle failed to define who the enemy of Rome really was; thus in the pattern of most oracular utterances, however it turned out, the prophecy was fulfilled.

The Old Testament alone makes 2,000 predictive prophecies, not a few lucky guesses. Here are 20 of more than 100 prophecies about Jesus Christ:

seed of Woman (Gen. 3:15)
 seed of Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7; 22:18)
 seed of Isaac (Gen. 21:12)
 seed of Judah (Gen. 49:10)
 seed of David (Psa. 132:11)
 Time of His coming and death (Daniel 2,9)
 born of a virgin (Isa. 7:14)
 born in Bethlehem of Judea (Micah 5:2)
 Elijah, a voice preparing the Way (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1)
 anointed by the Holy Spirit (Psa. 45:7; Isa. 11:2)
 prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15-18)
 teach by parables (Psa. 78:2)
 perform miracles (Isa. 35:5,6)
 rejected by his brothers (Psa. 69:8)

reject by Jewish rulers (Psa. 118:22)
 flesh would not decay (Psa. 16:8-10)
 rise from dead on third day (Psa. 16:8-10; 30:3)
 ascend to the heavens (Psa. 68:18; 24:7-9)
 His law, Word to go forth from Jerusalem (Isa. 2:1-3; Mic. 4:12)
 Gentiles would be admitted (Isa. 11:10; 42:1; Psa. 2:8)

These are but a few things, which Jesus could not have self-determined but must have relied upon others. Peter Stoner, mathematician, in *Science Speaks*, selected just 8 of these Messianic Prophecies concerning Christ and estimated the odds of these being accidentally fulfilled. Results 1 in 10 (to the 17th power); that is 1 in 10 with 17 zeros following it.

Suppose we take 10 to the 17th power in silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover the entire state 2 feet deep. Now mark one of these dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one?

Isaiah 53

So accurate was Isaiah 53 in predicting the specific circumstances surrounding the death of Jesus Christ that people say it could not possibly have been written before the time of Christ!

But when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found at Qumran, in the midst of them was a complete copy of Isaiah, all in one scroll, with chapter 53 in its details, carbon dated to 150-250 years before Christ!

Prophecies about Nations:

1. Deut. 28:47-68 Moses predicts what will happen to the nation of Israel should they ever forsake God and turn to idols. The incredible likeness of this prophecy to the actual history of Israel in the time of the prophets verifies the truth Moses spoke. Things became so bad that some killed and ate their own children (Deut. 28:53; Jer. 19:9). There would be left few in number as a remnant (vs. 62). They would be

scattered among the people from one end of the earth to the other (vs. 64). The dispersion is a matter of reality (James 1:1,2).

2. Isaiah foretold in the eighth century that when Israel would become deeply involved in idolatry, that the Lord would raise up the Assyrians as the "rod of His anger" to punish them (Isa. 50:5,6); but after that is accomplished, the Assyrians themselves would be destroyed (10:12-25). When Judah lapsed into spiritual decay, the prophets announced that Babylon would arise to punish them (Jer. 25:9-11) and to captivate them for 70 years. Babylon did so and destroyed Jerusalem. They held the Jews for exactly 70 years (607 B.C. to 537 B.C.). At the end of the seventy years (as Daniel 2 and Isaiah 13 predicts) Babylon was taken by the Medes and the Persians and Cyrus allowed the Jews to return to Jerusalem. (Cf. Daniel 5:28).

Prophecy About Babylon

Isa. 13:19 "Babylon, the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldee's excellency, shall be as when God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah." There are more than 100 specific prophecies about Babylon's fate:

1. Walls of Babylon: 186 feet thick at base and 87 feet thick at top, 200 feet tall, 250 watchtowers rose to 300 feet, enclosed an area of 196 square miles. It was 14 miles on each side; 56 miles in circumference. Historian Herodotus tells us these facts. The Great Wall of China is not nearly so large or strong. Though China's wall is older, it still stands. The walls of Jerusalem still stand. Jer. 51:58,62 says, "The broad walls of Babylon shall be utterly broken; . . .it shall be desolate forever." When was this fulfilled? In the fourth century A.D., Julian the Apostate came to the throne of Rome. His one overwhelming desire was to destroy Christianity and reestablish the pagan religions of Rome. While engaged in a war with the Persians near the remains of Babylon, Julian completely destroyed the remnants of the wall of Babylon lest it afford any protection in the future for the Persian army. Thus the prophecy of Jeremiah 51 was brought to fulfillment in 363 B.C. by one of Scripture's greatest antagonists of

all time. Isaiah could not possibly have written this after the fact because Babylon's walls did not come down for more than a thousand years after his death.

2. The city would not be inhabited. Jer. 50:13,39 "Because of the wrath of the Lord it shall not be inhabited, but it shall be wholly desolate. . .It shall be no more inhabited forever." Has this been fulfilled? Pictures of Babylon today show this place to be a trackless waste. Its soil will not now grow any vegetation in spite of the fact that it had the hanging gardens (one of the seven wonders of the ancient world). The soil will not even allow pastures for grazing sheep. Today only weeds grow there. Because of the great amounts of rubbish; it cannot be cultivated. Only jackals, vipers, scorpions, wild boars hyenas, and wolves today inhabit Babylon. Not even the Bedouins pitch their tent there. The heaps of rubbish are the only sign it was ever inhabited.

Alexander the Great, who conquered the world within a decade, decided that he would rebuild Babylon in 323 B.C. He wanted to make it the capital of his worldwide Empire. He issued 600,000 rations to his soldiers to rebuild the city. But shortly thereafter, Alexander at only 33 suddenly died of a fever. The enterprise was abandoned. The place soon became a desert.

There are many other amazing prophecies of the Old Testament that could be considered: Egypt, Tyre and Sidon, Samaria, Nineveh, Edom and Petra, Gaza and Ashkelon of the Philistines, Thebes and Memphis.

The Bible prophesies of Jericho, that it would be rebuilt but at great cost. God's Word says in Josh. 6:26: "Then Joshua made them take an oath at that time, saying, 'Cursed before the Lord is the man who rises up and builds this city Jericho; with the loss of his first-born he shall lay its foundation, and with the loss of his youngest son he shall set up its gates.'" (1400 B.C.) The fulfillment of this prophecy comes to pass in 1 Kings 16:34 "In his days (king Ahab) Hiel the Bethelite built Jericho; he laid its foundation with the loss of Abiram his first-born, and set up its gates with the loss of his

youngest son Segub, according to the word of the Lord, which He spoke by Joshua the son of Nun." (870 B.C.) With God time does not change things.

Conclusion:

We need to believe all the word of God; it has proved itself over and over again! God means what He says about sin, judgment, self-control, heaven and hell. We need to give our lives to Him in love and obedience.

Argument for the Genuineness of the Documents.

The genuineness of these writings really admits of as little doubt--and is as susceptible of as ready proof as that of any indent writings whatever. The rule of municipal law on this subject is familiar, and applies with equal force to all ancient writings, whether documentary or otherwise. The first enquiry, when an ancient document is offered in evidence in our courts, is, whether it comes from the proper repository; that is, whether it is found in the place where and under the care of persons with whom such writings might naturally and reasonably be expected to be found; for it is this custody which gives authenticity to documents found within it. If they come from such a place and bear no evident marks of forgery, the law presumes that they are genuine, and they are admitted to be read in evidence, unless the opposing party is able successfully to impeach them. . . . Now, this is precisely the case with the sacred writings. They have been used in the Church from time immemorial, and thus are found in the place where alone they ought to be looked for.

If it be objected that the originals are lost, and that copies alone are now produced, the principles of the municipal law here also afford a satisfactory answer. . . . If any ancient document concerning our public rights were lost, copies which had been as universally received and acted upon as The Four Gospels have been, would have been received in evidence in any of our courts of justice without the slightest hesitation. The entire text of the *Corpus Sums Civilis* is received as authority in all the courts of continental Europe upon much weaker evidence

of its genuineness; for the integrity of the Sacred Text has been preserved by the jealousy of opposing sects beyond any moral possibility of corruption, while that of the Roman Civil Law has been preserved only by tacit consent, without the interests of any opposing school to watch over and preserve it from alteration.

These copies of the Holy Scriptures, having thus been in familiar use in the Churches, from the time when the text was committed to writing; having been watched with vigilance by so many sects, opposed to each other in doctrine, yet all appealing to these Scriptures for the correctness of their faith; and having in all ages, down to this day, been respected as the authoritative source of all ecclesiastical power and government, and submitted to and acted under, in regard to so many claims of right on the one hand, and so many obligations of duty on the other; it is quite erroneous to suppose that the Christian is bound to offer any further proof of their genuineness or authenticity. It is for the objector to show them spurious; for on him, by the plainest rules of law, lies the burden of proof. If it were the case of a claim to a franchise, and a copy of an ancient deed or charter were produced in support of the title, under parallel circumstances on which to presume its genuineness, no lawyer, it is believed, would venture to deny its admissibility in evidence, nor the satisfactory character of the proof.⁴

Messianic Prophecies

The apostles throughout the New Testament appealed to two things, which established that Jesus was indeed the Christ, the Messiah. The first was the resurrection, but the second is fulfilled Messianic prophecy. Jesus said, "These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." Then He opened their minds to understand the Scriptures (Luke 24:44,45). The Old Testament contains more than 300 prophecies of the Messiah which were fulfilled in Jesus.

The truth of Jesus and the inspiration of the Scriptures may be established through fulfilled prophecy. If God is God, then His word will be true and His knowledge infinite. Indeed, His word will never be broken (John 10:35). If God has spoken, He will make it good (Num. 23:19). God is able to subject all things to His will (Isa. 46:9,10). The prophesied Messiah could be absolutely identified by His fulfillment of the prophecies made about Him (Rom. 1:2-4).

Notice these appeals to Messianic prophecy:

And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, He explained to them the things concerning Himself in all the Scriptures. (Luke 24:27)

"These are My words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled." (Luke 24:44)

"You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is these that bear witness of Me; and you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. (John 5:39,40) "For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote of Me." But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?" (John 5:46,47)

And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down; and the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed upon Him. And He began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." (Luke 4:20,21)

"For I tell you, that this which is written must be fulfilled in Me, 'AND HE WAS NUMBERED WITH TRANSGRESSORS'; for that which refers to Me has *its* fulfillment." (Luke 22:37)

"But *they have done this* in order that the word may be fulfilled that is written in their Law, 'THEY HATED ME WITHOUT A CAUSE.' (John 15:25)

New Testament Writers Appeal to Prophecies Fulfilled in Jesus

Acts 3:18; 10:43; 13:29:17:2,3

Rom. 1:2

1 Cor. 15:3,4

1 Pet. 2:5,6

Old Testament Prophecies About the Messiah

PROPHECY**FULFILLMENT**

1. He was to be born of the seed of the woman Gen. 3:15	Matt. 1:18
2. He would be the Son of God Psalm 2:7; 1 Chron. 17:11-14; 2 Sam. 7:12-16	Luke 1:32-35
3. He would overcome the serpent Gen. 3:15	Heb. 2:14
4. He would be of the seed of Abraham Gen. 12:1-3; 17:7; 22:18	Gal. 3:16
5. He would be of the seed of Isaac Gen. 21:12	Heb. 11:18
6. He would be of the seed of Jacob Num. 24:17; Gen. 35:10-12	Luke 3:23,34
7. He would be of the seed of Judah Gen. 49:10	Heb. 7:14
8. He would be of the seed of Jesse Isa. 11:1	Luke 3:23,32
9. He would be of the seed of David Psalm 132:11; Jer. 23:5	Acts 13:23; Rom. 1:3
10. The time of His coming and death Dan. 9:24-27	Luke 2:1
11. Born of a virgin Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:18; Luke 2:7
12. He was to be called Immanuel Isa. 7:14	Matt. 1:22-23
13. Born in Bethlehem Micah 5:2	Matt. 2:1; Luke 2:4-6
14. Great Men shall come and bow down to him Psalm 72:10-15	Matt. 2:1-11
15. Children slaughtered: that He might be killed Jer. 31:15	Matt. 2:16-18
16. Introduced by John the Baptist Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1; 4:5-6	Matt. 3:1-3; Luke 1:17
17. Was anointed by the Holy Spirit Psalm 45:7; Isa. 11:2; 61:1	Matt. 3:16,17; John 3:34; Acts 10:38
18. Was a prophet like Moses Deut. 18:15-18	Acts 3:20-22
19. He was sent as a deliverer to the people Isa. 61:1-3	Luke 4:16-21, 43
20. He is the light to Zebulun and Naphtali Isa. 9:1-3	Matt. 4:12-16
21. He comes to the temple and cleanses it Haggai 2:7-9; Malachi 3:1; Isa. 56:7; Jer. 7:11	Luke 19:45,46; John 2:13-16
22. His poverty Isa. 53:2	Mark 6:3; Luke 9:58

23. He was meek and not loud Isa. 42:1,2	Phil. 2:5-8
24. His compassion Isa. 40:11; 42:3	Matt. 12:15-20; Heb. 4:15
25. He was without guile Isa. 53:9	1 Pet. 2:22
26. He had great Zeal for God's house Psalm 69:9	John 2:17
27. He taught by parables Psalm 78:2	Matt. 13:34,35
28. He performed miracles Isa. 35:5,6	Luke 7:18-23; Matt. 9:35
29. His brothers rejected him Psalm 69:8	John 2:17; Mark 3:21,31
30. The Jews hated him Psalm 69:4; Isa. 53:3	John 1:11; 7:5
31. The Jewish rulers rejected him Psalm 118: 22	John 7:48; Matt. 21:42
32. He was a stumbling stone and a rock of offense Isa. 8:14	1 Pet. 2:8; Rom. 9:32
33. His flesh did not decay Psalm 16:8-10;	Acts 2:31
34. He rose from the dead on the third day Psalm 16:8-10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17	Luke 24:6, 31, 34
35. He ascended into the heavens Psalm 68:18; 24:7-9	Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9
36. He became a priest like Melchizedek, who was both king and priest Psalm 110:4; Zech. 6:12,13	Heb. 5:5-6
37. His Law went forth from Zion and his word from Jerusalem in the last days Isa. 2:1-3; Micah 4:12	Luke 24:46; Acts 2:1-40
38. He would enlist Gentiles into his service Isa. 11:10; 42:1; Psalm 2:8	John 10:16; Acts 10:44-48; Rom. 15:9-12
39. The righteousness of his reign Isa. 9:6,7; Num. 24:17-19; Micah 5:2	Rom. 3:23-26; 1 John 2:2
40. His Pre-Existence Micah 5:2; Isa. 9:6,7; 44:6	Col. 1:17; John 1:1,2; 8:58; Rev. 1:17
41. He shall be called Lord Psalm 110:1	Luke 2:11; 20:41-44
42. He shall be seated at the right hand of God Psalm 110:1	Heb. 1:3; Acts 2:34,35

Prophecies of the Sufferings of the Messiah

1. Betrayed by a friend Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14	John 13:18-21
2. Forsaken by his disciples Zech. 13:7	Matt. 26:31-56; Mark 14:50

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|---|----------------------------------|
| 3. He was sold for thirty pieces of silver
Zech. 11:12 | Matt. 26:15 |
| 4. This money was thrown into the temple
Zech. 11:13 | Matt. 27:5 |
| 5. This money was given to buy the potter's field
Zech. 11:13 | Matt. 27:7 |
| 6. He was patient and silent in his sufferings
Isa. 53:7 | Matt. 26:63; 27:12-14 |
| 7. He was smitten on the cheek
Micah 5:1 | Matt. 27:30 |
| 8. His sufferings were intense
Psalm 22:14,15 | Luke 22:42-44 |
| 9. He was scourged and spat upon
Psalm 35:15; Isa. 50:6 | Mark 14:65; John 19:1 |
| 10. His face was greatly marred
Isa. 52:14; 53:3 | John 19:1-5 |
| 11. He suffered that he might bear our sins
Isa. 53:4-6, 12; Dan. 9:26 | Matt. 20:28; 26:28 |
| 12. The rulers, Jews and Gentiles, combine against him to put him to death
Psalm 2:1-4 | Luke 23:12; Acts 4:27,28 |
| 13. He was extended on the cross, and his hands and feet were nailed to the wood
Isa. 25:10,11; Psalm 22:16; Zech. 12:10 | John 19:18; 20:25; Luke 23:33 |
| 14. He was numbered among the thieves
Isa. 53:12 | Matt. 27:38; Mark 15:27, 28 |
| 15. They gave him gall and vinegar
Psalm 69:21 | Matt. 27:39-44 |
| 16. He was mocked
Psalm 22:7,8; 35:15-21 | Matt. 27:39-44 |
| 17. He was separated from the Father
Isa. 63:1-3; Psalm 22:1 | Matt. 27:46 |
| 18. They divided his garments and cast lots for them
Psalm 22:18 | Matt. 27:35 |
| 19. He became a curse for us and bore our reproach
Psalm 22:6; Isa. 49:7 | Rom. 15:3; Heb. 13:13; Gal. 3:13 |
| 20. He made intercession for his persecutors and for the thieves
Isa. 53:12 | Luke 23:34 |
| 21. He was pierced after His death
Zech. 12:10 | John 19:34-37 |
| 22. They did not break a bone of his body
Ex. 12:46; Psalm 34:20 | John 19:33-36 |
| 23. He was buried with the rich
Isa. 53:9 | Matt. 27:57-60 |
| 24. People shook their heads
Psalm 109:25; 22:7 | Matt. 27:39 |
| 25. Darkness came over the face of the land
Amos 8:9 | Matt. 27:45 |

Many prophecies Jesus fulfilled were totally beyond the power of human control, such as: (1) place of birth, (2) time of birth, (3) manner of birth of a virgin woman, (4) betrayal, (5) manner of death in crucifixion, (6) people’s reactions at his death, (7) piercing, and (8) his burial.

Concerning these eight prophecies, Peter Stoner in *Science Speaks* estimated the probability of anyone fulfilling all of them is 1 in 10¹⁷. That would be 1 in 100,000,000,000,000,000. In order to help us comprehend this staggering probability, Stoner illustrates it by supposing we take 10¹⁷ silver dollars and lay them on the face of Texas. They will cover all of the state two feet deep. Now mark one of these silver dollars and stir the whole mass thoroughly, all over the state. Blindfold a man and tell him that he can travel as far as he wishes, but he must pick up one silver dollar and say that this is the right one. What chance would he have of getting the right one? Just the same chance that the prophets would have had of writing these eight prophecies and having them all come true

in any one man, from their day to the present time, providing they wrote them in their own wisdom.

Now these prophecies were either given by inspiration of God or the prophets just wrote them as they thought they should be. In such a case the prophets had just one chance in 10¹⁷ of having them come true in any man, but they all came true in Christ.⁵

Chances of Fulfillment

"There is only **1 chance in 480 Billion x 1 Billion x 1 Trillion** that 17 Old Testament predictions would be fulfilled in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ." (*The Signature of God*, Grant R. Jeffrey, Frontier Research Publications, Toronto, Ontario, pg. 181. *This probability is based on particular prophecies referenced in the book, pages 172-181. Some of those listed prophecies are referenced below.*)

PROPHECIES OF ISAIAH 53

PROPHECY	ISAIAH 53	NEW TESTAMENT FULFILLMENT
Despised	3	Matt. 27:39-43
Rejected	3	John 1:10,11; 7:5, 48
Acquainted with Grief	3	Heb. 4:15
Bearer of Grief and Sorrows	4	Matt. 8:16,17
Without Deceit	9	1 Pet. 2:22
Dumb Before His Persecutors	7	Matt. 26:63; 27:12,14
A Bearer of our stripes	5	1 Pet. 2:24,25
A sin-bearer	5, 12	1 Cor. 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 9:28;
Numbered with transgressors	12	Luke 22:37
Intercessor for transgressors	12	Luke 23:34
Deprived of Justice	8	Matt. 27:24
Buried with the Rich	9	Matt. 27:57-60
Raised from the Dead	10	Mark 16:9
Exalted and Honored	12	Phil. 2:9-11
Pierced Through	5	John 19:34; 20:25

“Truly eight centuries ahead Isaiah saw the glory of Jesus and ‘spoke of him’ (John 12:41). In his 53rd chapter vividness of detail causes readers to think they are looking at history not prophecy. Unbelievers have searched heaven

and earth, the living and the dead, to find anybody but Jesus (cf. Moses, Uzziah, Zerubbabel, Jeremiah, Zedekiah, Isaiah, Jehoiachin, Israel) to fit the chapter’s statements; but nobody except Jesus fits. Further, it would

be impossible for anybody else purposely to arrange his life so as to make Isaiah 53 tell of him.” (Hugo McCord, *Messianic Prophecies*, 44.)

“How could the same Messiah be a Mighty God and an Eternal King, yet also be despised and rejected by men and be cruelly put to death? The Jewish scribes wrestled with this paradox

for centuries without finding the answer, but now that it has all been fulfilled, we can see how beautifully it all came to pass in the life of Jesus.

“When prophecy contains numerous detail, all of which is exactly fulfilled, that is infallible proof that the prophecy is from God” (Herbert C. Casteel, *Beyond a Reasonable Doubt*, 170).

FACTS OF ASTRONOMY

Compiled by John Clayton

The field of astronomy is one of our most ancient disciplines. It has only been within the last century, however, that our technology has allowed close observation of our environment in space. As recently as the 15th century man was not even sure that the Earth was round, and the last planet to be discovered was found in the early 1930s. In spite of all this the Bible is completely accurate in its description of the Earth and its orientation in space. In the space below are some of the facts of astronomy that can be found in the pages of God’s Word.

Scientific Fact or Principle	Bible Passage
The Earth is round	Isa. 40:22; Prov. 8:27
Day and Night occur simultaneously on the earth	Luke 17:34
The Earth is suspended by force—nothing physical. Hindus say four elephants; and Greeks said a man, Atlas.	Job 26:7
The North is empty. The north pole of the Earth points out of our galaxy, where there is nothing but empty space.	Job 26:7
Space is too large to be measured or the stars to be counted. Number of known galaxies is over a billion, with over 100 billion stars in each galaxy.	Gen. 15:5; Jer. 33:22
Stars give off interpretable frequencies other than light. All stars give off mechanical shock waves in the audio part of the spectrum.	Job 38:7
The Earth was in a nebulous form early in its creation.	Gen. 1:2
Dust is important to our survival as a shield in our upper atmosphere	Isa. 40:12; Prov. 8:26
Air has weight.	Job. 28:25
Light can be parted into colors.	Job 38:24
Constellations possess force and influence on other objects in space.	Job 38:31
The continents have floated away from each other.	Gen. 1:9; 10:25
Arcturus and other stars move through space.	Job 38:32
Sunlight and moonlight did not get to the surface of the Earth until sometime after the beginning of Creation.	Gen. 1:14-16
Matter is made up of invisible particles.	Rom. 1:20; Heb. 11:3
The Earth has four topographic highs or “corners.”	Rev. 7:1
The oceans have natural lanes in them, which are used for shipping to this day. Matthew Maury discovered them by reading the Bible and searching for them.	Psalm 8:8
The age of everything in our galaxy is the same.	Gen. 1:1

Many of these ideas are quite subtle, and many of them might be accidental; but the point needs to be kept in mind that there are no Biblical statements, which contradict scientific fact. (John Clayton) A further excellent resource is Kenny Barfield’s book, *Why the Bible is Number One*.

The Medical Accuracy of the Bible

A good source of information on this subject is S. I. McMillen’s *None of These Diseases*.

The Medical book of the Egyptians was a book called “Papyrus Ebers,” written about 1552 B.C. The following are quotes from this book, which represent the knowledge of medicine in Moses’ time:

“To prevent hair from turning gray, anoint it with the blood of a black calf which has been boiled in oil, or with the fat of a rattlesnake.”

“When hair falls out, one remedy is to apply a mixture of six fats, namely those of the horse, the hippopotamus, the crocodile, the cat, the snake, and the ibex. To strengthen it, anoint with the tooth of a donkey crushed in honey.”

“To remove embedded splinters apply worm’s blood and asses’ dung.”

Now let’s consider some Biblical statements related to medicine and sanitation.

Scientific Fact or Principle	Bible Passage
Blood is necessary for life to exist.	Lev. 17:11-14
Both man and woman possess the seed of life	Gen. 3:15; 22:18
Eating the blood of animals is not a good practice.	Lev. 17:12,14
Eating an animal that died naturally is dangerous.	Lev. 17:15
How to diagnose leprosy.	Lev. 13
The principles of quarantine to cure contagious disease.	Lev. 13-15 (13:46)
The wisdom in not eating certain animals that carry disease.	Lev. 11
Circumcision of males should be done eight days after birth. They would bleed uncontrollably if done sooner.	Gen. 17:12
Principles of bacterial contamination from person to person and how to avoid this contamination.	Lev. 15:19-33
Certain insects can be eaten safely.	Lev. 11:22
The human body can be opened for surgery.	Gen. 2:21
Human waste products should be buried.	Deut. 23:12-14
Burning, washing of self and clothes after coming in contact with possible diseased animal or man.	Num. 19:5-22
The seeds of plants cannot be contaminated by contact with diseased animals.	Lev. 11:37

There are other principles found in Scripture. God gave Israel a system of hygiene that not only distinguished them from their neighbors but also prevented the diseases and plagues of their day. A number of these practices are still used today, and none have been shown wrong. Isn’t this quite a record for a man who studied the “Papyrus Ebers”? God inspired Moses and gave him wisdom unavailable otherwise.

How Did the Bible Writers Know These Scientific Principles?

How did the Bible writers know these things centuries before science discovered them? The answer is that God told them.⁶

Scientific Fact or Principle	Date Discovered	Scripture
There is a place void of stars in the North	19 th Century	Job 26:7
Earth is held in place by invisible forces	1650	Job 26:7
The earth is round.	15 th Century	Isa. 40:22
Day and night occur simultaneously on earth	15 th Century	Luke 17:30-35
Early diagnosis of leprosy	17 th Century	Lev. 13
Quarantine of Disease Control	17 th Century	Lev. 13:1-46
Blood of animals carries disease.	17 th Century	Lev. 17:13-14
Blood necessary for survival of life	19 th Century	Lev. 17:11
Oceans have natural paths in them.	1854	Psa. 8:8
Most seaworthy ship design is 30:5:3 ratio	1860	Gen. 6
Radio astronomy (stars give off signals)	1945	Job 38:7
Oceans contain fresh water springs	1920	Job 38:16
Infinite number of stars	1940	Gen. 15:5
Air has weight.	16 th Century	Job 28:25
Matter is made up of invisible particles	20 th Century	Heb. 11:3
Arcturus and other stars move through space	19 th Century	Job 38:32
Water cycle	17 th Century	Eccl. 1:7
Man was the last living being created	15 th Century	Gen. 1

THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

The problem lies in the existence of evil and suffering in the presence of a loving and all-powerful God. Some say:

Either God is all-powerful but not all good, and therefore doesn't stop evil and suffering.

Or God is all good but not all-powerful, and therefore cannot stop evil and suffering.

In either case, the God of the Bible, claiming to be both all good and all-powerful, cannot exist.

Why Has God Not Stopped All Evil?

I. The Nature of Man as A Free Moral Agent

1. God did not make man an evil being; He made man innocent and pronounced him "very good."

a. God made man in His own image; man has intellect, emotions, and a will--he is free to choose.

b. If man did not have a will, he would be no more than a puppet or a machine.

c. Free Will includes the possibility of choosing right or wrong, good or evil.

d. All men sin. Rom. 3:23

2. How should God deal with the sinfulness of man?

a. Someone suggests: "He should destroy all sinners and Satan too!

b. But all men are sinners! If He destroyed all that sinned, He would destroy you and me.

c. Men do not want pure justice from God; what they want is mercy.

3. God has chosen to work with men, not forcing them to righteousness, allowing them the freedom to choose to do good or evil.

a. God has not been negligent! He sent Jesus into the world to die for us, and then to build a kingdom for righteousness.

b. God has given us His Word, the Bible, to guide us. He prefers that men repent of their sins and be saved than for them to be punished. Ezek. 33:11; 2 Pet. 3:9

c. God cannot be held responsible for what men, who choose to do evil things, do to each other.

II. The problem of natural disasters:

hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanoes, tornadoes, fire, hail, wind, floods, disease, etc.

1. Accidents: Eccl. 9:11,12 The laws of nature are constant: gravity, rain, wind, fire, lightning, and floods are all necessities of life but can hurt.

a. God sends His sun upon the evil and the good, and His rain upon the righteous and the unrighteous Matt. 5:45

b. Accidents happen when men are careless, unaware, or unprepared for the changes of nature

2. Some things God permits (Deut. 29:29) we don't always know why specifically

a. some things are a test of our faith Job 1:12

b. suffering sometimes brings us closer to God 1 Pet. 4:19

c. suffering reminds us of our need for God Matt. 7:7-11

3. The chastening of God is for our benefit to strengthen us and help us endure Heb. 12:5-11

a. chastening is not punishment; its purpose is to benefit

b. Isa. 45:5-7 calamity often awakens people to the fact that God is the Lord of our lives.

The Values of Suffering

1. If it can be shown that suffering has a value and can lead to good in a person's life, then its presence would not be an argument against the existence of a good God.

2. It is an assumption that ease and happiness are the greatest good in life. Eccl. 7:2-4

3. Some "good things" can only be brought about in our character by suffering. The pearl comes not through ease but suffering.

4. Romans 8:28 Not all things are good, but God causes all things (good or bad) to work together for good for those who love Him.

5. What suffering can do for men:

a. help man know himself, what his character is, and what he can do to bless the lives of others.

b. help man learn what is really important or valuable.

c. teach man to be thankful for his blessings.

d. teach man compassion for the needs of others. 2 Cor. 3:5

e. teach man the value of prayer.

f. teach man the value of kindness in word, thought or deed.

g. teach man that bright ones often follow dark hours. Psalm 30:5

h. encourage men to remember God--some people never think of God until some great need comes into their lives.

i. trials bring about patience Rom. 5:4

Jesus Christ Suffered On the Cross For Our Sakes

1. Jesus Christ knows what it is to suffer in many forms: pain, injury, insult, punishment, rejection, prejudice, jealousy, hatred, hunger, weakness. He suffered through no fault or sin of His own. No one can accuse Jesus of not understanding suffering.

2. Jesus' suffering on the cross teaches us that love and suffering are not incompatible. Jesus never once questioned his Father's love. God's love is dramatically shown through the suffering and death of Jesus upon the cross. Rom. 8:6-8; 1 John 4:8. No one can accuse God of not caring for men.

3. Jesus' death teaches us that suffering is not always punishment for our sins. Jesus was sinless (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:14-16). Jesus died not for his own sins, but for ours.

4. Jesus' death teaches us that suffering can accomplish good purposes for others. The suffering of one may bless the lives of many others.

a. Joseph suffered to save Israel during the famine.

b. Moses suffered to lead Israel out of Egypt to freedom.

c. David suffered that he might be able to establish a righteous kingdom in Israel.

d. Jesus suffered that He might "save His people from their sins." Matt. 1:21

e. Voluntary suffering, even unjustly, helps accomplish wonderful things in the character of those involved.

f. Love costs something. John 15:13

5. Jesus' death on the cross proclaims that there is something worse than suffering, *sin*. A holy and good God must truly hate sin. He cannot transform sin; He must judge it. Our Heavenly Father condemned sin by the cross of Christ. When Jesus died, He bore the condemnation of the world's sin. Don't pity Jesus on the cross. Instead, pity Caiaphas, Pilate, or Judas. We must never let our sorrow blind us to the real cause of suffering in our world, our true enemy, sin and rebellion against God.

6. Jesus' death assures us that suffering in God's will always leads to glory. Suffering itself does not lead to glory, but suffering "in the will of God" and depending on the grace of God will lead to glory. The death of Jesus transforms suffering into love and glory. The rugged cross symbolized shame, but Jesus transform the instrument of death into a message of love.

7. Jesus' death on the cross teaches us that suffering doesn't last forever, and death is not the end. When God's people suffer, the Father is near them, sharing their pain, and holding them in His hands. Whether a Christian lives or dies, he never leaves the love of a caring Father in Heaven. Rom. 8:37-39; 14:8. Jesus yielded himself into the hands of His Father to receive His spirit at death. We also have that assurance. Jesus had the confidence and the courage to yield to His Father in times of suffering. This too is a great source of strength for the Christian. 1 Pet. 2:21-24

V. CONCLUSION

1. The Christian can join in Habakkuk's song Hab. 3:17-19
2. Trust in God helps the Christian rise above the sufferings of this life. 2 Cor. 4:7-15

Why Does God Allow Victims To Suffer?

What Can God Do To Help the Innocent?

So entire races are enslaved; ethnic minorities are discriminated against; entire populations are oppressed by ruthless political machines; supposedly undesirable citizens are liquidated; hostages are held; neighbors are used abusively for selfish ends. A cumulative evil effect is built up for succeeding generations. What are God's options? He could eliminate the human family arrangement, but we could not bear that. He could make mechanical robots of us all by withdrawing our freedom and computerizing our actions. We would never agree to that. He could step in ahead of every damaging human move, but that would be a withdrawal of freedom. He could take away the ability to suffer, but that would entail the loss of more than we are willing to surrender. He could settle the score with each guilty person after

each offense. That would sidestep the problem since it would not relieve innocent suffering, though the Christian faith does promise that someday all justice will be equalized. God could himself "make it up" to each offended person and make all the suffering worthwhile. This he has promised to do. This he has done. This he is doing every hour of every day for those who will allow him.⁷

Was It Morally Right for God to Order the Killing of the Canaanites?

By Clarence Lavender

The Bible teaches that God never does anything wrong. God is never out of control but always does things consistent with his holy and just nature. "Now therefore let the fear of Jehovah be upon you; take heed and do it: for there is no iniquity with Jehovah our God, nor respect of persons, nor taking of bribes" (2 Chron. 19:7). There must be good explanation when God orders the death of people, some of them women and innocent children.

The Destruction of the Canaanites

Those who question the ethics of God concerning the destruction of the Canaanites, or any other judicial decision made by God, fail to take into account six things:

1. They ignore the reason given for the destruction of wicked people, "that they teach you not to do after their abominations which they have done unto their sons" (Deut. 20:18).
2. The only way a person can accuse God of wrong is to be equal with God. No mortal can make the same judgments God makes because he does not have God's view of things or his knowledge.
3. The Canaanites were grossly immoral. The justice of God demands punishment for sin. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). God must show his righteousness in punishing the wicked or violate his own nature (Rom. 3:23-27).
4. A person would have to be omniscient to know that what happened to the innocent children of guilty parents was not the best thing that could have happened. The alternative here

may be to grow to adulthood and become malignant blights in the society of men like their parents.

5. Punishment here may be in recognition of what the Canaanites had earned. When it became clear they were past redemption, their destruction occurred.

6. Punishment was deserved by the Canaanites, whereas it was not in the case of the Holocaust—which was only a vendetta by Hitler and the Nazis against the Jews.

It was dedication to continual wickedness that marked the Canaanites for extermination. The scriptures uphold the justice and righteousness of God even in his command to eradicate the Canaanites.

Not for thy righteousness, or for the uprightness of thine heart, dost thou go to possess their land: but for the wickedness of these nations the Lord thy God dost drive them out from before thee, and that he may perform the word which the Lord aware unto thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Deut. 9:5).

God's call for Israel to destroy "the Hittite, and the Amorite, the Canaanite, and the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite" was not traced to the Jews' moral superiority or their number, but to fulfill his promise to Abraham and his seed. God was preserving a lineage through which the Messiah would come and all nations be blessed.

There had been a patient waiting from Abraham's time for the sin of the Amorites to reach its full measure. "But in the fifth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet full" (Gen. 15:16).

The Canaanites were singled out for severe treatment to prevent Israel and the rest of the world from being corrupted. "Of the cities of these peoples. . . thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth. . . that they teach you not to do after all their abominations, which they have done unto their gods; so would ye sin against Jehovah your God" (Deut. 20:16-18). When people bum their children in honor of false gods, practice sodomy, bestiality, and all forms of wickedness, the land itself begins to vomit them out (Lev. 18:25-30). The modern world would do well to heed the warning (Rom. 8:22).

Objection to the fate of these nations is really an objection to the highest manifestation of the

goodness of God. Greene likens this action on God's part, not to doing evil that good may come, but doing good in spite of certain evil consequences, just as a surgeon does not refrain from amputating a gangrenous limb, even though in so doing he cannot help cutting off healthy flesh.

A husband agrees to abort a tubular pregnancy. The purpose of the abortion is not to take the life of the child, but to save the life of the mother; besides the child could not survive in any case.

The doctor knows that in destroying cancer cells healthy cells will be destroyed. His purpose is not to kill good cells but bad ones; yet in trying to save the person from the spread of cancer, good is destroyed, but it could not have survived regardless.

At what instant I shall speak concerning a nation, and concerning a kingdom, to pluck up, and to pull down, and to destroy it: If that nation against whom I have pronounced, turn from their evil. I will repent of the evil that I thought to do unto them. And at what instant I shall speak concerning a nation and concerning a kingdom, to build and to plant it: If it do evil in my sight, that it obey not my voice, then I will repent of the good wherewith I said I would benefit them (Jer. 18:7-10).

Canaan had a forty-year countdown. They heard of the events in Egypt, the crossing of the Red Sea, and what happened to the kings who opposed Israel along the way. We know they were aware of such events, for Rahab confessed that these same events had terrorized Jericho and that she, as a result, had placed her faith in the God of the Hebrews (Josh. 2:10-14).

The destruction of the Canaanites was based on the same principle by which the whole world was judged in the universal flood and that by which the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah were judged. Usually those who object to these events are those who deny compatibility of the doctrine of eternal destruction with the mercy and love of God. God's character and the acts he requires are fully consistent with everything that both Testaments teach us to expect in our God. The problem usually centers in a deficiency in our view of things and our inability to properly grasp the whole of the subject.⁸

The Risk of Believing

From Rene Pascal

If atheism-agnosticism is a risk, is not theism also a risk? “Perhaps God is not.” Yes; but which risk is worse? Which “way of going wrong” is worse? To believe, and God is not? Or, not to believe, and God is? Let us weigh them. They are equal on the intellectual level, they are equally errors, failures of belief to correspond to reality. But beyond that? Nothing with regard to the first: belief in God while He is not. But the second: not to believe while God is? This represents a terrible failure on my part to give the response due to God, to acknowledge Him as my Creator, to thank Him for the gift of my existence, to love Him in response to His love for me. The other “way of going wrong,” believing God is while He is not, represents no corresponding failure to give a response due. If the atheist is right there is simply the state of affairs that there is no God; no adequate response is due to that.

The failure to give the response due to God if He is, is also the greatest evil, and loss, for the individual person. It is the loss of all that we ultimately long for: love, truth, beauty, liberation from guilt, fulfillment hope, meaning. For all these are to be found only in God; or not at all.⁹

AGNOSTICISM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

We have been speaking of two great alternatives: theism and atheism. But perhaps there is a third, agnosticism; and perhaps it is the reasonable option for a person who is uncertain whether theism or atheism is the truth.

Agnosticism represents an attempt at a neutral middle position: “I assert neither that God is, nor that He is not; I simply don’t know, and so I leave the question open.” That is certainly a position, but is it really neutral? What does this position entail for one’s life? Does it not entail the same thing as atheism: that one does not live before God, that one does not reckon with God, that one does not pray to God, does not thank Him? Whether one does not reckon with God because one says, “God is not,” or because one

says, “I don’t know that He is,” makes no practical difference. Either way God is not present to the person’s consciousness. While there is a logical difference between asserting God is not (atheism) and not asserting that He is (agnosticism), there is no existential difference, no difference for the conscious life of the person. One is as opposed as the other to a commitment to God, to seeing the world as manifesting God, to viewing existence as ultimately meaningful because it comes from God and leads to Him as its destiny. For this reason, as William James explains in his essay, “The Will to Believe,” agnosticism is not a neutral middle position. “Do not decide, but leave the question (of God) open, is itself a passionate decision —just like deciding yes or no — and is attended with the same risk of losing the truth!”

It should be stressed that uncertainty about God is not the same as agnosticism. Pascal, at one stage of his life, was uncertain about God. But he was never an agnostic. Agnosticism is a specific response to uncertainty, a definite position: “Do not decide, but leave the question open!” Pascal’s response to uncertainty is exactly the opposite of this: I want to decide, I want the question settled, I want to know; and so I seek God. The contrast to the agnostic “do not decide” is most vividly brought out by Pascal’s beautiful phrase: “My heart inclines wholly to know, where is the true good, in order to follow it; nothing would be too dear to me for eternity.”

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¹ Dr. Frank Allen, "The Origin of the World--By Chance or Design?" *The Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe*, ed. John Clover Monsma (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1958), pp. 19-20.

² Dr. Edward Luther Kessel, "Let's Look at Facts, Without Bent or Bias," *Monsma*, pp. 50,51.

³ From *Man Does Not Stand Alone* by A. Cressy Morrison. (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1944), pp. 94, 95.

⁴ Simon Greenleaf, *Testimony of the Evangelists*, pp. 9-10, quoted in *An Encyclopedia of the Evidences*, by J. W. Monser, pp. 375, 376.

⁵ Peter Stoner, *Science Speaks* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1963), pp. 100-107.

⁶ This material is based on research by John Clayton, a high school science teacher in South Bend, Indiana. Brother Clayton travels extensively with "Does God Exist?" seminars.

⁷ John Tal Murphy, *A Loving God and a Suffering World* (Downer's Grove, Ill.: IVP, 1981), p. 87.

⁸ Clarence Lavender, "Was It Morally Right for God to Order the Killing of the Canaanites?" in *Firm Foundation*, September 1992, pp. 10,11.

⁹ Rene Pascal, *Pensees*, Section III.

Salvation

What is Sin?

Anyone who seeks to do the will of God ought to know what sin is and that the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23). This death is spiritual separation from God, the source of life (Isa. 59:1,2). There are various words used in the Greek NT to describe sin. They are:

*sin (αμαρτια): "a missing of the mark" Rom. 6:23; James 4:17; 1 John 3:4; 5:16.

*sin (αμαρτημα): "an act of disobedience to Divine law" Mark 3:28,29; Rom. 3:25; 2 Pet. 1:9

*error (πλανη): "a wandering, a forsaking of the right path" Jas. 5:20; 2 Pet. 3:17; 1 John 4:6; Rom. 1:27; 2 Pet. 2:18; Jude 11

*iniquity (ανομια): "lawlessness or wickedness, crookedness" Matt. 7:23; 13:41; Tit. 2:14; 1 John 3:4; Rom. 4:7; Heb. 10:17

*iniquity (παρανομια): "law-breaking" 2 Pet. 2:16

*iniquity or unrighteousness (αδικια): "unrighteousness; a condition of not being right" Luke 16:8; 18:6; 2 Tim. 2:19; James 3:6

*iniquity (αδικημα): "a wrong, an injury, misdeed" Acts 18:14; 24:20; Rev. 18:5

*evil (πονηρεια): "bad, evil, worthless, wickedness" Matt. 22:18; Mk. 7:22; Lk 11:39; Rom. 1:29; 1 Cor. 5:8; Eph. 6:12

*trespass (παρπτωμα): "a false step, a blunder, a deviation from uprightness or the truth, to fall" Matt. 6:14,15; 18:35; Mark. 11:25,26; Gal. 6:1; James 5:16; Col. 2:13; Eph. 1:7; 2:1,5

*transgression (παρβασις): "a going beyond the prescribed limits" Rom. 4:15; 5:13,14,20; 7:7,13; Gal. 3:19

The Scriptures teach us that sin is the breaking or transgression of the law (1 John 3:4); sin is lawlessness because the one who sins sets aside the law to do as he wishes. Sin is the breaking of God's law and is an offense against God Himself (Gen. 39:9; Psa. 51:4). Sin is not only doing what God forbids; it is also the failure to do what God demands of us. "Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn't do it, sins" (James 4:17). Many people will be lost at judgment for failure to obey the gospel (2

Thess. 1:7-9). All wrongdoing or unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

Various Kinds of Sin:

John said that worldliness is characterized by three things: the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). The very first sin of Adam and Eve, eating of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is an example of how temptation to sin may appeal to any or all of these categories (Gen. 3:1-19). Eve saw that the fruit was good for food (flesh), pleasing to the eye (eyes), and was able to make her wise (pride). Both Adam and Eve gave in to temptation. Their sin led to their spiritual death and to physical death coming upon all men (Rom. 5:12-17).

1. *Works of the Flesh*: "sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Gal. 5:19-21).

2. *Wicked deeds*: sexual immorality, idolatry, adultery, male prostitution, homosexuality, theft, greed, drunkenness, slander, swindling. Those who commit such acts will not "inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

3. *Godlessness and wickedness*: failure to acknowledge or give thanks to God, idolatry, sexual impurity, homosexuality, shameful lusts, lesbianism, indecency, perversion, wickedness, evil, greed, envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, gossip, slander, God-hating, insolence, arrogance, boasting, disobedience to parents, senselessness, faithlessness, heartlessness, ruthlessness, and the toleration and approval of others' wickedness (Rom. 1:18-32).

4. *Deeds of Darkness*: the hint of sexual immorality, impurity, greed, obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking (Eph. 5:1-12). Those who practice these things will not inherit the kingdom of God and have the wrath of God coming on the disobedient.

5. *Earthly Deeds*: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed (which is

idolatry). Also anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language, and lying. The Christian must rid himself of these things.

6. *Godlessness in the last days*: "For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; and avoid such men as these. For among them are those who enter into households and captivate weak women weighed down with sins, led on by various impulses, always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth. And just as Jannes and Jambres opposed Moses, so these {men} also oppose the truth, men of depraved mind, rejected as regards the faith. . . . But evil men and impostors will proceed {from bad} to worse, deceiving and being deceived" (2 Tim. 3:2-8,13).

Sexual Sins

1. *Sexual Immorality*. This is a broad term referring to all kinds of sexual intercourse before or outside of marriage (1 Cor. 6:12-20). This includes intercourse before marriage, adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, incest, multiple husbands or wives (Matt. 19:3-9). Those who practice sexual immorality will not enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:9,10; Gal. 5:19-21).

2. *Adultery*. Adultery is committed when a married person has sexual intercourse with someone other than the person to whom he is married. Those who commit adultery are guilty of breaking a covenant with their spouses. A single person commits adultery when he has sexual intercourse with a person who is married to someone else.

3. *Homosexuality*. Sexual intercourse between two persons of the same sex; those who practice it cannot enter heaven (Gen. 13:13; 18:20; 19:1-29; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 6:9,10; 1 Tim. 1:10). Sodomites are called "dogs" in Deut. 23:17,18 and may be referred to in Rev. 22:15.

4. *Incest*. Illicit sexual intercourse performed between members of the same family (Lev. 18:6-18; 20:11-21; 1 Cor. 5:21; cf. Matt. 14:3,4).

5. *Bestiality*. Sexual intercourse with an animal (Ex. 22:19).

6. *Lust or Lasciviousness*. Jesus taught that the man who looks on a woman to lust after her has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:27-30). The Christian is to avoid lusting (Rom. 13:13; Gal. 5:19-21; Col. 3:5). Coveting another man's wife is sin (Ex. 20:17), even though one may not touch her. The Christian must be careful to avoid activities that promote lasciviousness or lust. "Don't be misled: 'Bad company corrupts good morals'" (1 Cor. 15:33).

Sins of the Heart

"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life" (Prov. 4:23).

"For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him" (Matt. 12:34,35).

"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander" (Matt. 15:19).

1. *Anger*. Jesus taught that anger with a brother is sinful (Matt. 5:21,22). Christians who have sinned against a brother are to reconcile quickly (Matt. 5:23-26). Christians who have been forgiven by God are expecting to be forgiving with others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32). Jesus gives us instructions as to how to deal with a brother who has sinned against us (Matt. 18:15-17).

2. *Partiality*. Christians are to love and treat everyone with respect (James 2:1-10). God does not show favoritism (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:6,11).

3. *Envy or Jealousy*. Love is not jealous (1 Cor. 13:4). Envy is the feeling of displeasure produced by witnessing the advantage or prosperity of others (Matt. 27:18; Rom. 1:29; Gal. 5:21; Phil. 1:15; 1 Tim. 6:4; Tit. 3:3; 1 Pet. 2:1). Envy desires to deprive another of what he possesses; jealousy desires to have the same or the same sort of thing for itself (Rom. 13:13; 1 Cor. 3:3; James 3:14,16; Gal. 5:20; James 4:2).

4. *Prejudice*. Judging according to appearances is wrong; Christians are to judge righteously (John 7:24; cf. Luke 9:36-51). Since we do not know the motives of other people's hearts, we must be careful not to judge. The Lord warns us against judging others (Matt. 7:1-5). This, however, does not mean that we should not

take note of other people's actions and deal with them accordingly (cf. Matt. 7:6, 15-20; 1 Corinthians 5; 1 Tim. 1:19,20; 3 John 9,10).

5. *Thanklessness*. An unthankful heart leads to many sins (Rom. 1:21-32). One who is not thankful to God for kindnesses may turn his life to cynicism, grumbling, complaining and bitterness (See 1 Cor. 10:10; Phil. 2:14; James 5:9; Jude 16).

6. *Pride or Arrogance*. Arrogance is the attitude of exalting oneself so that one is better than others. The "holier-than-you" attitude is greatly offensive to God (Isa. 65:5). God hates haughty eyes (Prov. 6:16,17) and expects us to despise it as evil (8:13). Pride leads to disgrace (11:2; 29:23), breeds quarrels (13:10), and goes before destruction (16:18). God will humble the proud (Luke 1:51; Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2; James 4:6; 1 Pet. 5:5). The Pharisee was not justified, even though he compared himself with a sinner (Luke 18:9-14). The pride of Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4) led to his downfall.

7. *Selfish Ambition*. A contentious struggle for personal profit or power, with no redeeming hint of service to others. Selfish ambition battles others for immediate gains and empty honors, which have no eternal value (Luke 12:13-21; Rom. 2:8; Gal. 5:20; Phil. 1:17; 2:3,4; James 3:14-16).

8. *Bitterness and Revenge*. Bitterness describes the twisted way individuals respond to the pain events of life. (Acts 8:23; Eph. 4:31,32; Heb. 12:15). Revenge is the paying back of evil for evil (Matt. 5:38-48). The Christian is to depend upon God to take vengeance on evildoers (Rom. 12:11-21; Heb. 10:30). The Christian is expected to forgive others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35). The Christian is instructed about what to do when a brother sins against him (Matt. 18:15-17).

9. *Greed or the Love of Money*. "The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs" (1 Tim. 6:10). One cannot serve God and money at the same time (Matt. 6:19-24). Greed or covetousness is idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).

Sins of the Tongue

1. *Lying*. The tongue can be used to hurt other people in a variety of ways: lying, bearing

false witness, false accusations, and flattery. (See Psa. 34:13; Lev. 19:16; Ex. 20

2. *Gossip, slander, blasphemy, and busybodies*. Rom. 1:28,29,30; 1 Cor. 12:20; 1 Tim. 5:13; 2 Tim. 3:1,2; James 4:11; 1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16. It is slander to speak evil about anyone. Those who speak about others should ask themselves: Is it true? Is it needful? Is it kind? Is it helpful? Does it edify? (See Prov. 16:27; 18:8; 21:23; Psa. 15:1-3; 101:5; 2 Thess. 3:11; 1 Tim. 5:13,14; 1 Pet. 4:15.)

3. *Angry outbursts, unjust criticism, and ridicule*. See Prov. 14:17; 15:1; 29:22; The Christian is to be quick to hear, slow to speak, and slow to anger (James 1:19,20), for a man's anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. When Jesus was reviled, he did not revile in return, leaving us an example to follow his steps (1 Pet. 2:21-25).

4. *Idle Talk*. (Matt. 12:36,37; James 3:10). Idle talk is unproductive; it does not bless or help anyone. It is negative and worthless. One who does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, has a vain religion (James 1:26,27). The Christian is instructed to use his tongue to edify others (Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:5,6).

5. *Profanity*. "Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord Thy God in vain, for the Lord will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain" (Ex. 20:7). To profane something is to treat what is holy and should be respected as if it were common. Profaning God's name is to use it in an unholy manner. To speak of God, Christ, heaven or hell in such a way as to make it common is sinful. To swear, using God's name, and not mean what you swear is taking the Lord's name in vain (Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12).

Sexual things are often used in such a way as to be profanity. Marriage is holy, and the marriage bed is undefiled (Heb. 13:4). Dirty jokes, filthy language, and vulgar talk have no place in the conversation of Christians (Eph. 4:29; 5:3-5; Col. 3:4,5).

6. *Sowing discord*. God hates the spreading of strife among brothers (Prov. 6:16-19). The person who uses his tongue to incite anger and bitterness among brethren surely sins against God and against his brethren. Many will be hurt by his actions.

7. *Boasting*. Men should not boast of themselves, but rather boast that they know God

(Jer. 9:23,24; cf. Prov. 20:30,31). Let him who glories, glory in the Lord (1 Cor. 1:29-31; Gal. 6:14). Boasting is a cause of strife and jealousy (1 Cor. 4:6,7; 2 Cor. 10:12-18). See also Rom. 1:30; James 3:5; 4:16.

Origin of Personal Sin

James 1:13-15 "But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death. Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren."

Rom. 7:6-10 "And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died."

Personal Accountability for Sin

1. Each responsible for his own sin (Ezekiel 18; Rom. 6:23)
2. All have sinned (Rom. 3:10; Rom. 3:23; 1 John 1:8,10)

Two Kinds of Sin

1. *Unintentional Sins Can Be Forgiven* (Lev. 4:2)
 - sins of ignorance
 - sins of weakness (Matt. 26:41; Heb. 4:15,16)
2. *Presumptuous Sins Cannot Be Forgiven* (Num. 15:29-31)
 - presumptuous (Ps. 19:13)
 - impenitence (Jer. 5:3; Luke 13:3; 2 Pet. 3:9)
 - blasphemy of the Holy Spirit (despising the Word, Num.15:30,31; see Matt. 12)
 - Sins unto death (1 John 5:16; Jer. 7:16-20)
 - willful sins (Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31)

What Sin Will Do.
There are always consequences to sin.

1. Sin will deceive (Heb. 3:12-14; Eph. 4:22)
2. Sin will enslave (John 8:34; Rom. 6:16-18; 2 Pet. 18-22)
3. Sin will corrupt and defile us spiritually and physically (Tit. 1:15,16; Gal. 6:7,8)
4. Sin will harden (Tit. 1:15; 1 Tim. 4:1-3; Eph. 4:19; Heb.3:12-14; 6:4-6)
5. Sin will bring spiritual death (Ezek. 18:4; Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1)
6. Sin separates us from God (Isa. 59:1,2) no relationship

How God looks upon sin

1. Exodus 20:5 "jealous God, taking vengeance on them that hate me"
2. Sin is often called an abomination
3. Eph. 4:30 "grieve not the Holy Spirit"
4. Matt. 27:37-39 Jesus was broken hearted

It Is the Tendency of Man To Downplay Sin

A. Men have always thought that sin should be softened

1. We call it mistake, difficulty, error in judgment, disappointment, an inappropriate action, problem, disease

2. We wish to blame society, parents, and circumstances and remove responsibility from the perpetrator

3. We offer so many excuses: (rationalizing away our sin)

- "Just once won't hurt"
- "Everyone's doing it"
- "I can quit when I want to"
- "Get with it, this is the 2000's! Things have changed!"
- "We were all in on it"
- "She did it first" (Adam)
- "I had to do it, or I would have lost face" (Saul)
- "I didn't use the proceeds anyway." (Judas)

We often lie to ourselves about sin!

1. 1 Cor. 6:9-11 "Do not be deceived."
2. 1 Cor. 15:33 "Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals."
3. Gal. 6:7,8 "Do not be deceived. God is not mocked"
4. 1 John 1:8-10 "no sin? We are deceiving ourselves"
5. In our hearts we know that sin is wrong, but we often would rather believe a lie

The Punishment of Sin

1. Earth cursed because of sin (Gen. 3:17,18)
2. Death entered the world through sin (Rom. 5:12)
3. The sting of death is sin (1 Cor. 15:56)
4. The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4)

5. Sin prevents people from entering heaven (Gal. 5:19-21; Eph. 5:5; Rev. 21:8,27)

6. The punishment for sin is eternal (Matt. 25:41-46; Rev. 20:10-15; 21:8)

J.W. McGarvey said, "I wonder if any of us has ever realized what it is to commit sin. I have prepared sermons designed to set forth the enormity of sin: but I have every time felt that I made a failure. The pleasures of sin have blinded our eyes to its enormity. The journey of human life is strewn with tears; the whole earth on which we live has become dotted over with graveyards. The Word of God tells us that all this woe, pain, sorrow and death result from sin."

The Nature of Man

God made man with two natures: (1) an inward man, following the law of his mind (Rom. 7:23-24) which delights in the law of God and which of itself by nature can decide in moral matters what is right (Luke 12:57; Rom. 2:14; 1 Cor. 11:14); (2) an outward man of flesh (Rom. 7:25) which has no more religion than the beasts and knows nothing but to indulge itself. It is not subject to the law of God (Rom. 8:7) and cannot be, for flesh has no reason. It should not be expected that any moral goodness could dwell in the flesh (Rom. 7:8) or of badness either. Left to itself, by nature, the flesh will seek self-indulgence (Eph. 2:3). But the fleshly part of man is not sinful in itself. It is not immoral, but amoral: it does not know what morals are. Given the lead, its direction is immorality, but it was not made impregnated with sin. All that God made was very good.

Our parents bring us into a world of sin. (Psa. 51:5.) Our parents bring us into America, a land of the English language and of sin, but we have to learn both the language and sin. (Cf. Acts 2:8.) Psalm 51:5 is vivid poetical language, as is Psalm 58:3. Literally we do not speak as soon as we are born, nor that soon go astray, but the fact is that we are not born astray and as we learn right from wrong we go astray. Then our sins, not Adam's, separate between our God and us. (Isa. 59:1-2.) Our fathers' eating sour grapes will not set our teeth on edge. (Ezek. 18.) We receive the effects of many misdeeds of our fathers (Ex. 20:5), but

never the guilt (Deut. 24:16). We were whole and perfect when we were created till sin was found in us. (Ezek. 28:15.) The Lord forms the spirit in each of us, and he does not start us out as sinners. (Zech. 12:1.) He starts us in a way that Jesus thought fits us for heaven. (Matt. 19:14.) Romans 5:12 is not discussing those without the use of their minds, nor those who do not know their right hand from their left, but it is discussing those who have on their own sinned. (Rom. 3:9 f.)

Other passages for consideration:

Matt. 26:41 "Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Ecc. 7:29 "Behold, I have found only this, that God made men upright, but they have sought out many devices."

Gen. 8:21 And the LORD smelled the soothing aroma; and the LORD said to Himself, "I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man's heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done."

Ezek. 28:15 "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created, until unrighteousness was found in you."

Rom. 7:8-11 But sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, produced in me coveting of every kind; for apart from the Law sin is dead. And I was once alive apart from the Law; but when the commandment came, sin became alive, and I died; and this commandment, which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me; for sin, taking opportunity through the commandment, deceived me, and through it killed me.

What is Grace?

Someone has taken the word "G-R-A-C-E" and made the acrostic "God's Redemption At Christ's Expense." This is a fairly accurate description of grace. The word grace ($\chi\alpha\rho\iota\varsigma$) means "favor." One who has the love, blessing and favor of another may be said to be in the "good graces" of his benefactor. The distinguishing factors of God's grace are twofold: (1) that God's grace is given as a gift and is not earned; and (2) that God's grace is undeserved.

God's grace is a gift and not earned

Rom. 4:4 "Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. However, to the man who does not work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness."

Eph. 2:1-10 "For it is by grace you saved through faith--and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God--not by works, so that no one can boast."

2 Tim. 1:9 "who saved us and called us to a holy life--not because of anything we have done but because of his own purpose and grace"

Tit. 3:3-7 "he saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy."

Grace is not a wage for our labors, a prize for our winning a competition or an award for our meritorious efforts. It is a gift. When a man can earn no wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award, yet receives a wondrous gift, he has been given unmerited favor or undeserved kindness.

God's grace is undeserved

Rom. 5:6-8 "when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. . . God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

1 Tim. 1:12-16 "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners--of whom I am the worst. But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus might display his unlimited patience as an example for those who would believe on him and receive eternal life."

Grace is getting what we do not deserve.
 Justice is getting what we do deserve.
 Mercy is not getting what we do deserve.

What Forgiveness Means:

Psalm

32:1,2 "How blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered! How blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit!"

Forgiveness is not forgetting but "forgetting against." When God forgives us, He no longer counts our sins against us (2 Cor. 5:19) so that we

might be reconciled to Him (2 Cor. 5:20). Men cannot undo the past, but God can forget our past sins against us so that we are no longer guilty. Psalm 85:2,3 says of God: "You forgave the iniquity of your people and covered all their sins. You set aside all your wrath and turned from your fierce anger."

1. Forgiveness frees one from the bondage of sin.

John 8:34 "everyone who sins is a slave to sin"

Rom. 6:16 "you are slaves of the one you obey, whether to sin. . ."

Rom. 7:14-20 "I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin"

Rom. 8:2 "through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life has set me free from the law of sin and death."

Rom. 6:3-7 in baptism "our old self was crucified with him, that our body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin; for he who died is freed from sin."

2. Forgiveness releases one from the debt incurred by sin

Matt. 18:23-35 forgiven debt is one that no longer must be paid

Rom. 6:23 "the wages of sin is death" cf. Ezek. 18:4

Sin releases one from guilt in spite of what one may deserve. Forgiveness should not be confused with injustice, as when a guilty person escapes punishment through lies or bribes. Forgiveness is a pardon; the sin was real but now no longer matters because the price was paid in the blood of Jesus Christ (Rev. 1:5; Acts 20:28).

3. Forgiveness creates the opportunity for a new beginning.

2 Cor. 5:17 says "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!" Forgiveness means that the old record is clear, and one is looked upon as if he had never sinned. His past no longer matters to God, for he has died to sin and has undergone a new birth (John 3:3-7; Rom. 6:3-7). With the past buried by the love of God, God and man can now start a new covenant relationship, brought about by the blood of Jesus Christ. This new birth allows a man to start over with God. In this new

relationship in Christ, he can think, act and speak like Christ.

4. Forgiveness is the means by which God reconciles the world.

2 Cor. 5:19 says "that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them." Reconciliation is the bringing back into friendship a world that was alienated by sin. Sin separates men from God (Isa. 59:2), so that God no longer hears man's prayers. Forgiveness restores the relationship by removing the cause of the separation, i.e., sin. The sin gone, man can once again approach God through Christ. Forgiveness is better than merely forgetting, for by forgiving us God demonstrates His love to us (Rom. 5:6-8) in that He sent Jesus to die for us. We at that time were powerless, ungodly, and sinful.

The cross of Jesus reaches out to us in love and "compels us" to want to love Him and serve Him. "And he died for all that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for him who died for them and was raised again" (2 Cor. 5:14,15).

God's Grace is Greater than Our Sins

- 1 Tim. 1:12-16 The grace of God and His unlimited patience was able to forgive the worst of sinners, Saul of Tarsus, the apostle Paul.
- 1 Cor. 6:9-11 Though men are caught up in the worst of sins, God's power is able to wash, sanctify and cleanse them.
- 1 John 3:18-20 Though our hearts condemn us, God is greater than our hearts.
- 1 John 1:7-9 The blood of Christ can and does forgive all sin.

Meeting God's Conditions Does Not Negate the Grace of God

- Num. 21:6-9 looking upon the bronze serpent
- Joshua 6:2,16,20 God gave Jericho, but the people had to take it
- 2 Kings 5:1-14 Naaman dipping in the Jordan to be healed
- John 9:6,7, 10-12 The blind man who washed in the pool of Siloam
- John 3:3-7 except a man is born of water and the Spirit

- Titus 3:3-7 washing of regeneration is how the grace of God works
- Col. 3:12-13 God is active and we are passive in baptism

The Nature and Need for Repentance

- Luke 13:3,5 "unless you repent, you too will perish"
- Acts 2:38 "repent, and be baptized every one of you,...so that your sins may be forgiven"
- Acts 3:19 "Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out"
- Acts 11:18 "God has even granted the Gentiles repentance unto life"
- Acts 17:30,31 "now he (God) commands all people everywhere to repent. For he has set a day when he will judge the world with justice by the man he has appointed. He has given proof of this to all men by raising him from the dead."
- 2 Pet. 3:9 "The Lord is not slow in keep in his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

What Repentance Is:

Repentance is "a change of heart and mind that leads to a change in life and behavior." In Matt. 21:28-32, Jesus tells of a certain man who told his son to work in the vineyard. The son said, "I will not," but afterward he repented and went. He changed his mind about the matter and did as his father told him. Repentance is a change of heart and mind that leads to a change of life and behavior.

What Repentance Is Not:

Repentance is not the same thing as regret. Judas regretted (μεταμελεια: had remorse or emotional sorrow) that he had betrayed the Lord with a kiss and sold him for thirty pieces of silver, but he did not return to the Lord in obedience (Matt. 27:3-5). Judas went and hanged himself. Peter, on the other hand, wept bitterly but repented (μετανοια: changed his mind). Peter, after he was turned again (Luke 22:32), came back and served the Lord.

Repentance is not merely being sorry for sin. While godly sorrow produces repentance (2 Cor. 7:10), sorrow alone is not a change of heart and mind. There are fruits that show repentance (Matt. 3:8; Acts 26:20). Some think that because they have walked down an aisle confessing sin or have given their hand to a preacher in sorrow, they have repented. Repentance is more than merely being sorry.

Repentance is more than stopping the wrongdoing. While repentance demonstrates itself in the fact that a person ceases to do evil, it also means that one turns his heart to the Lord and embraces His will completely. There are those who sweep the house clean but do not fill their lives with the Lord (Matt. 12:43-45). One may cease to do evil, but real repentance means that one lovingly learns to observe everything Jesus commands.

Repentance is not pretense. One may pretend at righteousness, but the Lord knows every man's heart. One may attend the meetings of the church; but if he does not clean up his life, he has not repented. Pretending service to God is hypocrisy.

Repentance Begins by a Change of Heart toward Sin

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against God. He is sorry that he hurt and grieved God by his transgression of God's law and realizes that Jesus suffered on the cross for his own sin (1 Cor. 15:3; 1 Pet. 2:24). It is this kind of godly sorrow that leads to repentance (2 Cor. 7:10). God's kindness and grace leads us to repent (Rom. 2:4). Sin so grieves God that it breaks our relationship with Him (Isa. 59:1,2). The Ephesians made known their repentance by "bringing their books together and burning them in the sight of all" (Acts 19:19).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against others. He realizes that not only has he sinned against God but that his sins have caused other people to suffer. God gave his laws for our good (Deut. 6:24; 10:13); they protect us from the evil of other people. We hurt others with our tongues, with our immoral acts, and with our example. Jesus said that one who sets a stumbling block before a little one sins grievously (Matt. 18:6-9).

A penitent person is sorry for his sin against himself. David said, "For I know my

transgressions, and my sin is ever before me" (Psalm 51:3). The consequent guilt that comes from sin can be a heavy burden (Psalm 32:1-5). Like the prodigal son, those who sin reap a sense of great unworthiness (Luke 15:11-24). Furthermore, those who sow to the flesh will from the flesh reap corruption (Gal. 6:7,8). He who sins against the wisdom of God injures himself (Prov. 8:36). Solomon said, "His own iniquities will capture the wicked, and he will be held with the cords of his sin" (Prov. 5:22).

A penitent person is sorry for the false teaching he taught or believed. False doctrine is like a gangrene that corrupts and destroys (2 Tim. 2:17). Those who support others who teach false doctrines participate in their evil deeds (2 John 9-11).

Repentance Continues in the Turning of the Heart toward the Right

Repentance is not only a turning away from sin, it is also a turning toward God. A penitent person's heart is changed toward loving the things God loves and wanting to please Him in every respect. When the prodigal son "came to his senses," he left the far country and came home to the Father (Luke 15:11-24). The sinner cries out, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me" (Psalm 51:10). There is a resolution to do right within the heart of a penitent man. The consequence to this is that not only does he become loyal to what is right, he also hates what is wrong (Rom. 12:9; 1 Thess. 5:21,22; Psalm 97:10). The penitent Thessalonians demonstrated their repentance by turning from idols to serve the living and true God (1 Thess. 1:9).

The penitent believer is willing to take up daily the cross of Christ and follow the Lord (Luke 9:23). He is willing to lose his life for the sake of Christ that he may find it eternally. He is neither ashamed of neither Christ nor his teachings (Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16). His heart has so changed that he is determined to do everything the Lord asks him to do.

One may cut down a tree, but chances are that it will sprout again. To be rid of it, one must dig out the roots. So it is with sin. It is not enough to quit committing a foul deed; the heart must be changed, for it is from the heart that foul deeds arise (Matt. 15:18).

Zacchaeus the tax collector set a wonderful example of repentance in Luke 19:1-10. Not only was his heart changed into gladness, but he vowed: "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount" (Luke 19:8). Zacchaeus was willing to restore fourfold whatever he had wrongfully taken. Those who turn to the Lord want to restore whatever loss they have caused others if and when they are able to do so.

Repentance Completes Itself in a Change of Life and Behavior.

John the Baptist told the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him for baptism that they should "produce fruit keeping with repentance" (Matt. 3:8). Jesus does not leave us where he finds us. He told the woman caught in the act of adultery to "go now and leave your life of sin" (John 8:11). Jesus upbraided the Pharisees and leaders of his day because they did not repent at his preaching. He said, "The men of Nineveh will stand up at judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here" (Matt. 12:41). In Jonah's time Nineveh, from the king to the beasts, fasted, wore sackcloth and sat in ashes to show their penitence over their sin (Jonah 3:5-9). The penitent son of the vineyard owner changed his mind and went to work in the vineyard (Matt. 21:28-30). Christians do not merely talk the talk, they walk the walk. James urged the Christians, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says" (Jas. 1:22). No one is blessed who sees that he needs to change but fails to change (Jas. 1:23-25; 4:17).

Some People Harden Themselves and Refuse to Repent

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness" (Heb. 3:12,13).

Jeremiah dealt with people in his time who had "made their faces harder than rocks; they have refused to repent" (Jer. 5:3). Sin deadens the conscience and calluses the soul (1 Tim. 4:2; Eph.

4:19). This is why the appeal to repent is an urgent one. God commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30); He is not willing that any man should perish but that all should come to repentance (2 Pet. 3:9). The person who goes on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth no longer has a sacrifice for sins in Christ Jesus, but may expect the judgment of flaming fire (Heb. 10:26-31).

God cannot force you to repent, but he can appeal to you. If there is no repentance, there can be no pardon. He promises forgiveness to the penitent but does not promise tomorrow to the procrastinator (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:7).

Repentance is perhaps the Hardest of God's Commands to Obey

Men are quick to seek to justify themselves, but they are slow to recognize and to acknowledge that they are wrong. One basic difference between Saul and David was that Saul generally sought to justify himself, whereas David could be brought to repentance.

The Implications of Repentance

1. That man is a free moral being, completely capable of obeying God's commands. Man is able to change; otherwise God is demanding that man do what he cannot do.
2. That the individual standing in need of repenting is personally responsible for his own sins and may not blame others for his own faults.
3. That repentance involves the whole heart: emotions, reasoning, and the will. Repentance is the deliberate choice of a persuaded individual, not the temporary response of an emotional experience.

Who Is a New Testament Christian?

Only Jesus Christ has a right to determine who is and is not a Christian. I have no right to do that. What men think or believe is irrelevant. Our task is to ask if Jesus has spoken on such matters and to find out what He has said. Our focus in this lesson is not to determine WHO is right but to determine WHAT is right. Nor is our purpose to be sectarian. Our goal is to go to

heaven and to lead others there, based upon the only accurate guide we have--the Bible.

What Does Jesus Say about Who Will Enter the Kingdom of Heaven

Jesus said in Matt. 7:21-23 that not everyone who thinks he is going to enter will be able--but he who does His will. Some sincere, busy people will be lost. They were lost because they were lawless; they did not do what God wills. Jesus said:

- John 8:24 unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins John 3:16
- Luke 13:3,5 unless you repent, you will perish
- Luke 14:27 "whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple."
- Luke 14:33 "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions."

John 3:1-7 you must be born again to enter the kingdom. This birth is not optional. This birth is of the water and of the Spirit. This birth is a reference to baptism (3:22). In Mark 16:15,16 both faith and baptism are necessary to be saved. It is the one who both believes and in baptized who is saved.

How People Fulfilled These Requirements Of Jesus

- Acts 2:14-41 Pentecost pricked by the preaching of Peter, they asked what must we do: repent, be baptized
- Acts 8:5-13 Samaritans heard the preaching of the kingdom and Jesus Christ, they believed and were baptized
- Acts 8:35-39 Ethiopian Eunuch Philip preached Jesus, and the Eunuch believed, confessed his faith, and was baptized
- Acts 9:3-6, 15-19; 22:12-16 Saul of Tarsus told by Ananias to "be baptized and wash away your sins"
- Acts 10:34-38 Cornelius' household was taught by Peter and commanded to be baptized

- Acts 16:13-15 Lydia's household Paul preached, she believed the preaching and was baptized
- Acts 16:25-34 Philippian jailer's household Paul spoke the word of the Lord, they were baptized that same hour of the night, having believed.

Summary: They heard the word, believed it, loved the lord, repented, confessed faith, and were baptized for the remission of sins.

What Is Baptism?

Webster's Unabridged Dictionary: baptism: "a ceremony or sacrament of admitting a person into Christianity or a specific church by dipping him in water or sprinkling water on him, as a symbol of washing away sin."

.Sprinkling for baptism was first mentioned in 251 A.D. when Cornelius opposed Novation who was sprinkled on what he thought was his death-bed. Cornelius opposed the practice. It was not until 1311, the Council of Ravenna, that men held sprinkling to be equivalent to baptism. This is 1300 years later than the New Testament.

What does the New Testament Teach in regard to baptism?

"*Baptidzo*" means to dip, plunge, or immerse. There are other words in the New Testament which mean to sprinkle or pour (*rhantidzo* & *ekcheo*).

- Matt. 3:16 "went up out of the water"
- John 3:23 John baptized at Aenon, because there was much water there
- Acts 8:38,39 Eunuch went down into water, baptism, came up out of
- Rom. 6:4-7 "buried with him" "raised with him"
- Col. 2:12,13 "buried with him" "raised with him"

We have no authority to substitute one action for another in fulfilling God's commandments. Christian baptism is by immersion. Though one may think he has been "baptized" by sprinkling or pouring, one has not been scripturally baptized.

Are Infants To Be Baptized?

We have no New Testament command or record of any infant being baptized. We have no right to make a law for God. The first infant

baptism we know of took place in the latter part of the second century A.D. Tertullian opposed it strenuously. It was not until the fourth century that this practice was accepted--four centuries too late. Acts 8:12 says that "men and women" were being baptized but not infants. Only people who could hear, believe and repent were candidates for baptism. Becoming a Christian requires personal decision (Luke 14:27). No one can believe or repent for another or be saved for another. Further, infants have no sins needing forgiveness (1 John 3:4)

Conclusion

Jesus is the Savior; only He has a right to legislate. No one has a right to suggest new ways for people to become Christians--ways that depart from the teachings of Jesus. When people learn better, they should do better. Only those who have obeyed the gospel have the hope of entering the kingdom of heaven.

Is Baptism Necessary to Salvation?

1. John 3:3-7

"I tell you the truth, unless a man is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." "You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'" Cannot means that "it is impossible for him" to enter. "Must" means "it is morally necessary" for one to be born of water and the Spirit. Virtually all scholars of any merit are agreed that the birth of water and Spirit is a reference to baptism. Tit. 3:3-5 speaks of our salvation as a "washing of regeneration"

2. Acts 2:37-41

Baptism's purpose is "for the forgiveness of your sins" (NASV), "so that your sins may be forgiven" (NIV), or "so that your sins will be forgiven" (New Evangelical Translation). All 3000 people who were baptized understood what they needed to do and gladly did it. The baptized were added at baptism (2:41), and the "saved" were added (2:47) to the church. Here the baptized and the saved are regarded as identical. The people were not told to pray at a mourner's

bench. They were not told to pray the sinners' prayer. They were baptized that very day.

3. Acts 9:1-9; 22:12-16

Ananias came to Paul and told him the things that he must do. In spite of the fact Paul had spent three days fasting (9:9) and praying (9:11), Ananias commanded baptism. Paul was not yet saved, though he was penitent and praying. Ananias told him, "And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name." Ananias would not have commanded Paul to be baptized and wash away his sins if he were already saved. One does not take medicine because he is well but because he is ill.

4. Romans 6:3-7

Baptism is the act of faith, which unites the penitent believer with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. One is baptized into Christ. He is baptized into his death and dies with Christ. His old man of sin is crucified with Him. He is also united with Him by baptism in His resurrection. Jesus did not have new life until he arose from the dead. In the same way, new life is not granted until one rises from the watery grave of baptism. The symbolism of baptism marks the time when one by the grace of God is united with Christ. Until one is baptized, he cannot claim to be united with Christ. It is in Christ's death that he shed his blood (John 19:34). To be baptized into his death is to come in contact with the blood, which cleanses from sin (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 1:5). The old self of sin was crucified with him "so that the body of sin might be rendered powerless" (inoperative, inactive). It is the person who had died (with Christ) who is freed from sin. Unbaptized people are still in their sins. See Col. 2:12,13

5. Titus 3:3-7

"He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit." God is the one who does the saving. He does it through (by means of) the washing of rebirth and renewal caused by the Holy Spirit. This washing of rebirth or regeneration is baptism (John 3:5).

6. 1 Pet. 3:21 (NASV)

"and corresponding to that, baptism now saves you--not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience--through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Baptism is the means by which God saves us and grants us a good conscience. Baptism is the means by which we appeal (ask) God for a good conscience and are cleansed. Baptism unites us with Christ in His resurrection (Rom. 6:4-5).

Baptism was a part of every example of conversion in the New Testament. The Eunuch did not rejoice until after his baptism; he was not content to wait and asked to be baptized. The jailer and his household considered baptism so important that they were baptized in the middle of the night. When the Samaritans believed the preaching of Philip about Jesus and His kingdom, they were baptized. The 3000 who obeyed at Pentecost were baptized that very day. If baptism were a non-essential, why is there a constant urgency in the New Testament to submit to it?

7. Acts 2:38

"Repent and be baptized everyone of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." Possessing the Spirit is essential to having Christ in our lives. Roman 8:9 "And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ." The Holy Spirit is given to all who obey Him (Acts 5:32). We possess the Spirit, "who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who God's possession--to the praise of his glory" (Eph. 1:13,14). The Spirit is given to us because we are sons (Gal. 4:6); we become sons of God by faith when we put on Christ in baptism (Gal. 3:26,27). Baptism is essential.

9. Rom. 6:3,4; Gal. 3:27

Baptism is "into" Christ and the act by which we put on Christ. Every promise, every spiritual blessing we have is "in Christ" (Eph. 1:3; 2 Cor. 1:20). Since baptism puts us in Christ, we could not have been in Him before baptism or without baptism. Baptism is the difference between whether one is in Christ,

where all spiritual blessings are, or out of Christ, where there are no promises.

- Redemption Col. 1:13,14
- Salvation 2 Tim. 2:10
- New Creature 2 Cor. 5:17
- No Condemnation Romans 8:1

10. 1 Cor. 12:13

"For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." Baptism is the act by which one enters the body of Christ, the church (Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23). The church does not do the saving but is rather made up of those who are saved. Christ is the "Savior of the body" (Eph. 5:23). Christ purchased the church with his own blood (Acts 20:28). The act of baptism is when an individual is saved and added to the body of Christ. If one is not baptized, he has not been purchased by the blood of Christ nor saved.

The Testimony of Church History

1. G.R. Beasley Murray, a noted Baptist scholar, quotes Adolf Schlatter as saying, "There is no gift or power which the Apostolic documents do not ascribe to baptism. He meant of course, that there is no gift or power available to man in consequence of the redemption of Christ that is not available to him in baptism. Though many will expostulate at the statement, there is little doubt that Schlatter is right."¹

2. Everett Ferguson in *Early Christians Speak* list these church fathers who explicitly taught that baptism was for the remission of sins:²

- Barnabas, *Epistle of Barnabas* 11:1,8,11. (70-79 A.D.)
- b. *The Shepherd of Hermas*, Mandate IV. 3:1; *Similitudes* IX. 16:3-6. (not later than 155 A.D.)
- Justin Martyr, *Apology* I. 61. (175 A.D.)

¹ G.R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 263.

² Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1971), pp. 33-36.

- Theophilus, *To Autolytus* II. 16. (2nd Century A.D.)
- Irenaeus, *Proof of the Apostolic Preaching* 3 (150 A.D.)
- Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor* I. 6:25:3-26:2; 30:2; 32:1. (2nd Century A.D.)
- Tertullian, *On Baptism* 12 (150 A.D.)

3. While the testimony of early church leaders does not prove that a belief is true--only the Bible is our authority--it does show how the early church understood the teaching of the New Testament. The idea that baptism is unnecessary is actually a very late development. Zwingli and Calvin in the 16th century believed baptism was a "work of merit" and was unnecessary to salvation, since one cannot earn salvation. It is clear however that the grace of God works through the washing of regeneration, which is baptism (Tit. 3:3-7).

Acts 2:38

Williams (Baptist)

"You must repent--and as an expression of it, every one of you be baptized. . . that you may have your sins forgiven."

J.B. Phillips Translation, 1958

Peter told them, "You must repent and every one of you must be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that you may have your sins forgiven and receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Today's English Version, 1966

Peter said to them: "Turn away from your sins, each one of you, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven; and you will receive God's gift, the Holy Spirit."

Amplified New Testament, 1958

And Peter answered them, Repent--change your views, and purpose to accept the will of God in your inner selves instead of rejecting it--and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of and release from your sins; and you shall received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Goodspeed

"You must repent, and every one of you be baptized ...in order to have your sins forgiven."

Short Baptist College, 1921

"Repent and be baptized every one of you. . . for (in order that you may receive) the remission of your sins."

New Evangelical Translation, 1990; **God's Word to the Nations**, 1995

Peter answered them, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ so that your sins will be forgiven, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Contemporary English Version, 1995

Peter said, "Turn back to God! Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins will be forgiven. Then you will be given the Holy Spirit."

Easy-To-Read Version, 1990

Peter said to them, "Change your hearts and lives and be baptized, each one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ. Then God will forgive your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

McCord's New Testament Translation, 1989

Peter said to them, "Change your hearts, and let each one of you be immersed in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sins might be forgiven, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

New International Version (1st edition), 1974, 1978

Peter replied: "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." (1984 edition: "for the forgiveness of your sins.")

William Barclay's **Daily Study Bible**, 1976

Peter said to them, Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

New Revised Standard Version, 1989

Peter said to them, "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ so that your sins may be forgiven; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

The Message, 1994

Peter said, "Change your life. Turn to God and be baptized each of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, so your sins are forgiven. Receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Lexicons:

Thayer's *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, 1889: εις αφεσιν αμαρτιων, to obtain the forgiveness of sins, Acts ii.38."

Bauer's *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, rev. and augmented by Gingrich and Danker,

1979: "to denote purpose in order to, to . . . εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν for forgiveness of sins, so that sins might be forgiven Matt. 26:28; cf. Mk 1:4; Lk 3:3; Ac 2:38."

The *Expositor's Greek Testament* (R. J. Knowling): εἰς, 'unto' R.V., signifying the aim (that is, the aim of the command is the forgiveness of sins, pds.) "It has been objected that St. Peter lays no stress upon the death of Christ in this connection, but rather upon His resurrection. But we cannot doubt that St. Peter who had emphasized the fact of the crucifixion would have remembered his Master's solemn declaration a few hours before His death, Matt. 26:28. Even if the words in this Gospel εἰς ἀφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν are rejected, the fact remains that St. Peter would have connected the thought of the forgiveness of sins, a prerogative which, as every Jew was eager to maintain, belonged to God and to God alone, with the (new) covenant which Christ had ratified by His death. Harnack admits that however difficult it may be to explain precisely the words of Jesus to the disciples at the Last Supper yet one thing is certain, that He connected the forgiveness of sins with His death. . . .As each individual ἐκάστος was to be baptized, so each, if truly penitent, would receive the forgiveness of sins." (Vol. 2, p. 91.)

Baptism among the Early Church Fathers

The first mention of sprinkling in extant literature is in the *Didache*, which is usually dated approximately 150 A.D. It was first known as "clinical baptism." Beginning with this early uninspired writing, there are occasional mentions of sprinkling in the general literature of church history on down through the centuries. It was not, however, until the Council of Ravenna, held in 1311, under the direction of Pope Clement V, that sprinkling was officially accepted by the Roman Catholic Church instead of immersion. In fact, some church buildings still standing show the evidence of the previous practice of immersion. Such is the case of the large baptistry building which stands near the leaning tower of Pisa in Italy. The building contains a large full-size baptistry in which possibly as many as 50 people

could be immersed at one time. Obviously, it was built before 1311 and the change in doctrine.

1. The Bible nowhere speaks of sprinkling as baptism. Rather the word baptizo is used which literally means "to dip, plunge, or immerse." The Catholic Encyclopedia says: "The most ancient form usually employed was unquestionably immersion. This is not only evident from the writings of the Fathers and the early rituals of both the Latin and Oriental churches, but it can also be gathered from the Epistles of St. Paul, who speaks of baptism as a bath (Eph. 5:26; Rom. 6:4; Titus 3:5). In the Latin Church, immersion seems to have prevailed until the 12th century. After that time it is found in some even as late as the 16th century. Infusion and aspersion, however, were growing common in the 13th century and gradually prevailed in the Western church. The Oriental churches have retained immersion, though not always in the sense of plunging the candidate's entire body below the water."³

2. Everett Ferguson: "A period of instruction, especially pertaining to the moral implications for the Christian life, preceded the baptism Baptism was administered to those who believed Christian teaching and repented of their sins" (p. 37)⁴

"As the confession implies, faith was the necessary prerequisite to baptism. Baptism was administered to those who are persuaded and believe." *Didache* III.6 "Baptism was also viewed as an act of repentance" *Didache* III.3 (p. 37)

Substitutes for Baptism

"The precedent of Jewish washings, the secular usage of baptizein, circumstantial accounts of baptism in early Christian literature, and the symbolism of baptism as burial and resurrection (Rom. 6:1-11; Col. 2:12) indicate that the normal practice in early Christian baptism was a dipping or plunging."⁵

³ The *Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. II: 261,62.

⁴ Everett Ferguson, *Early Christians Speak* (Austin, Tex.: Sweet Publishing Co., 1971).

⁵ Everett Ferguson, "Baptism," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christianity* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1988), 131-134.

"The *Didache* is the only indication before the middle of the third century of the use of anything but immersion, even in the case of emergency."

"The clinical baptism of Novation (Cyprian IV.9, 10) provided an interesting case. We know the circumstance from his opponent, Cornelius, who was elected bishop of Rome in A.D. 251 . . . The opposition to the validity of Novation's ordination rested as much on the fact of his receiving sickbed baptism as on the way it was administered, but doubts about the latter were part of the misgivings about the former. There was a feeling that those who received baptism in these circumstances were not fully converted and submitted to baptism only as a safety protection in view of impending death." (pp. 51,52)

Infant Baptism

"The early Christian feeling about the innocence of infants finds clear expression in second century authors and in the writer who makes the first explicit reference to infant baptism in Christian history, Tertullian (*On Baptism* 18:1-10,12). Innocence here meant "sinlessness, or at least guiltlessness." (58)

"This feeling plus the stress on baptism for the remission of sins explains why there is no early reference to infant baptism. It was actually the growth of the practice of infant baptism which led to a changed view of the spiritual condition of the infant." (p. 59)

"The earliest likely reference to infant baptism is to be found in Irenaeus" (*Against Heresies* II.xxii.4). (p. 59) "The first unambiguous reference is to be found in Tertullian (V. 12), and he was opposed to the practice . . . He seems to be stating, as elsewhere in his treatise *On Baptism*, the common position of the church." (p. 60)

"Origen affords evidence that the practice preceded the theological justification (*Homilies* on Luke V.14, 15). The sequence was infant baptisms then the doctrine of infant sinfulness, and not a doctrine of original sin leading to the practice of infant baptism. The reasons for baptizing a child were being discussed. The child did not have sins of his own. Origen's answer was that a stain attaches to birth. This is not yet a doctrine of original sin (that is, the inheritance of the guilt of Adam's transgression)." (Pp. 60,61)

"The first ecclesiastical command to baptize infants is contained in the fourth-century *Apostolic Constitutions* VI:15." (p. 64)

Other quotations:

1. "It seems clear that up until about the end of the fifth century, adult believer's baptism was the normal practice of the church. This fact is demonstrated by the emphasis in the Early Fathers on careful preparation for baptism, and the necessity to live a sinless life after baptism."⁶

"The practice of infant baptism completes the early patristic developments. Infant baptism was practiced in the second century, but only with the aid of an adult sponsor. A full defense of this custom came to expression in the theology of Augustine in the late fourth and early fifth centuries. Only in the fifth century did the Syrian Church make infant baptism obligatory; prior to this time it was the exception rather than the rule."⁷

2. William Barclay: "Commonly baptism was by total immersion and that practice lent itself to a symbolism to which sprinkling does not so readily lend itself. When a man descended into the water and the water closed over his head, it was like being buried. When he emerged from the water, it was like rising from the grave. Baptism was symbolically like dying and rising again. The man died to one kind of life and rose to another; he died to the old life of sin and rose to the new life of grace."⁸

Does baptidzo really mean "to immerse"?

After an exhaustive survey of more than 200 examples in Greek literature and ancient translations, Thomas J. Conant concluded: "The word baptizein, during the whole existence of the Greek as a spoken language, had a perfectly defined and unvarying import. In its literal use it meant, as has been shown, to put entirely into or under a liquid, or other penetrable substance,

⁶ Donald M. Lake, "Baptism," in *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*, ed. J.D. Douglas, revised (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1978), pp. 99-101.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ William Barclay, *The Letter to the Romans*, in the Daily Study Bible Series (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1975), p. 84.

generally water, so that the object was wholly covered by the inclosing element."⁹

G. R. Beasley-Murray in his treatise on baptism states: "Despite the frequent denials of exegetes, it is surely reasonable to believe that the reason for Paul's stating that the baptized is buried as dead, rather than he died (as in v. 6), is the nature of baptism as immersion. The symbolism of immersion representing burial is striking, and if baptism is at all to be compared with prophetic symbolism, the parallelism of act and event symbolized is not unimportant."¹⁰

Alexander Campbell said, "Greek lexicographers, with one consent, in their definitions, as well as Greek philosophers, historians, orators, and poets, in their use of this term baptizo, render it dip, plunge, immerse: never as indicating sprinkling, pouring, or scattering any thing."¹¹

Gingrich & Danker's Revised Lexicon: "dip, immerse, mid. dip oneself, wash."¹² In New Testament times, the word was employed in describing the dipping of a garment in dye. "Sprinkling, as a form of baptism took the place of immersion after a few centuries in the early Church, not from any established rule, but by common consent, and it has since been very generally practiced in all but the Greek and Baptist churches, which insist upon immersion."¹³ "In essence the action is an extremely simple one, though pregnant with meaning. It consists in a going in or under the baptismal water in the name of Christ (Acts 19:5) or more commonly the Trinity (Matt. 28:19). Immersion was fairly

certainly the original practice and continued in general use up to the Middle Ages."¹⁴

⁹ Thomas J. Conant, *The Meaning and Use of Baptizein* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Kregel Publications, 1977), pp. 187, 188. Originally published by the American Bible Union, New York, 1864.

¹⁰ G. R. Beasley-Murray, *Baptism in the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1962), p. 133.

¹¹ Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate Co.: 1951), p. 90.

¹² Walter Bauer, *A Greek English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., revised and augmented by F.W. Gingrich and Frederick Danker (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), p. 131.

¹³ J.L. Sooy, "Sprinkling," *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature*, ed. John McClintock & James Strong (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1895, reprinted 1968), IX: 968.

¹⁴ Geoffrey W. Bromiley, "Baptism," *Baker's Dictionary of Theology*, ed. Everett F. Harrison (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1960), pp. 83-85.

Timeline on the History of Baptism

Date	Event
150 A.D.	First mention of "sprinkling" or clinical baptism in Didache.
c. 182/188 A.D.	Irenaeus in "Against Heresies" may be the first to specifically mention infant baptism
c. 200 A.D.	Tertullian the first to specifically mention "infant baptism." He opposes it as a relatively new practice.
c. 215	Hippolytus in the "Apostolic Tradition" states "First Baptize the children"
c. 254-256	Cyprian of Carthage argues that baptisms given by schismatics are invalid; Bishop Stephen of Rome holds that the sacraments belong not to the minister but to Christ
303-306	Diocletian's persecution
311 & 315	First Majorinus, and then Donatus set up as rival bishops of Carthage, after a bishop is ordained by a possible apostate. "Donatists" believed a) only Donatist baptisms are valid and b) baptisms performed by the unworthy are invalid
c. 312	Conversion of Constantine to Christianity
337	Constantine is baptized shortly before his death
c. 380	British monk Pelagius is shocked by lax morals among Christians in Rome - He eventually rejects the doctrines of Grace and Original Sin, but still believes that infants should be baptized (John 3:5)
412 - 421	Augustine denounces the views of Pelagius - Augustine believes that we are all tainted by original sin; unbaptized children are condemned to "darkness"
418	Council of Carthage condemns "whoever says that newborn infants should not be baptized"
6 th Century	Justinian I made infant baptism compulsory.
1311	Council of Ravenna officially accepted sprinkling as a valid substitute for immersion
1412	Council of Florence states infants should receive baptism "as soon as is convenient"
January 21, 1525	Students of Ulrich Zwingli illegally rebaptize (immerse) themselves in Zurich, starting the Anabaptist movement
1536	John Calvin publishes "Christian Institutes," denying necessity of baptism
1528	Luther states in his Large Catechism "we must be baptized or we cannot be saved"
1609	Englishman John Smyth re-baptizes 40 followers in Amsterdam, starting the Baptist movement
1649	Westminster Confession affirms infant baptism, but views that baptism is not necessary for salvation
1812	Alexander Campbell is baptized by Baptist preacher Luce.
1823	Campbell realizes and teaches baptism is "for the remission of sins."
1837	Campbell's controversy in the Lunenburg letter over the pious unimmersed.
1899	Debate on the Validity of baptism as to its purpose
c. 1900	Birth of Pentecostalism, with emphasis on "baptism with the Holy Ghost and

	fire”
1915-1929	Controversy among Christian churches and Disciples over "open fellowship"
1980	Pope John Paul II reaffirms the necessity for infant baptism, in the “Instruction On Infant Baptism” by the Sacred Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith

What Happens at Baptism?

Before Baptism	Baptism: A Dividing Line	After Baptism
Guilt of Sins	Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46-49	Remission of Sins
The Unsaved	Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21	The Saved
Sins Not Washed Away	Acts 22:16	Sins Washed Away
No Gift of the Holy Spirit	John 14:17; Acts 2:38; 5:32; Gal. 4:6; Eph. 1:13,14	Gift of the Holy Spirit A pledge of our inheritance
Children of the Devil	John 8:44; 2 Cor. 6:16	Children of God
Not in Christ	Rom. 6:3; Gal. 3:27	In Christ
Not in the Kingdom of God	John 3:5; Col. 1:13	In the Kingdom of God
Not in the “one body,” the church	1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:22,23	In the “one body,” the church
Those who do not have all spiritual blessings	Eph. 1:3	Those who do have all spiritual blessings
Those who do not have the abundant life	John 10:10	Those who do have the abundant life
Those who do not have an inheritance reserved in heaven	1 Pet. 1:4; 3:21	Those who do have an inheritance reserved in heaven

What Will Happen To Good But Unbaptized People?¹⁵

A person of unquestioned sincerity, convinced she should be baptized, hesitated because she knew of many fine people who were not baptized. “What will happen to good unbaptized people?” she asked. Certainly it is easy to understand her reasoning.

That there are excellent moral people, fair to all men, merciful to the unfortunate, who have not been baptized into the Lord is a well-known fact. But if a good man touches a highly charged electric wire, God’s law about electricity is not changed. That good people have not been

immersed does not change God’s law about immersion (Rom. 6:3,4; Col. 2:12). That many millions of people have were baptized (?) as infants does not change God’s law that baptism is for believers (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 8:36). That millions of people have been baptized into various sects and denominations does not change God’s law that baptism is into one body, one church (1 Cor. 12:13; Col. 1:18). That many sincere Jews and upright Mohammedans have not confessed Jesus does not change God’s law about the deity of His Son (John 3:18; Mark 16:6; Acts 4:12). That some are moral and yet deny the existence of God does not change God’s law about faith in him (Heb. 11:6).

But the laws of God also reveal that some people are better off in God’s sight unbaptized than some who have been immersed (2 Pet. 2:20-22). God’s laws also reveal that some

¹⁵ Hugo McCord, “What Will Happen to Good Unbaptized People,” in Fifty Years of Lectures, Vol. 2, pp. 252,253.

heathen people, not being as stubborn as some who have heard the message of Jesus are going to have it easier in the day of judgment (Matt. 11:20-24). God's word also reveals that some without a Bible have lived better before God than some knowing the Bible (Rom. 2:14-24).

Certainly one should conclude that no matter what mercy some may have in the day of judgment, that mercy will not be extended to one who knows God's law on baptism and who refuses to obey (James 4:17; 1 John 2:4).

Are Infants to Be Baptized? What does the Bible say?

1. There is not one single command or example of infant baptism in the New Testament.

2. Rom. 6:16-18 Infant baptism denies the person the opportunity to freely choose to follow Jesus Christ. Would we regard an adult baptized by force, independent of his will, as truly baptized?

3. Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15,16 fixes instruction and belief as prerequisites to baptism. (See also John 6:44,45) Infants cannot exercise faith in the gospel message.

4. Acts 2:41 the 3000 who were baptized gladly received the preaching of Peter and chose to "save" themselves (2:40). In addition to receiving the word, those who were baptized were commanded to repent (2:38). Infants are not capable of repenting. If baptism is for "the remission of sins," we must assume infants are lost in sin.

5. Acts 8:12 the Samaritans who believed Philip's preaching of the kingdom and Jesus Christ were baptized, both men and women (males and females of full age and stature). It is assumed that infants were baptized whenever "household" baptisms occurred. Why were infants not baptized in this instance, if indeed household baptisms included infants? Surely, some Samaritans had infants.

6. Acts 8:36,37 the Eunuch was permitted baptism after the confession of his faith. "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

7. Acts 10:44-48 Cornelius and his people heard the word before they were baptized

8. Acts 16:33,34 all the house of the Philippian jailer was baptized, having believed and rejoicing at their obedience.

9. Acts 16:14 Lydia was listening to Paul, and the Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's preaching

10. Acts 18:8 Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.

11. 1 Cor. 1:16 Stephanas' household was comprised of people old enough to have "devoted themselves for ministry to the saints" (16:15).

12. 1 Pet. 3:21 baptism is an inquiry for a good conscience. Do infants have defiled consciences?

13. Col. 3:5-11; Rom. 6:3-7 Baptism is the putting away of the old man of sin and taking on the new self freed from sin. What old man of sin does an infant have to put away?

Are Babies Born in Sin? Total Hereditary Depravity

The doctrine of Total Hereditary Depravity says that every person from birth has a nature that is corrupt, perverse, and sinful throughout. As a result of this inborn corruption, the natural man is totally unable to do anything spiritually good. This spiritual inability means that the sinner is so spiritually bankrupt that he can do nothing pertaining to his salvation. The natural man is enslaved to sin; he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt, and unable to save himself or prepare himself for salvation.

It further says that man was not created this way, for God made Adam upright. When Adam chose evil in the garden, he thereby plunged himself and the entire race into spiritual ruin and lost for himself and his descendants the ability to make right choices in the spiritual realm. His descendants are still free to choose; but inasmuch as Adam's offspring are born with sinful natures, they do not have the ability to choose spiritual good over evil. Consequently, man's will is no longer free; instead, man's will, as the result of inherited depravity, is in bondage

to his sinful nature. As a result of Adam's sin, men are born in sin and by nature are spiritually dead. Therefore, if they are to become God's children and enter His kingdom, they must be born anew of the Spirit.

The Bible Says:

1. The spiritual condition of a person at birth:

Rom. 7:7-12 "I was once alive apart from the Law"

Rom 9:10,11 "the children..., neither having done anything good or bad"

Ezek. 28:15 "You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you."

Acts 17:29 "being then the offspring of God"

Heb. 12:9 God is the "Father of our spirits"

Luke 18:15,16 "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." (How can this be if infants are born wholly corrupt and unable to do good?)

2. How does a man alienate himself from God?

Rom. 7:9,10 "when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died"

Cal. 1:21 "Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior"

Psalm 58:3 "Even from birth the wicked go astray; from the womb they are wayward and speak lies." (They are not born astray; they go astray)

Isa. 59:1,2 "but your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear."

1 John 3:4 "Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness." (Sin is an act not an inheritable trait.)

Rom. 6:16 "Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to some to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey-- whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?" (One chooses slavery to sin; he is not born enslaved to sin.)

Ezek. 18:1-32 "The soul who sins is the one who will die. The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son." Sin (as an act) and its effects may be learned, but sin and its guilt are not inherited.

3. Man is not totally depraved; man is capable of good but is weak

The idea of weakness to temptation and sin is not the same as total inability to do any good

Matt. 26:41 Jesus said "Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body (flesh) is weak." (That man is willing means that man has some good within him.)

Gen. 2:17 Adam and Eve were not to eat fruit from "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil." (This is not the tree of the knowledge of evil and evil. Adam and Eve received knowledge of good as well as evil. They were not totally corrupt in knowledge; even in sin they had knowledge of good.)

Gen. 8:21 "Never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood."

Luke 8:15 In the parable of the sower: "But the seed on the good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop."

Acts 10:2 Cornelius, though an unregenerate man was nevertheless "devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly."

Rom. 7:21-23 "When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members."

Rom. 2:14,15 Gentiles who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law (how can they if they are totally unable to any good?)

4. That man is free to choose between good and evil, God and Satan.

Rom. 6:16-18 "though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness."

Acts 2:40 "Save yourselves from this perverse generation"

1 Pet. 1:22 "you have purified yourselves by obeying the truth"

John 3:16 "that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life"

John 3:36 “Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects (does not obey) the Son will not see life, for God’s wrath remains on him.”

Rev. 22:17 “whoever is thirsty, let him come; and whoever wishes, let him take the free gift of the water of life”

Josh. 24:15 “choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve”

1 Kings 18:21 Elijah went before the people and said, “How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal is God, follow him.”

5. *Some questions:*

- Luke 13:5, “unless you repent, you too will all perish.” Why would Jesus Christ condemn people for failure to repent when they are incapable of repentance or doing any good toward their salvation?
- Heb. 11:6 ‘without faith it is impossible to please God’ Why would God demand faith from all men, when He knows that men are incapable of believing?
- 2 Cor. 5:18-20 “Be reconciled to God.” Why would God ask men to be reconciled if they were not capable of doing anything by which they could be reconciled? (The word “reconcile” implies a separation and a reunion; it means “to bring back into harmony.” A reconciled husband and wife were once in harmony, separated, and later restored. If an infant is born in sin, he cannot be reconciled because he was never in harmony with the Lord. Infants are not born in sin but born pure; they separated from God when they sin and reconciled to God by obedience to the gospel.)

An Objection:

What about Psalm 51:5? “Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” Doesn’t this imply we are born in sin?

The NIV translates poorly here. Literally, David’s words would be translated: “Behold in iniquity I was born and in sin my mother conceived me.” The idea of this verse is that David was born in an evil and sinful world. Let’s remember that sin is an act, a transgression of God’s law. Sin is not inherited; it is learned.

One speaks a certain language because he was born in an environment that speaks that particular language. In Acts 2 the apostles spoke with the miraculous gift of tongues to people from many nations. When they heard the apostles, they marveled and said, “Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans? And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?” (Acts 2:7,8 NASB). One learns a language, and one learns sin by being born into a world that practices it.

To make this passage say that David was born depraved and sinful as a babe would make it contradict what David says in Psalm 22:9-10: “Yet you brought me out of the womb; you make me trust in you even at my mother’s breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother’s womb you have been my God.” The fact that the world is a sinful place in which to be born does not mean that one is born sinful and guilty of sin.

God's Second Law of Pardon For the Christian

When a person has been baptized for the remission of his sins, all his past sins are forgiven. This by itself, however, does not insure that the Christian will not sin after his baptism. What should the Christian do when he has sinned against God? How are the Christian’s sins forgiven? There are three things God expects of a Christian who has committed a sin: (1) confession of his sin, (2) repentance, (3) prayer for forgiveness.

Confession of Sin

James 5:16 “Therefore, confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.”

1 John 1:8,9 “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”

Repentance

Acts 8:18-24 “When Simon the Sorcerer saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles’ hands, he offered them money and

said, 'Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit.'

Peter noted that Simon's money would perish with him and that his heart was not right before God. "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin."

Col. 3:5-11 "put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature. . . rid yourselves of all such things. . . put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator."

Prayer

Acts 8:22 "Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord"

James 5:16 "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"

1 John 5:16 "If anyone sees his brother commit a sin that does not lead to death, he should pray and God will give him life."

The Conditional Security of Believers

The False Doctrine of "Once Saved, Always Saved"

The doctrine of "once saved, always saved" suggests that the Christian, once truly saved, can never do anything to forfeit his salvation and be finally lost in hell. This belief means that Christians have an unconditional security in Christ. They suggest that any person who appears to be a Christian and falls away was never truly converted in the first place. They believe that Christians do sin; but when they sin, they are punished in this life and forfeit privileges in heaven but not entrance into heaven.

The Conditional Security of the Believer

The Scriptures teach that God's grace and favor continue to be abundantly given to the believer who continues to keep faith and to keep doing God's will from the heart. The issue is not, "can God save sinners?" He can and does! Nor is the issue, "What is the outcome of those who never believe?" They are condemned (John 3:18). The issue is "What will happen to the

born again Christian who willingly turns his back on God and forsakes Him by turning to a life of neglect and sin?" Unconditional security suggests that he is still saved; conditional security says that he is lost.

If conditional security is taught in the Scriptures, then one would expect conditional statements in the Scriptures regarding salvation. A conditional statement has a qualification to it. It may use the word "if" such as in John 8:31; or it may use a relative clause describing the kind of person who meets the qualification, i.e., "he that" as in Mark 16:16. The problem with the doctrine of unconditional security is that it ignores the conditional, qualifying statements in Scripture about whom the grace of God saves: Passages That Teach Conditional Security of Christians

- John 8:31,32 "if you abide (continue, remain) in my word"
- John 8:51 "if anyone keeps my word"
- John 15:2,6,10 "if anyone does not abide. . . if you keep my commandments"
- Rom. 8:12,13 "if living to the flesh, you must die"
- 1 Cor. 15:1,2 "if you hold fast the word"
- Gal. 5:1-4 "if you receive circumcision (go back to the Law)"
- Gal. 6:7-9 "if we do not grow weary"
- Col. 1:21-23 "if you continue"
- Heb. 3:12-14 "if we hold fast"
- Heb. 10:26-31 "if we go on sinning willfully, . . . no more sacrifice for sins"
- 10:29 "he who has trampled the Son of God, treated blood as unholy, insulted the Spirit"
- Heb. 10:35-39 "if he shrinks back"
- 2 Pet. 1:5-11 "if these qualities are yours, you will never stumble"
- 2 Pet. 2:20-22 "if he is entangled and overcome, then the last state is worse than the first" (these are Christians 2 Pet. 1:3,4)
- 1 John 1:6,7 "if we walk in the light"
- 1 John 1:9 "if we confess our sins"
- 1 John 2:24,25 "if (what you heard from the beginning) remains in you, you also will remain in the Son and in the Father."

If there were only one Scriptural condition in this list, that would be enough to show that our salvation is conditional.

Some Warning and Exhortations:

1 Cor. 9:24-27 "make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize"

1 Cor. 10:1-12 "if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!"

Gal. 5:19-21 Paul's warning to Christians about works of the flesh that might keep them from entering the kingdom of heaven.

Rev. 2:10 "Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life"

The Present Tense of Salvation

John 5:24 "whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life." This passage observes the basic truth that the believer has eternal life and does not consider the person who stops believing. Note John 8:51 "Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps my word, he shall never see death." The whole truth blends both passages rather than ignoring either. John 3:36 says, "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." One has eternal life as long as he believes and obeys.

Can a person stop believing?

Psa. 106:12 "they believed His words"

106:13 "they quickly forgot His works"

106:21 "they forgot God their Savior"

106:24 "they did not believe His word"

Luke 8:11-13 "they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away"

1 Tim. 1:19,20 "made shipwreck of the faith"

1 Tim. 4:1 "fall away from the faith"

1 Tim. 5:12 "cast off the faith"

2 Tim. 2:18 "upset (overthrow) the faith of some"

Heb. 3:12 "brethren, . . . in any one of you an evil, unbelieving heart, in falling away from living God."

Objections:

"No one can separate us from the hand or the love of God."

Two precious promises are found in John 10:27-29 and Rom. 8:35-39, which state that

nothing is able to separate us from God. These verses, however, do not take into account that a person may decide to separate himself from God. Jude 21 advises us to "keep yourselves in the love of God"; and John 15:9,10 teaches that we must abide in his love. No one can separate us from God, but we are able to forsake Him. Christians can fall away!

"If a Christian falls, they were never converted in the first place."

But note Heb. 6:4-6. Those who fell away were at one time saved! They were "once enlightened" (cf. Heb. 10:32; Col. 1:13,14); "tasted the heavenly gift, partakers of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38,39); tasted the good word, and tasted the powers of the age to come." These people willfully fell away from God by rejecting Jesus Christ. It was impossible to renew them to repentance because they did not want to repent (Heb. 10:26-29). God is speaking of these "cases" and not all cases; some are brought to repentance (Acts 8:14-24). Notice also Gal. 5:1-4 speaks of those who fall from grace as having been "severed" from Christ. One cannot be cut off from that which one has never been united. In 2 Pet. 2:20-22, we have some who have escaped the defilement of the world returning to sin. One can only escape that defilement through the blood of Jesus. Speaking of a washed sow is meaningless unless they were washed clean from sin.

Is Man Predestined?

Calvinism teaches that God has unconditionally elected some to bring to a knowledge of himself, not on the basis of any merit shown by the object of his grace and not based upon his looking forward to discover who would "accept" the offer of the gospel. God, according to this doctrine, has elected upon the basis of His own will some for glory and some for damnation. He made this sovereign choice before the foundation of the world.

The Calvinist doctrines of unconditional election coupled with irresistible grace means that neither the elect nor the lost can resist God's will. Neither has freewill to choose to follow

God or not. Their fate is sealed from the beginning.

John Calvin said:

By Predestination we mean the eternal decree of God, by which he determined with himself whatever he wished to happen with regard to every man. All men are not created on equal terms, but some are preordained to eternal life, others to eternal damnation; and accordingly, as each has been created for one or the other of these ends, we say that he has been predestinated to life or to death.”¹⁶

The Bible teaches:

1. *God desires the salvation of all people* (1 Tim. 2:3,4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
2. *Jesus tasted death for all people, not just the saved* (Rom. 5:6; 1 Tim. 2:6; Heb. 2:9; 1 John 2:2; 1 Tim. 1:12-15).
3. *God loves all* (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-8).
4. *Jesus commissioned the apostles to preach to the whole world* (Matt. 28:18; Mark 16:15).
5. *Jesus expects all men to believe and to repent* (Acts 17:30; Rom. 1:16). The Scriptures everywhere assume men are capable of repentance.
6. *Men have freewill to choose to believe or not to believe* (John 3:16; 3:36; 5:24; 8:24; Rom. 6:16-18; 11:22,23; Luke 9:23).
7. *Sinners are lost because they refuse to seek God and obey the gospel* (Acts 13:46; Matt. 23:37; 2 Thess. 1:7-9; 2:10-12).
8. *The righteous people are saved because they have met conditions for eternal life* (Matt. 19:17; John 5:40; Heb. 5:8,9; Acts 2:4; 1 Pet. 1:22,23; John 3:3-7; Matt. 7:21).
9. *There is hope for all men* (1 Tim. 1:12-15; Acts 2:38-41).
10. *God renders to each man according to his works* (Rom. 2:6; 2 Cor. 5:10; Psalm 28:4; 2 Tim. 4:14; Rev. 20:11-15; 22:12).

Some Things Are Predestined

“Predestinate” is used six times in four passages of the New Testament. Acts 4:28 says the death of Jesus was predestined by the Father. Rom. 8:28-30 says that God foreordained the

called (the church) to be conformed to the image of His Son and to be justified and glorified. In 1 Cor. 2:7, we find that by God’s wisdom the gospel was predestined to come out at the appointed time. In Eph. 1:3-14 Paul says that God chose “us” and foreordained (predetermined, predestined) us to sonship and blessing.

While the church is predestined for heaven and the lost are predestined for hell, each man decides for himself whether he will choose the destiny of the broad or the narrow way. While the roads invariably lead to their destinies, each one chooses the road he travels.

How many baptisms do we have today?

In A.D. 64 Paul wrote in Ephesians 4:5, “one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” Before A.D. 64 there was more than one baptism, such as John’s baptism, Holy Spirit baptism, and the baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sin. From the time of Paul’s letter, however, there is but one. If the Holy Spirit baptism is the one (as some denominations teach), then there is no remission of sins in a baptism today, for these churches teach that the baptism of the Holy Spirit does not remit sins. In contrast to that, however, the New Testament teaches that baptism in water does remit sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-7; 1 Pet. 3:21). Since the baptism of Acts 2:38 included the promise of forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and since that promise was universal in time and location, then we must conclude that the commanded baptism of Acts 2:38 is the one baptism of Eph. 4:5.

¹⁶ Calvin’s *Institutes*, Book III, chap. 21, sect. 5.

Do we fulfill the command of baptism in the Spirit or in Water?

Holy Spirit	Water
Spirit-element (Acts 1:5)	Water-element (Acts 8:38; 10:47)
Christ does the baptizing (John 1:33; Matt. 3:11)	Disciples do the baptizing (Matt. 28:19,20)
Limited Promise to the Apostles (Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4)	Universal Promise to all who are called (Acts 2:38-39)
A Promise received (Luke 24:48; Acts 2:1ff.)	A Command to be fulfilled (Acts 2:38; 10:48)
To reveal and confirm the faith (John 16:13; Heb.2:3,4)	For forgiveness and to wash away sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16)
In no name (Matt. 3:11)	In the name of Jesus Christ (Matt. 28:19; Acts 19:5)
Not raised in (Acts 2:1-4)	Buried and Raised in (Rom. 6:3,4)
Not into Christ (John 15:1-6; Acts 8:12-16)	Baptized into Christ (Gal. 3:27)
Did not save (Acts 2:1-4)	For salvation (Mark 16:16; 1 Pet. 3:21)
No longer needed (John 16:13; Heb. 2:3,4)	Needed so long as men need salvation (Mark 16:16; 2 Tim. 2:10)
Ceased by A.D. 64 (Eph. 4:5)	Unto the end of the world (Matt. 28:20)

If We Had the Baptism of the Holy Spirit Today

If we had the baptism of the Holy Spirit today, we would expect to see the following things: additional inspired books added to the New Testament, living apostles, people raised from the dead, the maimed and all others healed, water turned to wine, people walking on water, tempests stilled, trees cursed, money found in a fish's mouth, thousands fed from a few loaves and fishes, words placed in prophets' mouths, languages miraculously spoken, and many other undeniable miracles. No one is performing these signs today.

Baptism before Salvation: Wise or Foolish Matthew 7:24-27

Which is wise and which is foolish?

Man #1: Belief >>> Saved + Be Baptized to show past salvation.

Man #2: Be sprinkled >>> Saved + Believe and be confirmed

Mark 16:16 Believe + Be Baptized >>> Shall be saved

The wise man: "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts upon them, may be compared to a wise man, who built his house upon the rock."

The foolish man: "And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act upon them, will be like a foolish man, who built his house upon the sand."

Passages Which Show the Necessity of Obedience

Matt. 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven."

John 3:36 "He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."

John 8:31,32 "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

John 12:48 "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."

Heb. 5:8,9 "Although He was a Son, He learned obedience from the things which He suffered. And having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation."

Examples of Conversion

Hearing the Gospel	Believing in Jesus Christ	Repenting of Sin	Confessing the name of Jesus	Being Baptized	Salvation, Forgiveness
Pentecost Acts 2:14-41		Repent 2:37-38		Baptized 2:38,41	Forgiveness 2:38,47
Samaria Acts 8:5-13	Believed 8:13			Baptized 8:12,13	
Eunuch Acts 8:35-39	Believed 8:36,37		Confessed 8:37	Baptized 8:38	Rejoiced 8:39
Saul (Paul) Acts 9 & 22		Prayed & Fasted 9:9,11		Baptized 9:18	Sins Washed Away at Baptism 22:16
Cornelius Acts 10:34-38 11:14	Believed 10:43			Baptized 10:47,48	
Jailer Acts 16:25-34	Believed 16:31			Baptized, having believed 16:33,34	
Corinthians Acts 18:8-11	Believed 18:8			Baptized 18:8	

THE CHURCH

We will focus on what the Bible says about the church. The New Testament church is the one Jesus died for, purchased with his blood, and is the one of which He is the head. We ought to be concerned with being a part of this church and no other! The world today sees the church through its own eyes. Some think of the church as a building; others think of it as a denomination. How does God define the church in the Bible?

The Church Is Made Up Of People

In Matt.16:16-18 Jesus says He will build his church. Eph. 2:19-22 tells us the church Jesus built was not made of brick and mortar but of people. In Acts 8:3 But Saul {began} ravaging the church, entering house after house; and dragging off men and women, he would put them in prison. It is clear that the church was made up of people. In Rom 16:16, people greet people; buildings do not greet other buildings. There were, in fact, no church buildings prior to 3rd century A.D.

The Church Is Made Up Of Called and Saved People

The word "church," (ἐκκλησία) means "called out" (a group of people called together for a purpose). Christians have been called by the gospel (2 Thess. 2:13,14) to serve Jesus. The church is made up of people who obeyed the gospel and are saved by Jesus. In Acts 2:41,47 saved people were added to the church. In Eph. 5:23 (cf. 1:22-23), Jesus is the Savior of the body or the church. The church is the saved; Jesus the head of the church and the Savior of his body.

The NT refers To the Church by Several Pictures:

1. As a family, it is a household (1 Tim 3:15).
2. As a government, it is a kingdom (Matt 16:18,19).
3. As an organism, it is a body (Eph 5:23).
4. As a dwelling place, it is a temple of God (1 Cor 3:16).

God Wills That His People Be One, United

In John 17:20-23 Jesus prayed for his disciples, that they might all be one. Paul

instructed the Corinthians in 1 Cor 1:10-13 that they all agree, that they be of same mind and judgment and that there be no divisions among them. God wants His people to be one. Paul wanted the Ephesians to forgive one another and to forbear one another, "keeping the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph. 4:3). The basis for that unity came from the following verses. In Eph 4:4-6, Paul said,

"There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all." Each of these "ones" has a meaning for us:

- * one body--one church, not many.
- * one Spirit--not many conflicting Spirits
- * one hope--by obedience to the gospel
- * one Lord--no presidents, popes or conferences
- * one faith--one system of doctrine
- * one baptism--no do-it-yourself practices
- * one God and Father--not many gods

Paul noted in 1 Cor 12:13 that we are all baptized into one body. That body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,23). This being true, the church as the Bible describes it is not:

- * a collection of denominations with differing doctrines, practices, names, organizations, creeds, worship, and requirements for entrance.
- * interdenominational (allowing several all under one umbrella)

* nondenominational (not aligned with any particular one but having members in several) Rather, the NT church is Undenominational. The NT knows nothing of the whole concept of denominationalism, prevalent in our world today.

The New Testament condemns the idea of sectarian names, division, and various false doctrines. In the New Testament, the church was merely the church. It is absurd to ask what kind of church it was, because there were no kinds. There was just the church! If we were to see the first automobile, we wouldn't ask what kind is it; for there were no "brands" of automobile. There was just an automobile.

Some basic points to consider:

- * Matt 15:8,9, 13-14 Man-made religion will be uprooted.

- * Gal 1:6-9 There is but one gospel.
- * Col. 3:17 We are to do all in the name of the Lord.

**Good News: One Can Be "Just A Christian"
And Never Be A
Member of Any Denomination**

New Testament Christians were merely "Christians." There were no man-made names, creeds, practices, or organizations among them. You can practice the same thing by reading and following the Lord's instructions in the Bible, the word of Christ and avoid any man-made beliefs or practices. Jesus said in John 8:31,32 that the true disciples abide in His words. He reminds us in John 12:48 we will be judged by His words. It just makes sense to do God's will and follow the Bible in all we teach and do. This means giving up every man-made doctrine, idea, practice, name, or organization. It means observing all things that Jesus commands (Matt 28:19,20). The church as God's people love the Lord, love each other, share the gospel, help the needy, and follow every teaching of Jesus Christ.

**Why Becoming A Member
Of The Lord's Church Is Necessary**

1. *Because God adds all the saved to His church* (Acts 2:41,47, Col. 1:13,14). Since repentance and baptism leads to salvation (it, the remission of sins), and since the baptized were added unto them, and since the saved were added to the church, the Lord by the same act both forgives sin and adds one to His church.
2. *Because members of the church have been released from their sins by the blood of Christ* (Rev 1:4-6). When John wrote the seven churches of Asia, he was speaking to a people who had come into a kingdom and were priests to God. John taught that "we" Christians "are of God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one," There are but two kingdoms: the domain of darkness and the kingdom of His beloved Son (Col. 1:13).
3. *Because Jesus Christ is the Head of His Church and the Savior of His Body* (Eph. 5:23; Col. 1:18). Jesus Christ purchased the church with His own blood (Acts 20:28). We have no record anywhere in the New Testament that the blood of

Jesus ever purchased anything but the church. His kingdom (Rev 5:9,10, Matt 16:18,19).

4. *Because men are reconciled to God in the Body through the cross* (Eph. 2:11-22). The church, which is His body (Eph. 1:22,23), is able to draw near to God because the blood of Christ has cleansed it. If one is not reconciled to God, one is alienated from God. God reconciles people to Himself in one body, the church.

5. *Because members of the church are members of God's Family* (1 Tim 3:15; Gal. 3:26,27; 1 Cor. 12:13). God's household is His family, the church. To be God's child one must be baptized into the body of Christ, which is the church. One is either in God's family or Satan's family. Baptism is the time one becomes a child of God and enters that body.

6. *Because only members of the church have their names written in heaven* (Heb. 12:23; Rev. 20:15; Luke 10:20). Only the ones whose names are written in heaven will escape the lake of fire and brimstone. The Lord has added those who are saved to His church and to that heavenly list.

Organization of the Church

Jesus is the Head of the Church

- * Jesus has all authority (Matt. 28:18; John 3:35)
- * Jesus is prophet (Deut. 18:15); priest (Heb. 7:17,21,28); and King of kings and Lord of lords (Rev. 17:14)
- * Jesus' Teaching is the Standard of Judgment (John 12:48; Matt. 7:21-17) Jesus is the only head and only Lord of His church (Eph. 4:4-6)

Elders or Overseers are to shepherd the Church

- * Three Designations of the Same Office. Cf. Acts 20:17,28; 1 Pet. 5:1-5
- 1) elders or presbyters (Acts 14:23; 15:2; 20:7; Phil. 1:1; 1 Tim. 5:17. Tit 1:5-9; 1 Pet. 5:1)
- 2) overseers or bishops (Acts 20:28, 1 Tim 3:1, Tit. 1:7)
- 3) shepherds or pastors (Acts 20:28, Eph 4:11, 1 Pet. 5:1-5)
- * Qualifications of Elders or Overseers (1 Tim. 3:1-7, Tit. 1:5-9)
- * Women were not to have authority over men (1 Tim. 2:8-15)

* Shepherds are to watch for the souls of members (Heb 13:17; 1 Pet. 5:1-5)

Deacons or Servants

Qualifications of deacons and their wives (1 Tim. 3:8-13)

Served with elders (Phil. 1:1)

Appointed to take care of special tasks of the church (Acts 6:3-6)

Evangelists, Preachers, or Ministers

Evangelist is one who brings the gospel, "the good news" (Acts 21:8; 2 Tim. 4:5)

Minister (or servant) is one who serves God (1 Tim 1:12; Acts 9:15)

The Work of a Preacher, evangelist.

* evangelize (Rom. 1:14-16; 10:14,15)

* edify the local church (Eph. 4:11-16)

* contend for the faith (Jude 3, 1 Tim. 1:3, 2 Tim. 4:1-5)

* train others to teach the doctrine of Christ (2 Tim. 2:2)

* pray for open doors (Col. 4:2,3)

* set an example of a believer (1 Tim. 4:12)

* reprove evildoers and false teachers (lit. 1:10-14)

* correct those ensnared by the devil (2 Tim 2:24-26)

Members of the body of Christ

* All members are necessary and vital to the work (1 Cor 12:12-27)

* Each member is expected to do his part (Eph. 4:11-16, Rom 12:3-8, 1 Pet 4:10,11)

* Members have a responsibility to respect and submit to elders (Heb 13:7,17, 1 Tim 5:17-19)

* Members have a responsibility to evangelize and to keep each other in the grace of God (Gal. 6:1; Matt. 28:18,19; Mark 16:15,16; James 5:19,20; Jude 22,23)

The Church, the Kingdom, the Body and the House of God

It is called the Church in its Relation to the World (Matt. 16:18; Acts 20:28)

It is called the Kingdom in its Government (Matt. 16:19; Col. 1:13)

It is called the Body in its Relation to Christ (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23)

It is called the Household in its Relation to God (1 Tim. 3:15)

When Was the Church-Kingdom Established?

Before Acts 2, the Church-Kingdom is spoken of as Future

- 760 B.C. kingdom established in the "last days" (Isa 2:2,3; Joel 2:28)
- 600 B.C. to be established in the days of those kings (Dan. 2:44)
- 555 B.C. the ancient of days (Dan. 7:13,14)
- 28 A.D. John the Baptist, Jesus, twelve and seventy says kingdom is "at hand" (Matt. 3:2; 4:17; 10:7; Luke 10:19).
- 29 AD. Jesus prayed for it to come (Matt. 6:9,10)
- 30 A.D. Jesus predicted that He will build it (Matt. 16:18,19)
- 30 AD. Jesus predicted some living would see it come with power (Mark 9:1)
- 30 A.D. the kingdom shall come (Luke 22:18; 19:11)
- 30 A.D. the disciples were waiting for it (Mark 15:43; Acts 1:6)

The Church is Established In 30 A.D.). In Jerusalem on the Day of Pentecost

In these "last days" (Acts 2:17)

At Jerusalem (Luke 24:47)

3000 Added to them (Acts 2:41)

Roman Kings in power (Dan. 2:44; Luke 2:1)

Christ Risen and Exalted (Acts 2:22-36)

During Lifetime of Disciples Standing in Jesus Presence (Mark 9:1)

Kingdom Came with Power (Acts 1:8; 2:1-4)

After Acts 2, the Church-Kingdom is spoken of as a Present Reality

- 30 A.D. the church is a functioning body of people (Acts 2:47; 5:11)
- 37 A.D. the church is persecuted (Acts 8:1)
- 45 A.D. the church is active (Acts 13:1-3; 14:27)
- 63 A.D. the church-kingdom is in existence (Col. 1:13,14; 1 Tim 3:15)
- 96 A.D. the kingdom has been purchased by the blood of Christ (Rev. 1:4-6; 5:9,10)
- 96 A.D. John is in the Kingdom (Rev. 1:9)

The Falling Away and The Restoration

The Prediction of the Falling Away

- Acts 20:29-30 savage wolves will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them
- 2 Thess. 2:3-13 Apostasy will come before the day of the Lord. Those who did not love the truth will be sent a deluding influence so that they might believe what is false, because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in wickedness.
- 1 Tim. 4:1-3 some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons
- 2 Tim. 3:1-13 evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived
- 2 Tim. 4:1-5 the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance with their own desires; and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.
- 2 Pet. 2:1-3 false teachers will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them; and many will follow their sensuality.

Manmade, Unscriptural Practices which are Evidence of a Departure:

Date	Practice
103	Holy Water
110	Single Bishop replacing plurality of elders
140	Lent
185	Infant Baptism
230	Doctrine of Purgatory
240	Intercession of Saints
251	Pouring for Immersion
325	Council of Nicea
394	Latin Mass
500	Confession to Priests
606	First Universal Pope (Boniface III)
667	Instrumental Music in Worship
1063	Celibacy of Priests
1248	Indulgences
1311	Sprinkling Authorized

1545	Images or Icons Venerated
1870	Pope Declared Infallible

Denominational Churches And their Date of Origin

A.D.

606	Roman Catholic Church with first pope
1054	Division between Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox churches
1530	Lutheran church (Martin Luther)
1535	Church of England (Episcopalian)
1536	Presbyterian church (John Calvin)
1607	Baptist church (John Smyth)
1650	Quakers (George Fox)
1684	Congregational churches
1729	Methodist churches (John Wesley)
1830	Mormon church (Joseph Smith)
1831	Seventh-Day Advent (Ellen G. White)
1865	Salvation Army (William Booth)
1859	Christian Church (Midway, Kentucky)
1875	Jehovah's Witnesses (Charles T. Russell)
1879	Christian Science (Mary Baker Eddy)
1895	Nazarene Church (P.F. Bresee)
1898	Pentecostal Holiness
1914	Assembly of God

Matt. 7:21-23 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of My Father, who is in heaven. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"

Matt. 15:13, 14 "Every plant which My heavenly Father has not planted shall be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

John 8:31,32 "If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; and you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

Gal. 1:6-9 "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you, and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even though we, or an angel from

heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to that which you received, let him be accursed."

2 John 9-11 "Anyone who goes too far and does not abide in the teaching of Christ, does not have God; the one who abides in the teaching, he has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house, and do not give him a greeting; for the one who gives him a greeting participates in his evil deeds."

The Udenominational Nature of New Testament Christianity

Definitions:

Church: (ἐκκλησία) "called out" referring to a "called out body of people."

The word "church" is used in three different ways in the New Testament. It is most often used to refer to the world-wide body or kingdom of Christ, comprised of all who have obeyed the gospel and were added by the Lord to the number of the saved in His body (Matt. 16:18; Eph. 5:23,25). Baptism (immersion in water for the remission of sins) is the point at which one enters the body and is added to the church (Acts 2:41,47; 1 Cor. 12:13). Used in this universal sense, "church" is always used in the singular; there is "one body" or one church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23).

A second use of the term "church" refers to the local congregation, so that the Scripture refers to the "church of God in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2), "the churches of Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), or the "seven churches in the province of Asia" (Rev. 1:4). One should not assume that these are different kinds of churches (as denominations, which have different names, creeds and practices). The New Testament knows nothing of the denominational concept. The New Testament knows of only one universal church identifiable in local

congregations, so that Paul speaks of the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16).

A third use of the term "church" is a reference to the assembly of the local congregation as in 1 Cor. 11:18 or 14:34. In the New Testament "church" never referred to a physical building, though it is commonly used for that today. The church is made up of people, living stones. Other terms that are synonymous with "church" include temple, vineyard, kingdom, body, household or family of God.

Denomination: The organized grouping of congregations with similar names, creeds, beliefs, structures and practices. The word "denomination" refers to "A class, kind or sort designated by a specific name: ecclesiastically a body or sect holding particular distinctives."

(*Baker's Dictionary of Theology*)

Denominationalism suggests that each denomination is a part or a division of the whole, that all of the denominations put together actually make up the universal church. This concept is wholly foreign to the New Testament, since Jesus only built one church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23). Factions in the church is regarded in the Bible as a work of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21), and those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.

Pluralism is the belief that there can be different groups with many names, creeds, organizations, and practices and that these denominations can co-exist with the approval of God. This belief is clearly denied by the Scriptures. Jesus prayed for His people to be one (John 17:20-23); division is condemned (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rom. 16:17-19); and Jesus identifies the true disciples as those who abide in his teaching (John 8:31,32; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11). The obvious consequence of pluralism is that there is no such thing as heresy or false doctrine. That there is such a thing as false doctrine and that it is condemned is clear from the Scriptures (Matt. 7:15-20; Acts 20:28-31; 1 Tim. 4:1-4; 2 Tim. 3:1-4:5; 2 Pet. 2:1-22).

**Which of These Two Concepts
Is Biblical and Founded upon Rock
And which is Unbiblical and Founded upon Sand?
Matthew 7:24-27**

<i>Denominational churches</i>	<i>The “Undenominational” NT Church</i>
Divided	United (Acts 2:43-47)
Many Bodies	One Body (Eph. 4-6; 1 Cor. 1:10-13; John 17:20-23)
Many Theologies	One Faith (Eph. 4:5; Jude 3)
Human Practices	Only Divinely Authorized Practices (John 8:31,32)
Human Creeds	No Creed but Christ (Matt. 7:21; John 12:48)
No Heresies Possible	False Doctrines Possible (Gal. 1:6-9)
False Teachers Tolerated	False Teachers are not tolerated (2 John 9-11; Rom. 16:17,18; Rev. 2:2).
Many Names	Name of Christ (Col. 3:17; Acts 4:12)
Human Organizations (presidents, headquarters, diocese, synods, etc.)	One Lord (Eph. 4:5)
Baptism Choices: Sprinkling, Pouring or Immersion	Baptism is Immersion (Eph. 4:5; Rom. 6:4)
Religious Titles (‘Father,’ ‘Reverend,’ or ‘Mother Superior’)	No titles (Matt. 23:5-12)
Instrumental Music in Worship	Worship by Singing (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16)
Women Preachers and Leaders	Women Not to Teach or Have Authority (1 Cor. 14:34; 1 Tim. 2:8-15)
Entertainment blended in Worship	Worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:24)
Baptism of Infants	Baptism of Penitent Believers (Acts 2:38; 8:12; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-6)

Some Important Lessons:

1. It matters what one believes (John 8:31,32; 2 Thess. 2:11,12).
2. Division is never right in the sight of God (John 17:20-23; 1 Cor. 1:10; Gal. 5:19-21).
3. It matters what name one wears (Acts 4:12; 11:26; 1 Cor. 1:11-13; Col. 3:17).
4. It matters how men worship God (John 4:23,24; Matt. 15:8,9; Col. 2:20-22).
5. Christ shed His blood to build one church (Matt. 16:18; Acts 2:47; 20:28; Eph. 1:22,23; 4:4).
6. It matters to God whether or not we support error (2 John 9-11; 1 Tim. 4:1-3).

Can We Restore the New Testament Church?

The restoration principle pleads for a return to a standard, a norm. It involves the belief that going backwards to the source of truth can make progress. Specifically, it means going back to the

Bible as the voice of authority in Christianity. It pleads for the recognition of the New Testament Scriptures as the guidebook of the church. In recent years people have questioned whether the idea is a valid one and whether we can restore the New Testament church? We mean by that restoring the ideals and patterns that God wills and can be found in the New Testament. Some are saying that we ought to be like Christ but that it is not necessary to restore the church today to the ideals presented in the books of Acts and the epistles.

Examples of Restoration in the Old Testament

- 2 Kings 18:3-6 Hezekiah restored Israel's worship of God, by destroying the idols, cleansing the temple and keeping the Passover. The Passover had not been kept fully since the time of Solomon. Hezekiah's father was the wicked Ahaz. (8th Cent. B.C.)
- 2 Kings 22:8-11 Josiah, in the 18th year of his reign, read a copy of the Law, found by

Hilkiah the priest, while they were repairing the Temple. Josiah instituted sweeping changes, ending idolatry, and restoring worship and the Passover according to the Law! (7th Cent.)

- Jeremiah 6:16 Jeremiah called for the people to return to the old paths and walk in them. (7th Century)
- Ezra 7 Ezra by the grace of God went back to Jerusalem because "he had set his heart to study the law of the Lord, and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel" (7:10).
- Anytime men stray from the will of God, there is the necessity of restoration!

Jesus Pointed To The Need To Do God's Will

Jesus emphasized the changeless nature of the Word of God by saying, "It is written." (Matt. 4:1-11). In his discussions He often said, "Have you not read?" Or "Is it not written...?" Or "What is written in the Law?" Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was a kind of "restoration" sermon pointing people back to God's will rather than popular religion.

The New Testament Warns of Departures from the Faith

1. Acts 2:42 The apostles, disciples were at first steadfast in their devotion
2. Acts 20:28-31 Paul warned the Ephesian elders
3. 1 Timothy 4:1-2 some will abandon the faith to follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons
4. 2 Timothy 4:1-5 Paul's warning to Timothy of false teachers
5. 2 Peter 2:1-3 Peter's warning of false prophets

Some of the Departures of Men

Men began teaching unscriptural doctrines and practicing things, which were completely different from the church one can read about in the New Testament. It was different in name, in doctrine, in worship, in organization, and in mission.

Some innovations: (new practice not found in the Bible) include: Holy Water (113 A.D.); Lent (140 A.D.); Penance (157 A.D.); Infant Baptism (185 A.D.); Intercession of Saints (240 A.D.); Sprinkling for Baptism (250 A.D.); Sacrifice of Mass (370 A.D.); Celibacy of Priests (425 A.D.); Purgatory (230 A.D.); Confession to Priests (500

A.D.); Pope (606 A.D.); and Instrumental Music (670 A.D.). Human creeds, traditions, and the laws of men came to be as authoritative as the Scriptures.

The Reformation Came About when Men Sought Change

Tired of Roman rule, people throughout Europe began thinking about going back to the Bible as the sole authority for their faith. Martin Luther said: "To reform the church by the (early church) fathers is impossible; it can only be done by the Word of God." Huldreich Zwingli and John Calvin: "insisted that nothing should remain in the church which was not expressly authorized by Scripture.

As time went by many different Christian groups began springing up, each with different names, creeds, organizations, and forms of worship.

- Martin Luther (1530) Lutheran Church/Lutheran catechism
- John Calvin (1536) Presbyterian Church/Westminster confession of faith
- Henry VIII (1552) Episcopal Church/Book of Common Prayer
- John Smyth (1607) Baptist Church/Standard Manual
- John Wesley (1729) Methodist Church/Methodist Discipline

As men came to America, seeking religious freedom, they began to want something other than the denominational and sectarian faiths they found. They wanted two things: (a) to go back to the Bible alone; and (b) unity among Christians.

The Restoration of the New Testament Church

Men began to say: "Let us cast aside all denominational names, creeds, doctrines and practices which divide the Christian world and just wear the name 'Christian' and be only members of the New Testament church." Their plea: "Where the Scriptures speak we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent." They sought to go back to the New Testament and practice only those things taught there. They believed the Bible was the seed of the Kingdom (Luke 8:11), which would produce only Christians, members of the Lord's church, as it

had done in the first century. We are born again by the incorruptible seed of the Word (1 Peter 1:23-25). What the seed produced in the first century, it would produce "in like kind" in any century.

Why the Restoration Is A Valid Concept

1. The Eternal Nature of the Gospel.

- Matthew 28:18-20 making disciples of Christ till the end of time
- Matthew 24:35 Christ's Words will last beyond this life
- Jude 3 the faith was once for all time delivered to the saints

2. The Teaching of Christ Demands Obedience

- John 8:31-32 abide in word to be true disciples
- John 12:48 we will be judged by the teachings of Christ
- Matthew 7:21 not everyone who claims to be a Christian will be saved
- Galatians 1:6-9 those who teach a different gospel will be condemned
- 2 John 9-11 we are not to fellowship those who teach false doctrines

3. God Expects His People to Come Out of Sin When They Learn the Truth--Repentance!

- Revelation 2:14-16 Church at Pergamum commanded to repent of their doctrinal error and toleration
- Revelation 2:20-23 the church at Thyatira commanded to quit tolerating the false teaching of Jezebel
- Titus 3:9-11 we must reject a factious man (i.e., one who teaches a heresy to the dividing of the church)
- Romans 16:17-18 we must mark and turn away from those who cause dissensions and teach deceptive things
- Titus 1:9-11 elders have responsibility to keep church pure and free from those who oppose the truth

Restoration is actually repentance from doctrinal error.

Have We Restored the New Testament Church Today?

Generally speaking, in those doctrines and practices that are most essential, we have gone back to the New Testament patterns and followed

them. To the extent that we are following the New Testament teaching, we have restored the church today!

The question arises, "Can we know the truth?" The Bible everywhere assumes that men can know the truth and can believe and practice it (John 8:31,32). We have the promise that we will be guided into all truth (John 16:12,13).

Are we perfect? No! Do we have a corner on truth? No! Are there things we must still repent of? Yes! Are there things we could do better? Yes! Once people have become New Testament Christians by obedience to the gospel and seek to practice the will of God, they have begun the journey of restoration--they are Christians and in God's kingdom. Obviously all of us can mature and grow in our knowledge of the will of God.

Restoration in many ways is a process. As we learn what is true and that we are to change, so must we change. Restoration is repentance, and as we repent from wrong thinking we restore truth. Churches of Christ say, "Tell us what the Bible teaches and where we are deficient, and we will listen."

Conclusion:

Can We Restore the New Testament Church?

Yes! And by all means we should restore it to the ideals Christ demands. Restoration begins with each individual converted to the Lord and willing to put Him first in every respect. Are there things in your life you need to restore?

The Unity of the Church

The prayer in John 17 may truly be called the Lord's prayer--it was uttered just before He went to Gethsemane. Here Jesus pours out His heart to the Father, requesting that He "sanctify them in the truth." He asks that they may all be one so that the world may believe. He prays they may be one so that the world may know that the Father sent Jesus and loved them as He did Jesus. The Lord wanted the love of the Father to be in them (26).

The word "ask" indicates that Jesus is requesting something of the Father on behalf of his followers. Here Jesus is actually praying for you and me (a precious prayer). He desires their unity built upon personal relationship and built upon love and obedience. The thing that sets

Christians apart from the world is the truth (17). The thing that convinces the world Jesus is real is their unity.

God wants His people to be ONE

God knew that it is the nature of man to divide, to want to do things his own way, and to disagree with others. Among the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21) are things which destroy unity:

- * enmities: hatred
- * strife: discord, fighting, competition
- * jealousy
- * outbursts of anger: fits of rage
- * disputes: selfishness, selfish ambition
- * dissensions: dividing into an opposing group (to cause two groups in the place of one)
- * factions: (heresies) Tit. 3:10,11 divisions organized into groups who oppose each other (Rom. 16:17)

People cause division by wrong attitudes and by teaching false doctrines (Acts 20:28-32). The Word of God and the love of brethren give an answer to division. Those who practice the works of the flesh will be lost. God expects His people to be loyal to or faithful to the truth and to conform to His teaching! (1 Cor. 1:10-15). Paul admonished Corinth "that you all agree" (lit., "speak the same thing"). This is a phrase of that looks back to the politics of Greece where men were united behind one person or city. Jesus did not want parties with loyalties to groups. He urged that there be no divisions (splits) among you (divided up and distributed out in cliques caused by opinions) but that you be made complete (whole or united) in the same mind (frame of mind or state of mind) and the same judgment (opinion, conviction) in both the theory and the applications of that belief. The Corinthians were quarreling (contentious). Their divisions were based on rallies around people: "Paulites," "Apollosites," "Peterites," and "Christians." This partyism perhaps led people to give greater credit to men than to Jesus Christ.

Sectarianism is a mindset, driven by pride and is divisive. It says, "Everything I think is right; everything you think is wrong, because I'm me and you are you." In Eph. 4:1-7 Paul demanded the people recognize the oneness, the uniqueness, and the exclusiveness in all of Christianity:

- a. one body: the church Eph 1:22,23

- b. one Spirit
- c. one hope of your calling
- d. one Lord
- e. one faith--"the faith" that body of beliefs, which make Christianity unique
- f. one baptism
- g. one God

How Are Christians Able To Be United?

Unity comes through commitment to Jesus Christ as Lord! He is indeed the Christ, the Son of the Living God! Unity is relational (Jn 17:21). Since we are connected lovingly to God through the blood of Jesus, we are connected to all others who have been cleansed in the blood. Unity comes from putting Christ in a place of priority over all else. We are united to Him because of our faith, but our unity with Him also makes us united with all that belong to Him.

Unity comes through a commitment to love each other (John 13:34,35; Col. 3:12-15). Love is the perfect bond of unity. When we love the Lord, we also learn to love the brethren (1 John 4:7-11).

Unity comes through obedience to the teaching or message of Christ, the Bible. In John 14:15 obedience is relational. We show our love to Christ by obedience to His commands. Jesus said in John 17:20 that people believe through the "message." How can we ever be one with God and Christ and err from the message? 2 John 9-11 teaches that people who go beyond the message lose the relationship with Christ and the Father. Unity is linked to love, but it is also linked to staying within the teaching of the New Testament.

Our plea to go back to the Bible is a unity plea! It is founded on the only thing that can unite: faith, love, and obedience. Unity founded on sentiment and compromise is not the Biblical unity God wants, because it sacrifices the truth and allows men (and traditions) to take the place of the Lord.

Does the New Testament Contain Patterns For The Church?

The New Testament is God's written revelation for the church. While it is not written in "legal" language, it does contain the will of God in its commandments, in its teachings, and in its examples. It does reveal to us how we should

live, work and worship so as to please God in every respect (Col. 1:9,10). These instructions can be regarded as patterns to be observed by the church in all places and at all times. The New Testament embodies "the faith that God has once for all entrusted to the saints" (Jude 3). We work with patterns everyday. Clothes are made from patterns; food is prepared from recipes; and concrete is set in forms. A pattern is a rigid requirement that demands exactness. The patterns of the New Testament are sometimes detailed and sometimes in principle. "There has to be pattern commands to which obedience can be given, since men cannot respond to a revelation amorously" (i.e., not having any form).

The Old Testament teaches that God is often interested in exactness of detail.

- Gen. 6:15,22; 7:5 God told Noah how to build the ark, and Noah did according to all that God commanded him.
- * Ex. 25:9,40; 26:30; 39:32,42,43 Moses built the tabernacle according to the pattern he was shown on the mountain. Moses went so far as to examine all the work to see if had been done just as it was commanded.
- Lev. 10:1,2 Nadab and Abihu were killed because they offered a strange fire that the Lord did not command.
- 1 Chron. 13:7,10 Uzzah perished when he touched the Ark of the Covenant, which David brought to Jerusalem on a cart. David learned that God expected him to do things the right way (1 Chron. 15:2,12-15).

The New Testament encourages Christians to hold to the patterns that were delivered to them:

- 2 Tim. 1:13 "What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus." A pattern is a "model," a "determinative example," a "standard."
- Rom. 6:17-18 "But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were committed. You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." A "form" is a mold or a norm. The concept of a mold indicates an

exact pattern, to which one who submits to God willingly shapes his life. There is a pattern of teaching in the Bible which reveals God's requirements for salvation.

- 2 Thess. 2:15 "So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings (traditions) we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter." (teaching = tradition)

The New Testament Teaches the Importance of Correctness in Doctrine:

- 2 Tim. 2:15 "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth."
- Luke 5:14 And He ordered him to tell no one, "But go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, just as Moses commanded, for a testimony to them."
- John 12:50 "And I know that His commandment is eternal life; therefore the things I speak, I speak just as the Father has told Me."
- John 15:10 "If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love."
- 1 Cor. 11:2 Now I praise you because you remember me in everything, and hold firmly to the traditions, just as I delivered them to you.
- 1 Thess. 4:1 Finally then, brethren, we request and exhort you in the Lord Jesus, that, as you received from us {instruction} as to how you ought to walk and please God (just as you actually do walk), that you may excel still more.
- 2 John 6 And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.
- 2 John 9-11 those who go beyond the doctrine of Christ are without God; we must not support false teachers
- Rev. 22:18,19 not adding or taking away from the prophecy; this is an echo of Deut. 4:2; 5:32; 12:32

What does it mean when God tells us?

- to do the will of my Father Matt. 7:21

- to observe the word of God Luke 11:28
- to abide in my word John 8:31
- to keep my commandments John 14:15
- to hear my voice John 18:37

Application of this point: Wise men do God's will; foolish men do not. (Matthew 7:24-27)

Patterns in the New Testament

1. Patterns of obedience to the gospel:

- the pattern of teaching adults before baptism
- the pattern of immersing in water
- the pattern of baptism prior to salvation

2. Patterns of worship:

- the pattern of singing hymns of praise (not playing or making vocal sounds that imitate instruments)
- the pattern of observing the Lord's Supper each first day of the week
- the pattern of contributing each first day of the week
- the pattern of men taking leadership roles in public worship

3. Patterns of organization:

- the pattern of autonomous congregations
- the pattern of a plurality of elders and deacons in each congregation
- the pattern of men taking leadership roles and meeting the Scriptural qualifications
- the pattern of the priesthood of all believers with no distinction between "clergy" and "laity"
- the pattern of not bestowing religious titles

4. Patterns of unity:

- the pattern of one, undenominational church, unifying its members and congregations by their relationship to God in obeying the gospel and following the Lord's teaching

- the pattern of marking and rejecting factious, false teachers
- the pattern of expecting all Christians to speak the same things and to be of the same mind and judgment

5. Patterns of Christian living:

- the pattern of a moral lifestyle and disciplining brethren who are unwilling to live morally
- the pattern of working to support oneself so that one might help others
- the pattern of forgiving and reconciling a brother
- the pattern of benevolent service to others in need
- the pattern of faithful attendance at the meetings of the church
- the pattern of persistent and fervent prayer

6. Patterns of evangelism:

- the pattern of preaching the gospel to all nations
- the pattern of training the Christian in the truth and practice of Christianity
- the pattern of restoring the erring brother

Patterns are found in Scripture sometimes in principles and sometimes in specific statements. If the New Testament was not written to instruct the Christian in how to live the Christian life, then for what possible purpose could it have been written?

If every leaf on every tree has a pattern, and if every cell in every person has a DNA pattern, and if the whole universe is laid out in a set pattern, why should it seem so strange that the church our Lord built and died for should have a pattern?

WORSHIP

The Nature of Worship

Psalm 103:1-5

Churches meet together to meet also with God. He is present with His people. Jesus said in Matt. 18:20, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." More often than not we forget that point! God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit meet with his people at church.

What do you think about being in the presence of God? Perhaps it is frightening (Rev. 1:17)? John fell at Jesus' feet. Perhaps it is exciting. Perhaps it alarms your conscience to be in God's presence? Perhaps it is comforting, a solace in the midst of your storms? Perhaps it is a time to say "thank you"? I hope that you have come to meet Him, to worship and praise Him. I am afraid that many of us go through the motions never reaching out to God. Perhaps some are coming out of habit and not getting much from being together. I hope to remind you of what being together is all about and to challenge your sincere hearts to enter into a deeper relationship with God as you worship HIM

We Must Today Turn Our Hearts toward God

Each Lord's day, is the day we remember the great sacrifice for us--His body and His blood. Today, this Lord's day, is the day we praise our God, lift our voices in adoration and love. From Psalm 103:1-5 we learn He is the one we sing to. Eph 5:18-19 tells us to sing with our hearts to God. Today we say, "thank you," by our prayers, our songs, and by our contribution (Col. 3:15-17). Today we call upon our Father to help us and send our petitions to God for the things we as a body need. Peter reminds us in 1 Pet 5:7 to cast our cares upon Him. The Hebrew writer in Heb. 4:16 encourages us to draw near the throne of grace.

What Worship Is And Is Not:

In John 8:23-24 Jesus tells us what God wants from the worshipper. "Give unto the Lord the glory due His name; Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:2). "God is greatly

to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be held in reverence by all those who are around Him" (Psalm 89:7). Psalm 95:1-7 reminds us of our personal need to worship God.

The English word "worship" comes from the old word "worthship"! It is by our words and actions telling God that He is worthy of our praise and adoration. He deserves our love and thanksgiving. Worship is a mental act, a sense of awe and reverence in the presence of the DIVINE. Worship (*proskuneo*) means "throwing oneself on the ground to show respect and awe." We should recall the words of God to Moses "Take your shoes off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground." (Ex 3:5) In Rev. 4:11 we see the heavenly host saying, "Worthy art Thou!" In Rev. 5:9-13 we learn worship is an important event in heaven. William Temple said, "To worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God, to feed the mind with the truth of God, to purge the imagination by the beauty of God, to open the heart to the love of God, to devote the will to the purpose of God."

Our Part in Worship

It is good to remind ourselves in church that we are not the audience. God is! He is here to observe us and to be praised by us. Our task is to "please Him." This is why we can never cheapen our worship by turning it into entertainment. Entertainment is "a pleasant way to pass the time." We cannot cheapen worship by making it a performance, where some perform for others. Worship is not for self-glory but to glorify God and Him alone. Paul said in Acts 17:24-25 that God is not worshipped by man's device.

Let us prepare our hearts and spirits to praise and glorify our God before we get to church. Let's enter the services with celebration, praise and thanksgiving in mind. While we worship let's devote ourselves to God, singing and praying with our hearts aflame with love (1 Tim 2:8). When we leave worship, let's say it was good to draw close to our God and to show Him we love Him. Let's live lives that reflect we are God's people.

Israel worshiped in vain by living immoral

and godless lives (Isa. 1:12-20). They needed to repent of their sins before they came to worship God. James reminds us that we must control our tongues every day if we wish for our religious worship to come before our God (James 1:26,27).

What will please God most is a heart that is right with Him! Is your heart right with God? washed in the crimson flood?

Prayer--Man Speaking to God

What Is Prayer?

In its simplest definition prayer is merely that man is speaking to Almighty God. What makes this spiritual is not that man is speaking but that God is listening. God invites men to pray to Him (Matt. 7:7-11) and cares about our everyday lives and burdens (1 Pet. 5:7).

The Different Forms of Prayer listed in 1 Tim. 2:1,2

- Requests: an earnest asking of God for our needs
- Prayers: the whole range of petitions made to God
- Intercessions: seeking the hearing of God on behalf of others
- Thanksgiving: expressing gratitude for God's blessings

Prayer is the act of speaking to God as our Father. As a Father He cares for us and for our needs (Matt. 7:7-11; cf. 2 Cor. 12:14). In the model prayer of Jesus, He addresses God as "Father," remarking that He is "Our Father." (Matt. 6:9-15).

How Should Christians Pray?

- Luke 18:1 pray always
- 1 Thess. 5:17 "pray without ceasing" cf. Col. 4:2
- John 14:13 "in the name of Jesus Christ"
- 1 John 5:14,15 "according to His will"
- Mark 11:23,24 believing that we have received our request
- Heb. 4:15,16 with confidence, boldness
- James 1:5-8 without doubting
- James 4:1-3 with proper motives, not for our pleasure
- Luke 18:10-14 with humble hearts
- Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35 with forgiveness in

their hearts for others

- Matt. 26:41 with watchfulness against temptation

For Whom Should the Christian Pray?

- 1 Tim. 2:1 for all people
- 1 Tim. 2:2 kings and rulers
- Eph. 6:18 for all the saints
- Heb. 13:18; Col. 4:3 pray for open doors for the gospel
- Matt. 9:36-38 pray for workers to reach out to the lost
- Matt. 5:43,44; Luke 6:28 for those who mistreat us, our enemies
- James 5:14 for the ill
- James 5:16 confess your sins and pray for one another
- 1 John 5:16 for a sinful brother

There are some sin-hardened people for whom we are not to pray (Jer. 7:13-16; 14:12-14; 1 John 5:16:17).

Whose Prayer Will God Hear?

- Matt. 6:9 His children
- Matt. 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:12 the righteous
- 1 John 3:22 the obedient
- James 1:5-8 the trusting
- Heb. 4:16 the confident
- Acts 10:1-6 the lost but God-fearing man

Whose Prayer Will God Not Hear?

- James 4:3 those with wrong motives
- 1 Pet. 3:7 men who mistreat their wives
- James 1:6,7 those who doubt
- Zech. 7:12,13 those who hardened hearts against the law
- Isa. 59:1,2 those who continue in sin
- Prov. 28:9 those who turn from hearing the law
- Prov. 21:13 those who do not hear the cry of the poor
- Prov. 15:8,29 the wicked
- Psa. 66:18 those who regard iniquity in their hearts
- Prov. 1:24-28 those who refuse His call

In What Ways Shall I Expect God to Answer My Prayer?

1. Sometimes God says, "Yes." He did so to

Elijah (James 5:13-16). Let's remember that God expects His children to keep on asking until we receive (Luke 18:1-8).

2. Sometimes God says "No." A negative answer may be the answer of a loving God who cares for His people. Remember Paul's thorn (2 Cor. 12:7-10) and Jesus at the garden of Gethsemane (Matt. 26:36-44). In such cases Christians must learn to pray that God's will be done, realizing that God's grace will be sufficient for our needs.

3. Sometimes God says, "wait awhile." He did so with Israel until Moses was eighty years old (Exodus 1-3). Jesus also responded slowly to Mary and Martha when Lazarus was sick but raised him from the dead. See also Jer. 42:1-7.

4. Sometimes God gives us something different from what we ask. The thief on the cross only wanted to be remembered but Jesus took him to Paradise. We don't always know what is best to ask for or how we should pray (Rom. 8:26). With confidence we can be assured that God, as a loving Father, will do what is best for us.

5. Often God gives us much more than we ask or think (Eph. 3:20,21). Solomon only asked for wisdom but received much more in addition to the wisdom. He received honor, riches and length of days.

The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper is a memorial feast instituted by our Lord on the night in which He was betrayed. It is a memorial of His body and His blood, which was shed for the remission of our sins.

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

(Matt. 26:17-19; Mark 14:12-24; 1 Cor. 11:17-34)

1. The Lord's Supper is a meal eaten by citizens of the kingdom, the church (Luke 22:29,30)
2. Those born of water and of the Spirit are in the kingdom (John 3:3-5)
3. The Lord's Supper was the practice of the early church (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
 - taught by the apostles (Matt. 28:18-20)
 - Paul received the instruction from the Lord (1

Cor. 11:23)

- Christ instituted the Supper and delivered its observance to the apostles (Matt. 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-25; Luke 22:19,20)

The Significance of the Supper

1. It commemorates the forgiveness of our sins found in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, the blood by which we entered into the new covenant with God (Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:26)
 - a. it is a memorial: "this do in remembrance of me" (1 Cor. 11:25-33)
 - b. it is a proclamation of the death of Christ (1 Cor. 11:26)
 - c. it is a time of examination of our manner of worship (1 Cor. 11:28-32)
2. We are to examine ourselves to see that we are partaking of the bread and cup in a worthy manner, "discerning the Lord's body."

The Focus of the Supper

1. *Backwards* to the cross, remembering His body and blood (1 Cor. 11:23-26)
2. *Upwards* toward God, communion with Christ (1 Cor. 10:15-17; 11:27-29)
3. *Inward*, examining one's heart so as to maintain spiritual vigor (1 Cor. 11:29-32).
4. *Forward*, partaking "until he comes" (1 Cor. 11:26).
5. *Outward*, maintaining unity and harmony in the church (1 Cor. 11:17-22).

The Day and Frequency of Observance

1. The apostle's teaching included "breaking bread" (Acts 2:42; 20:7)
2. The church at Troas came together "on the first day of the week" (Acts 20:7). Paul tarried for six days before the church met together "to break bread." They took the supper at the time "when" they gathered for this purpose, suggesting they did not meet at other times.
3. The Lord's (κυριακον) Supper (1 Cor. 11:20) was eaten on the Lord's (κυριακη) day (Rev. 1:10). This word is used only twice in Scripture. Early church history confirms that the Lord's day, the day of the Supper, was the first day of the week. We have no record of the Lord's Supper being observed on any other day.

The Elements to Be Used

1. The bread of the Lord's Supper was

unleavened bread, since the Lord initiated the Lord's supper at the Passover feast (Matt. 26:17-26). The only bread eaten at the Passover was unleavened (Deut. 16:1-8).

2. The fruit of the vine (Matt. 26:29) was grape juice, which probably was fermented in the early centuries.

Giving To God and Meeting the Needs Of The Church

Why We Should Give

1. Because God has given to us all that we possess (James 1:17).
2. Because God owns everything.
 - the heavens and the earth (Gen. 14:19,20; Deut. 10:14; Psa. 24:1; 89:11)
 - the land we live on (Lev. 25:23)
 - every beast (Psalm 50:10-12)
 - every soul belongs to Him (Ezek. 18:4; Luke 12:15-21)
 - we have been bought by the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19,20)
3. Because by giving we express our love to God (Luke 16:13-15; 2 Cor. 8:1-24)
4. Because by giving we find blessing (Acts 20:35; Mal. 3:10; Luke 6:38; 18:28-30; Phil. 4:17-19)
5. Because by giving we share with others in the work of evangelism (Phil. 4:10-20; 3 John 5-8)
6. Because, by failing to give we rob God (Mal. 3:8,9)

How We Should Give

1. Regularly (1 Cor. 16:1,2) "every first day of the week"
2. Systematically (1 Cor. 16:1,2) "lay by in store"
3. Individually (1 Cor. 16:1,2) "each one of you"
4. Bountifully (2 Cor. 9:6-8) "he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully"
5. Purposefully (2 Cor. 9:7) "as he has purposed in his heart"
6. Cheerfully (2 Cor. 9:7) "God loves a cheerful giver"
7. Readily (2 Cor. 8:12) "For if the readiness is present, it is acceptable according to what a man has, not according to what he does not have."

8. Accordingly (1 Cor. 16:1,2) "as he may prosper"

While tithing (giving one tenth of one's income) was commanded in the Old Testament (Lev. 27:30-33; Deut. 12:6,7,17,19; 14:22-29; 26:12-15), the practice is not taught in the New Testament. God asks us to give as we have been prospered and as we have purposed in our hearts (1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 9:7).

Does The Bible Authorize Christian Worship with Musical Instruments?

The Scriptures of Christian worship in Song:

- Matt. 26:30; 14:26 after the Supper instituted
- Acts 16:25 Paul and Silas in prison
- Rom. 15:9 confess to Thee, sing to Thy name
- 1 Cor. 14:15 sing with spirit and understanding
- 1 Cor. 14:26 individuals had psalms to share
- Eph. 5:18,19 speaking, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord
- Col. 3:16 teaching and admonishing with songs
- Heb. 2:12 proclaim, sing
- James 5:13 Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises.
- Heb. 13:15 sacrifice of praise = fruit of lips

We are living in a time in which the concepts of "worship" and "entertainment" have been blended. Our religious world has instituted the "gospel music" business; religious "stars" entertain. In some cases worship becomes a performance, so some churches get the best singers and the best instrumentalists. One must wonder where God is in all this. He is to be the focus of our worship and not us. The purpose of worship is to please God (John 8:28,29). We have sometimes left the true notion of worship. Worship is the expression of an individual's devotion. It comes from the inside. Through time this has changed to the idea of performing and attempting to make an impression on the individual by stimulating his emotions. Too often men have cheapened the music of the church by making it entertainment. We sometimes feel as if we have been cheated by having no performance

and miss the excitement of an orchestra, while not realizing the beauty of a spiritual feast in our own hearts filled with praise.

Three Basic Arguments for the Instrument

A. *The use of Psallo (ψαλλω) in Eph. 5:19.*

Over time *psallo* has gradually changed in meaning. It first meant "to touch, twang, strike strings." Next it meant "to touch or play strings of harp." Later it meant, "to sing with the harp." At last it meant, "to sing praises." (without any thought of any instrument of music). The only time in the LXX that *psallo* meant play was when the instrument was specified in the context; otherwise it meant to sing (LXX 150 B.C.). In the New Testament *psallo* is used four times. It meant

- "sing" Rom. 15:9; 1 Cor. 14:15; James 5:13
- "make melody or make music" in Eph. 5:19. The maker of the music or melody is to be the heart (no instrument even considered here)

Everett Ferguson said of *psallo*, "If the precise meaning of certain verses may be in doubt, what is clear is that an instrument did not inhere in the word *psallo* in the Septuagint. *Psallo* could translate a word meaning 'play' (*nagan*), or a general word (*zamar*). The meaning which would cover all occurrences is 'make melody.' This could include making melody on an instrument, but in the preponderance of occurrences it clearly refers to making melody with the voice."¹ F. F. Bruce said of *psallo* in Eph. 5:19, "Nor should the etymological force of the terms be pressed, as though *psalmos* inevitably meant a song sung to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument...while such plucking of the strings is the original sense of *psallo*...it is used in the NT with the meaning 'to sing psalms.'"² In confirmation of this view, the Greek Orthodox Church (who knows Greek better than anyone) has never used instruments of music in worship.

¹ Everett Ferguson, *A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1972), 6-7.

² F.F. Bruce, *NICNT on Ephesians and Colossians*, 284.

B. *The use of instruments in the Old Testament.*

Psalm 150 and 2 Chron. 29:25-27 show that the use of instruments in Jewish worship is a command from God. However, Christians are not obligated to the Old Covenant that God made with the Jews. We are under a new covenant ratified by the blood of Christ and taught in the New Testament. For this reason, we don't offer incense, dance, or make animal sacrifices. The New Testament is a better covenant than the old and is spiritual (Heb. 8:6-13; 10:1-10). The Old Testament had a temple building; in the New Testament we Christians are the temple of God. Our laws are written on our hearts not on tablets of stone. Our worship is not an outward and showy but inward and spiritual (John 4:21-23).

C. *There are harps in heaven (Rev. 5:8; 15:2)*

Each of these passages refers to a vision John had of the throne of God, not Christian worship. Each reflects Old Testament literature where the worship of the temple is considered ideal. But Christians do not worship in the Jerusalem temple; instead they are the temple of God. Incense is burned in heaven as well; are we to burn incense? Saints in heaven wear crowns and cast them toward God? Are we to do the same? Our task is not to imitate what is done in heaven but to be obedient to Jesus and His teachings for us. If Christians should play harps, why didn't the church do it in the New Testament? Why didn't they understand they were to imitate what is done in heaven? Heaven is heaven and earth is earth.

D. *The use of instruments is an aid to singing.*

Some say, "Instrumental Music in worship is justified in Christian worship as an aid to worship in song in the same way a song book is an aid. What is the difference in having a song book aiding in following the words of the song and a piano aiding in following the music of the song?"

Expedients or aids must first be lawful; expedients aid in doing that which is instructed. Nothing more than singing is done when a songbook is used, but a piano involves something more than singing, speaking, teaching or admonishing. Song books aid in accomplishing the purpose of singing. Pianos make a different

kind of music. Expedients must truly aid. Organs, bands often hinder the singing, which must compete to be heard. Expedients must edify. Pianos produce musical sounds that are meaningless to the mind. The songbook does not. Organs may stimulate the emotions, but they do not instruct the mind. Expedients must not divide, but the instrument has been a source of division everywhere it is used.

The Basic Arguments against the Instrument

A. *The argument from history.*

The history of the church conclusively shows that instrumental music was an innovation. For many centuries no church used instruments of music. The use of the instrument is of human origin and not of Divine instruction.

“The general introduction of instrumental music can certainly not be assigned to a date earlier than the fifth or sixth centuries; yea, even Gregory the Great, who towards the end of the sixth century added greatly to the existing Church music, absolutely prohibited the use of instruments. Several centuries later the introduction of the organ in sacred service gave place to instruments as accompaniments for Christian song, and from that time to this they have been freely used with few exceptions. The first organ is believed to have been used in Church service in the 13th century. Organs were, however, in use before this in the theatre. They were never regarded with favor in the Eastern Church, and were vehemently opposed in some of the Western churches.”³

Everett Ferguson noted: “It is quite late before there is evidence of instrumental music, first the organ, employed in the public worship of the church. Recent studies put the introduction of instrumental music even later than the dates found in reference books. It was perhaps as late as the tenth century when the organ was played as part of the service. This makes instrumental music one of the late innovations of the medieval Catholic church. When introduced in the Middle Ages, the organ was still not part of the liturgy

³ “Christian Music,” John McClintock and James Strong, *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Book House, 1876, reprint 1969), VI:759.

proper. That is, it did not initially accompany the hymn service, but was a separate item in the service. The type of chant employed left no place for instrumental accompaniment until new styles of music developed.”⁴

“Primitive Christians employed no instrumental music in their religious worship, says Lyman Coleman.⁵

“Only singing, however, and no playing of instruments, was permitted in the early Christian church.”⁶

“There can be no doubt that originally the music of the divine service was everywhere entirely of vocal nature.”⁷

“Indeed, all evidence points to the chant and music of the primitive church as practically identical with the customs and traditions of the synagogue (vocal).”⁸

James W. McKinnon, in his 1965 doctoral dissertation at Columbia University, shows that the early church music was wholly vocal, and that the opposition of the church fathers to instrumental music in worship was both monolithic and vehement.

Early Church Fathers opposed instruments of music in Christian worship.

- Justin Martyr (ca. 150 A.D.) condemned any association with musical instruments as worldly.
- Tertullian (150-222 A.D.) mentions only vocal music in worship.
- Clement of Alexandria (200 A.D.) severely denounced the use of instruments among Christians even at banquets.
- Augustine (354-430 A.D.) displays the general attitude of the early church against instruments of music for any purpose. “Let no one’s heart revert to the instruments of the theatre.”
- Gregory of Nazianus (330-390 A.D.) mentions instruments but not in any way to

⁴ Everett Ferguson, *A Cappella Music in the Public Worship of the Church* (Abilene, Tex.: Biblical Research Press, 1972), 81.

⁵ Lyman Coleman, *The Primitive Church*, 276-77.

⁶ Hugo Leichtentritt, *Music, History, and Ideas*, 34.

⁷ Earl Nauman, *The History of Music*, 177.

⁸ Eric Werner, *Interpreter’s Dictionary of the Bible*, III: 466.

- approve them. He believed their only use was the arousal of sensuousness.
- Jerome (347-420 A.D.) speaks only of vocal music and emphasizes that the heart is the source of songs.
 - Theodoret (ca. 400 A.D.) says the use of the instrument is a “childish” relic of the Old Testament and is excluded from the worship of the church.
 - Chrysostom (4th century A.D.) says of the instruments of the Old Testament allegorically look forward to the pure worship of the lips.⁹

What Various Men Have Said through the Centuries

- Thomas Aquinas (1250): “Our church does not use instruments, as harps and psalteries, to praise God withal, that she may not seem to Judaize.”
- Martin Luther: “The organ in the worship to God is an ensign of Baal.”
- John Calvin: “It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers, or revival of other shadows of the law. The Roman Catholics borrowed it from the Jews.”
- John Wesley: “I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither seen nor heard.”
- Adam Clark: “I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship to God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship Him in spirit and truth.”
- Charles Spurgeon: “I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery.”
- John Knox called the organ: “a kist (chest) of whistles.”

⁹ For detailed accounts see Everett Ferguson, *A Cappella Music*, 47-84. See also James D. Bales, *Instrumental Music and New Testament Worship*, 259-80.

- Alexander Campbell: “To the really spiritually minded, it (using instruments in worship) would be like a cowbell in a concert.”
- J.W. McGarvey: “And if any man who is a preacher believes that the apostle teaches the use of instrumental music in the church, by enjoining the singing of psalms, he is one of those smatterers in Greek who can believe anything he wishes to believe. When the wish is father to the thought, correct exegesis is like water on a duck’s back.”¹⁰

Our purpose is to restore the New Testament church, which never used and greatly opposed the use of instruments of music in worship.

B. The lack of authority, the absence of instruments in NT worship.

Jesus never taught the disciples to use them. They were long in existence but ignored in the teaching and the practice of the entire New Testament. The New Testament contains God's complete will for our time, from Pentecost till the Second Coming. Had God wished that we use it, He would have said so. Where is the Bible authority for instrumental music? Where is the instruction? Approved Example? Implication? Expedient?

Some one says, “The Bible doesn't say we can't play the organ! Therefore, it must be all right.” But neither does the Bible specifically condemn: burning incense, praying to Mary, roast lamb with communion, sprinkling for baptism, infant baptism, or a mourner's bench. How can we justify organs and reject these?

C. Playing an instrument adds a new form of worship.

The instrument is not merely an aid but was itself a means of praising God in the Old Testament but is unauthorized in the NT. (2 Chron. 5:13; 29:25) Playing lyres and psalteries were themselves forms of worship not merely aids. An expediency aids in the performance of an instruction, but an expediency does not change the instruction. An addition changes the instruction so that people do

¹⁰ John William McGarvey, *Short Essays in Biblical Criticism* (Nashville, Tenn.: Gospel Advocate, 1956), 116.

something different than the instructions required. Expedients are lawful, whereas

additions are not lawful.

The Difference between Expedients and Additions
 Expedients Help Fulfill the Instruction, but Additions Change the Instruction.

Bible Example	Expedient Lawful and Authorized	Addition Unlawful and Unauthorized
Noah's Ark Gen. 6:13-22	Tools to cut, join, and to spread pitch	Larger size, additional windows, additional woods
Tabernacle Ex. 25:9,40; 26:30 Ex. 39:32,42,43	Tools to work silver, gold, and wood in making the tabernacle and its furniture.	Making ark of covenant out of both acacia and pine wood
Lord's Supper Bread and Fruit of the Vine	Trays and Cups	Roast Lamb
Baptize, Be Baptized	Baptistery, pool, river, lake, or bathtub	Sprinkle and pouring Are different actions.
Singing Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; Heb. 13:15	Songbook, pitch pipe	Piano, Organ Different kind of music Different means of praise

D. *The Scriptures show that God condemns innovations:*

- Lev. 10:1,2 Nadab and Abihu's strange fire
- 1 Sam. 10:8; 13:8-14 Saul's offering
- 2 Chron. 26:4,16-21 Uzziah's offering

To perform any action without divine authority is sinful. Will God approve our offerings of praise if we act without authority in our singing?

E. *Instruments cannot speak, teach, admonish, give thanks, praise, proclaim, confess or make melody on your heart.*

These are the things God wants us to accomplish in our singing. Instruments of music fail to do anyone of them. This is what makes them additions; they do something different from the instruction.

Jesus taught us in Matt. 7:24-27 that Christians are to do what He says in order to obey His will and enter heaven. The burden of proof for pianos and organs must be on the one who introduces it to show where Jesus has instructed this form of worship. There has never been any evidence from the Bible, language, or history to show that instrumental music in Christian worship has won God's approval.

The Sabbath and The Lord's Day

The terms "Saturday" and "Sunday" are both of human origin and do not affect what the Bible teaches as to when Christians should worship. Both are Latin terms referring to various days named after their gods: Saturday named after Saturn, the god of agriculture and corresponding to the Greek god Cronos; and Sunday named, for the day of the Sun god. Many mistakenly regard Sunday as a Christian Sabbath and bind the laws of the Sabbath, which were binding only on the

Jews on Saturday, on Christians on Sunday, the first day of the week.

The Bible and the Sabbath:

1. "Sabbath" comes from a Hebrew term meaning "to cease or desist." The idea is not that of relaxation or refreshment but a ceasing from activity.

2. Israel was commanded to keep the Sabbath for two reasons: (a) because after the sixth day of creation, God rested from his labors or ceased from His activity (Gen. 2:3; Ex. 20:8-

11; 31:16,17; Deut. 5:15). and (b) because Israel had been delivered from slavery in Egypt (Deut. 5:15).

3. The covenant which included observance of the Sabbath was made with Israel only (Ex. 19:3-6; 20:1,2; Deut. 5:2,3). The Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel, not a sign between God and all nations (Ex. 31:12-17).

4. Observance of the Sabbath was never commanded as a part of a covenant with the fathers before the time Israel came out of Egypt (Deut. 5:1-3; Neh. 9:13,14; Ezek. 20:10-12). The Law of Moses spoke to those who were under the Law (Rom. 3:19).

5. The words of the covenant God made with Israel when they came out of the land of Egypt was the Ten Commandments, the fourth of which demands observance of the Sabbath (Ex. 31:12-17; 34:27,28; Deut. 4:13; 9:11; 1 Kings 8:9,21).

6. Because Israel did not keep the covenant, the Old Covenant was to be nullified, and a new covenant was to be made (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13; 10:9).

7. Paul expressly stated that Christians are dead to the Law, released or delivered from the Law containing the Ten Commandments (Rom. 7:4-7). Those who would be justified by the Law are severed from Christ and have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4).

8. The Law contained in ordinances, which separated Jews and Gentiles, was abolished, taken out of the way, so that Christ could make peace by joining the two into one new man (Eph. 2:11-16; cf. Col. 2:14).

9. The Christian is not to be judged for not keeping the Sabbath, which is only a type of better things to come (Col. 2:16,17). The Sabbath for Christians is yet future in a heavenly calling (Hebrews 3,4).

The New Testament and the First Day of the Week, the Lord's Day

1. Jesus Christ arose from the dead on the first day of the week (Mark 16:1,2; Luke 24:1,7,13,20-22; John 20:1,19). These verses are sometimes held to contradict Matt. 28:1, which in some versions use the phrase, "late on the Sabbath." The word "late" (ὀψε) should be translated "after" when it is used as a preposition

(as it is in Matt. 28:1). "Late" here does not mean late as opposed to early, but late as in tardy or later. Some scholars regard this word as a technical term referring to that period of time between sundown (the official end of the Sabbath) and sunrise of the first day of the week. This would remove any possible disagreement between the gospels or as to when Jesus arose from the dead.

2. Pentecost always came on the first day of the week (Lev. 23:15,16). All the events of Pentecost (after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ) happened on the first day of the week (Acts 2): (a) the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles; (b) the first preaching of the gospel in fulfillment of Isa. 2:2-4; and (c) the beginning of the church (Acts 11:15).

3. The churches assembled on the first day of the week to (break bread) observe the Lord's Supper and to give their contributions (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1,2).

4. "Breaking bread" refers to the eating of the Lord's Supper (κυριακον), which occurred on the Lord's Day. The term "κυριακον" occurs only twice in Scripture, once in reference to the Lord's Supper (κυριακον in 1 Cor. 11:20) and once in reference to the Lord's Day (κυριακη in Rev. 1:10). It is no coincidence that early Christians observed the Lord's Supper on the Lord's Day, the first day of the week, since the term is only used of these two matters.

5. The Sabbath, the seventh day of the week, should not be confused with the Lord's Day, which is the first day of the week. While early Christians worshipped on the Lord's Day, they did not observe it as a day of rest. According to the *New International Dictionary of the Christian Church*:

"No evidence for the equating of Sabbath and Sunday is found before the end of the third century, but by that time there was an increasing stress on the true, i.e., spiritual, observance of the Sabbath, and it was, at least in theory observed as a day of worship alongside Sunday. Emperor Constantine in 321 issued an edict requiring "rest on the venerable day of the sun" by the cessation of public works and the closing of the law courts, but agricultural labor was expressly excepted. From then on we find a growing stress on the necessity of Sunday rest,

but the reason given is that men should be free to attend worship, not that Sunday is the "Christian Sabbath"--a phrase not found until the twelfth century." (p. 940)

The Early Church and the Sabbath By Wayne Jackson

In 1847, Ellen G. White, founder of the Seventh Day Adventist cult, claimed she had a vision of the holy of holies in heaven. She contended that she saw the fourth commandment of the Decalogue surrounded by a halo, which indicated that the sabbath day was to be observed today. In fact, Mrs. White wrote: "In the last days the Sabbath test will be made plain. When this time comes. Anyone who does not keep the Sabbath will receive the mark of the beast and will be kept from Heaven."

It is out of this background that modern apologists for Adventism attempt to defend Sabbath observance for the Christian age. One Adventist theologian, in an article entitled "How Long Did The Early Church Keep Sabbath?", asserted that the documents of church history afford "striking evidence that the seventh-day Sabbath was widely preserved in the Christian Church for centuries" (*Liberty*, Jan./Feb., 1968). It is quite significant that the author of that article made no attempt to establish his case on the basis of New Testament evidences rather, an appeal was made to certain writings of the post-Nicene age (after 325 A. D.) for an accumulation of the coveted evidence.

Support for "Christian" Sabbath-keeping was secured from the following sources: 1. Socrates (385-445 A.D.). 2. *Sozomen* (early 5th C. A.D.). 3. Athanasius (298—373). 4. *Constitutions of the Holy Apostles* (late 4th century). 5. Augustine (354-430). 6. Council of Laodicea (365). 7. Jerome (340-420). 8. *Patrologia* (specific author unnamed). 9. Pope Gregory I (590-604).

It is certainly revealing that none of these citations is from a source earlier than the middle of the 4th century A. D., two hundred and fifty years after the death of the last apostle! And yet the author brazenly concludes. "The evidence thus shows that the Sabbath was generally observed by Christians during the first four

centuries." If the early church kept the Sabbath, one wonders why quotations in abundance were not introduced from writings nearer the apostolic age. Any student of church history knows that the patristic writings are purer the closer they are to the NT era. The truth of the matter is, those documents nearest to the NT itself (the ante-Nicene writings, before 325 A. D.) bear unmistakable testimony to the fact that the early church was not authorized to keep the Sabbath nor any other vestige of Judaism. Note the following quotations:

"Incense is a vain abomination unto me and your new moons and Sabbaths I cannot endure. He has, therefore, abolished these things."

"Wherefore, also, we keep the eighth day with joyfulness, the day, also, on which Jesus rose again from-the dead" (*Barnabas* - 120 A.D.I.

"But every Lord's day do ye gather yourselves together. and break bread, and give thanksgiving" (*Didache* - 125 A.D.). "And on the day called Sunday. all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place... But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly..." (*Justin Martyr* - 140 AD).

"We passed this holy Lord's day. in which we read your letter, from the constant reading of which we shall be able to draw admonition" (*Dionysius* - 170 A.D.). "On one day, the first day of the week, we assembled ourselves together, and on the days of the readings we abstain from sustenance" (*Bardesanes of Syria* 180 A.D.). "He, in fulfillment of the precept. keeps the Lord's day.. glorifying the Lord's resurrection in himself" (*Clement of Alexandria* - 194 A.D.).

"The old law is demonstrated as having been consummated at its specific times, so also the observance of the Sabbath is demonstrated to have been temporary." "We neither accord with the Jews in their peculiarities in regard to food, nor in their sacred days" (*Tertullian* - 200 A.D.).

"If it be objected to us on this subject that we ourselves are accustomed to observe certain days, as, for example, the Lord's Day..." (*Origen* - 225 A.D.). "The solemn festival of the resurrection of the Lord can be celebrated only on the Lords Day." "Our regard for the Lord's resurrection which took place on the Lord's Day

will lead us to celebrate it on the same principle" (*Anatolzus* - 270 A.D.).

Lest we should appear to observe any Sabbath with the Jews which Christ. . in his body abolished" (*Victorinus* - 300 A.D.). "But the Lord's day we celebrate as a day of joy, because on it he rose again, on which day we have received it for a custom not even to bow the knee" (*Peter of Alexandria* 306 A.D.). "They [the patriarchs prior to the flood] did not, therefore, regard circumcision, nor observe the Sabbath, neither do we; ... because such things as these do not belong to Christians" (*Eusebius* - 324 A.D.).

These quotations certainly refute the Adventist allegation that "the Pope changed the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday." The testimony of history is clear — *Christians were worshipping God on the first day of the week, Sunday, for centuries before there was any such creature as a "Pope."* But that aside, surely the biblical information on this theme should be given consideration. Study these points carefully:

(1) The Sabbath was not required as a holy day during the patriarchal age; it was first given as a preview testing for Israel in the wilderness (Ex.16: 4ff) and later formally incorporated into the law of Moses (Deut.5:1-5). [Nate: for an excellent discussion on whether the Sabbath was observed from the beginning of creation, see Dan Winkler's material in *Difficult Texts of the Old Testament Explained*, Winkler Publications, 1982, pp. 195—198).

(2) Just as circumcision was a "token's [sign] between God and Abraham (and his descendants) (Gen. 17: 11). so the Sabbath was a "sign" between Jehovah and Israel (Ex. 31:13~17; Ezek.20:12). How could the Sabbath function as a "sign" between the Lord and Israel if that ordinance had been given to every other nation as well?

(3) Certain restrictions connected with the Sabbath indicate that it was not designed to have application for all time and in all regions of the earth. On the Sabbath, for example, no man

could "go out of his place" (Ex. 16: 29), and no fire could be kindled on the Sabbath (Ex .35:3).

(4) It was foretold that the law of Moses (including the ten commandments) would be superseded by a "new covenant" (Jer. 31: 31ff; cf. I Kings 8:21; 8:9: Heb.8: 6ff).

(5) The NT clearly teaches that the law of Moses has been abrogated (Col.2: 14ff; Eph.2: 15); man is dead to, discharged from that law (Rom.7:4, 6) and that includes the ten commandments, for within this context the apostle says, "I had not known coveting, except *the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*" (Rom.7:7). Those who attempt to bind the Sabbath should, if consistent, argue for keeping all the Law of Moses today (Cf. Gal.5: 3), but they do not. A careful investigation of the books of Romans, Galatians, and Hebrews (cf. also 2 Corinthians 3) would eliminate this error of supposed Sabbath-keeping.

(6) Concerning the first day of the week, it may be said:

(a) Christ rose from the dead on this day (Jn.20: 1) and appeared to His disciples that day (Jn.20: 19) and also on the following Sunday (Jn.20:26).

(b) The church was established on Pentecost (Acts 2: 1], which always came on the first day of the week (Lev. 23: 16).

(c) Christians met for worship on Sunday (Acts 20: 7).

(d) The first century saints were commanded to give into the treasury of the local congregation on "the first day of every week" [Greek text] (I Cor. 16: 2).

(e) When the apostle John received the vision in preparation for the great book of Revelation, he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's day" (Rev. 1:10), which certainly was Sunday [see the patristic quotations above].

The renowned church historian. Phillip Schaff, summed up the matter in his monumental work, *History of the Christian Church*, when he wrote: "The universal and uncontradicted Sunday observance in the second century can only be explained by the fact that it had its roots in apostolic practice" (Vol. I. p. 478). And so we must kindly but firmly point out that the Seventh

Day Adventist and other Sabbaterian groups are grossly in error.

(Note: This article is reprinted from the Christian Courier, of which Wayne Jackson is editor.)

Does the Bible Authorize Women To Lead Men In The Worship of the Church?

1. The political and philosophical changes of the last century have caused us to look at the place of women in our society. These changes have affected the home, the market and workplace, and politics. Many of these changes are for the good.

2. The effects of changing roles outside the church have also influenced ideas of how we ought to view the woman's role in the church.

3. No church could function well without women. More than a few churches were begun and held together by women, whose faith and commitment are a shining example.

4. Our question for this discussion is "Does the Bible authorize women to lead men in the worship of the church?"

- Does God give different roles to men and women?
- Not: What does society think the roles of men and women ought to be in worship?
- Not: What do "church growth" experts say concerning women?
- But what do the Scriptures say? We must have Bible authority!

Some Universal Principles Regarding Males And Females

1. God created both male and female (Gen. 1:27). He created the male first and then the female (Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 11:7-9).

2. God created the male and female different (Gen. 2:18). She was created to be a helper suitable to him. She was to complement him and was by no means an afterthought. In fact, she is indispensable and there is no other creature like her. (1 Cor. 11:12,13).

3. From the time of the fall, the husband is to rule over his wife (Gen. 3:16; Eph. 5:23,24).

4. God is the head of Christ, who is the head of man, who is the head of woman (1 Cor. 11:3). The relationship between Christ and the Father is like the relationship of woman to man. To be in subjection is not the same as being less than equal (Phil. 2:5-8). Just because a woman is to be in subjection to a man does not mean she is less than his equal.

5. Christ chose men to have places of authority in the church: the twelve apostles were all men; the seven of Acts 6 were men; elders and deacons are men (1 Timothy 3:1-14; Tit. 1:5-9).

6. Women in the New Testament were given various, praiseworthy roles of teaching and ministry. (Acts 18:37; Rom. 16:2; Phil. 4:2; Tit. 2:3,4).

7. With respect to salvation, both men and women are heirs of God (Gal. 3:28; 1 Pet. 3:7).

8. People sin when they assume a role that God has not authorized. (Acts 8:18-24; Lev. 10:1,2; 1 Sam. 13:8-14.)

The Woman's Role in the Public Worship of the Church

1 Cor. 14:33-37

1. 1 Corinthians 14 is a discussion of spiritual gifts and their use in the assembly of the church. Apparently at this time, there was a lot of confusion and disruption in the assemblies. This chapter was written to regulate abuses.

2. Some were told to "keep silence" in the assembly:

- tongue speakers who had no interpreter (14:28)
- when a revelation is given to a prophet, he is to speak; but when a second prophet receives a revelation, the first is to keep silence.

sigao: "to be silent, to keep still, to say nothing, to stop speaking, to become silent."

3. Women were told to "keep silence in the churches (plural); for they are not permitted to speak, but let them subject themselves, just as the Law also says."

"And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."

4. Apparently, some women were "praying and prophesying" in the assembly at Corinth. In 1 Corinthians 11:5 Paul mentions the problem of their doing so without a veil, a sign of modesty and subjection to their husbands. To be unveiled was immodest and improper. In 1 Corinthians 14 he forbids women to speak at all. Three reasons:

- a. It was improper or "disgraceful." Jewish synagogues did not allow women to speak in their assemblies. Jewish women did not speak to men in public (John 4:9). This is cultural.
- b. This is not the practice of all the churches.
- c. But Paul then appeals to the Law. (probably Gen. 3:16, referring to men's role of leadership).

5. 1 Corinthians 14:36,37 Paul underscores these statements by insisting "the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment."

1 Timothy 2:8-15

1. Paul, by apostolic authority, wills that men (males) pray "in every place" without wrath or dissension.

a. "Men" is the specific term *aner* and not common word for men, *anthropos*, a reference to people. We further know that he is speaking of males because of the contrast with *gune*, women.

b. "In every place" is a reference to where people come together to worship and pray. Moffatt: "at any meeting of the church." Lydia and the women met at a "place" of prayer (Acts 16:13,16). In 1 Cor. 1:2, it speaks of "all who in every place call upon the name of the Lord." F.F. Bruce: "The word 'place,' in Hebrew and Greek alike, was sometimes given a special significance among Jews as a place of meeting for divine service" (Answers to Questions, p. 114).

2. Women are encouraged to dress in modest apparel--not to overdress so as to bring attention to themselves. They are to be people who dress and act as one who fears God.

3. "Let a woman quietly receive instruction." *hesuchia*: "to be quiet, to be at rest, to be in silence or quietness in general," speaking of the spirit and attitude. It is tranquility arising from

within, causing no disturbance to others. It is self-control.

4. "With entire submissiveness" means "to submit to the orders or directives of someone, to obey, to submit to." "Submissiveness" is primarily a military term which means, "to rank under," to voluntarily submit or surrender one's own rights or will. Jesus showed this spirit in Philippians 2:5-8. Submissiveness is a readiness to renounce one's own will for the sake of others, i.e., to give precedence to others." The issue is keeping a divinely willed order. Christ is not inferior to the Father because he is submissive. He voluntarily forsook his equality with God to perform the role He was to perform.

5. Paul, by apostolic authority, does not "allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet."

- a. Teach: "to be a teacher" (in this context of a "place" where Christians are meeting)
- b. Exercise authority: "to be in a position of authority, to have authority"
- c. "Over a man": This does not preclude teaching other women or teaching children (2 Timothy 1:5; Titus 2:3-5). Nor does this apply to private teaching occasions such as Priscilla and Aquilla's explaining to Apollos the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). See also Philippians 4:2,3.

6. Reasons for this instruction:

- a. The priority (time) of Adam in creation (2:13)
- b. The deception of Eve but not Adam (2:14). Adam sinned not by deception but by listening to the voice of his wife (Gen. 3:17)
- c. The role of woman in the home (2:15). Rather than seeking a role of leadership in the home or the church, the women are to devote themselves to childbearing while they continue in faith and love and sanctity with self-restraint (discretion).

Some Objections to This Teaching:

1. *These instructions are cultural and relevant only to the circumstances surrounding the first century church. Times have changed and these instructions no longer apply to our day.*

On both occasions (1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2), Paul appeals to a universal basis for his instructions, going back to the creation

account in Genesis. The emphasis is on God's ordained order of things from the beginning. These things cannot and do not change.

2. If the teachings of 1 Corinthians 11 and 14 about women being silent are to continue, why don't women wear veils today?

The practice of wearing a veil is regarded by Paul as a "custom" (1 Cor. 11:16) that was widespread in his culture and time. The custom of wearing veils does not have the same meaning today that it had at that time.

Uncovered women were regarded as immoral, shaming not only herself but also her husband. Prostitutes may have been compelled to keep their hair short or may have been used to shearing their heads. For a woman to cast aside her veil also indicated she was behaving like a man, who is not obligated to cover his head. While the principles of behaving like another gender and dressing modestly not immorally remain, the specifics of culture dictate what is immoral and what is out of gender.

Consequently, Christians would not want to dress as prostitutes do today or dress as do transvestites.

3. Doesn't 1 Cor. 11:5 show some women were praying and prophesying in the church assembly?

Apparently some women were praying and prophesying on some occasions at Corinth during the first century. Whether this occurred in assembly or in another setting is not indicated. Such things were done by the special gifts of the Spirit (one could also pray with the Spirit, 1 Cor. 14:15). Even though the Holy Spirit inspired her, she was to pray or prophesy with her veil on, as a sign of subjection. Those gifts are no longer available today. Paul does not address whether it was right for them to pray or prophesy where men are present in 1 Corinthians 11. When he does address this problem in 1 Corinthians 14, he forbids women to speak. He would not have told them not to speak if they had not been speaking. 1 Corinthians 11 is descriptive of the behavior of the women, whereas 1 Corinthians 14 is prescriptive as to women in the presence of men.

Conclusion

The focus has been on specific areas regarding the leadership in worship. What we

must also focus on is what women are permitted and should by all means be doing. There are far more areas in the work of the church for women to be involved in, and each is vitally important. Strong churches need the commitment of their women to fulfill the work God has given them to do.

The Bible

Introduction to the Bible

Psalm 19:7-11

1. In all of the history of the world, no book has been more loved and studied than the Bible--it remains the best seller of all time and yet often it is left unread.

2. The Bible is unique: 66 Books written by about 40 men over a space of 1500 years.

It was written in many different places in the known world of ancient times (not all authors were Jews). It was written in Hebrew (the Old Testament), Greek (the New Testament), and Aramaic (part of Daniel). Yet there is unity and harmony throughout.

3. The Bible is a book that men have hated, because it spoke out against sin--those who are evil hate what is good. Men have predicted that it would no longer be read because it was out of date and out of touch. Many of these men are now in their graves. Their philosophies and beliefs are forgotten, but the Bible is still the most desired book in the world! The Bible is indestructible, because God is indestructible! (Matt 24:35; 1 Pet. 1:23-25)

The Bible's Origin

1. 2 Pet. 1:20,21
2. 2 Tim. 3:16
3. 1 Cor. 2:12-13
4. 3800 times the Bible uses the phrases "Thus says the Lord," "God spoke," and "The Lord testified."
5. 2 Sam. 23:1,2 "The Spirit of the Lord spoke by me, and his word was in my tongue."
6. Jer. 1:9 "I have put my words in your mouth"
7. John 16:12,13 Jesus' promise fulfilled in the New Testament.

The Bible's Purpose

1. To reveal the heart and mind of God to man and reveal His plan to redeem man from sin
2. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 four things for which Scripture is profitable:
 - teaching or doctrine--that we might know the truth
 - reproof or rebuking--to convict or persuade others to change

- correction--standard by which we can always judge ourselves
 - instruction or training--it gives us the equipment to do the work God wants us to do, so that we are complete
3. The gospel is God's message of salvation (Rom 1:16).
 4. The gospel was designed to be believed and obeyed (1 Cor. 15:1,2)

The Bible's Completeness

1. John 16:12,13 Holy Spirit would guide them into all the truth! the whole truth, nothing left out! (John 14:26)
2. Jude 3 Jude maintains that "the faith" was once-for-all delivered to the saints

The Bible Warns Us:

1. We are to preach the Word of God (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
2. We are to believe no other gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
3. Do not add or subtract from the Word (Rev. 22:18,19).
4. Do not substitute human ideas (Mark 7:7-9).
5. His Word will one day judge us (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15).

The Bible Answers the Three Great Questions of Life:

1. The Origin of Life: where did I come from? God created you
2. The Purpose of Life: why am I here? Eccl 12:13
3. After Death, What then: where am I going? God gives us a glimpse of heaven and hell.

The Bible Contains:

1. The Mind of God--He loves and wants all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim. 2:3,4).
2. The State of Man (Rom. 3:23; 6:23)
3. The Way of Salvation (John 3:16; Acts 2:38)
4. The Happiness of Believers (John 14:1-3)
5. The Doom of Sinners (2 Thess. 1:7-9)

Digging Deeper into My Bible Psalm 119:33-40

An unknown writer said, "This Book is the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding; its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, prayerfully. It is a mine of wealth, a paradise of glory, and a river of pleasure. Follow its precepts and it will lead you to Calvary, to the empty tomb, to a resurrected life in Christ; yes, to glory itself, for eternity. *But we frequently do not know the Bible, as we should!*

Why Don't People Study Their Bibles More?

1. Too busy with other things.
2. Can't Understand It
3. Many people do not read anything much
4. Have not wanted to
5. Have not planned to

The Scriptures Came From God

1. *2 Tim. 3:16-17*
2. *2 Pet. 1:20,21*
3. *1 Cor. 2:12,13*

What the Bible can do for you

- *Gives understanding Psalm 119:130* The unfolding of Thy words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.
- *Keeps from sin Psalm 119:9-11* How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.
- *Sanctifies John 17:17* Sanctify them in the truth; Thy word is truth.

- *Born by the Word 1 Pet. 1:22-23* Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and abiding word of God.
- *Builds Up and Gives Inheritance Acts 20:32* And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

The Bible is called:

- Word of Life *Phil 2:16*
- Word of Reconciliation *2 Cor. 5:19*
- Word of Salvation *Acts 13:26*
- *Saves souls James 1:21* Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls.
- Words are spirit and are life *John 17:3*
- *The Scriptures are compared to:*
 - *a sword Eph. 6:17*
 - *Fire and a hammer Jer. 23:29* "Is not My word like fire?" declares the LORD, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?"
 - *a seed Luke 8:11*
 - *a lamp and a light Psalm 119:105* Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.

No greater moral change ever passed over a nation than passed over England during the years, which parted the middle of the reign of Elizabeth from the Long Parliament. England became a people of the book, and that book was the Bible. It was read at churches and read at home, and everywhere its words, as they fell on ears which custom had not deadened, kindled a startling enthusiasm. As a mere literary monument, the English version of the Bible remains the noblest example of the English tongue. But far greater was the effect of the Bible on the character of the people. Elizabeth might silence or tune the pulpits, but it was impossible for her to silence or tune the great preachers of justice and mercy and truth who spoke from the Book. The whole temper of the nation felt the change. A new conception of life and of man superseded the old. A new moral and religious impulse spread

through every class. (John Richard Green, *A Short History of the English People*.)

Therefore, We Should Do These Things:

Know the Bible 2 Tim. 2:15

- At a pulpit rate, it takes 71 hours to read the Bible aloud; if you break that down to 365 days, that is merely 12 minutes a day
- How long has it been since you read the Bible through?

Love the Word *Psalm 119:97* "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Be doers of the Word *James 1:22* But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves.

Keep the word *1 John 2:5* but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

Preach the word *2 Tim. 4:2-5*

Because we will be judged by the word *John 12:48* "He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings, has one who judges him; the word I spoke is what will judge him at the last day.

A former park ranger at Yellowstone National Park tells the story of a ranger leading a group of hikers to a fire lookout. The ranger was so intent on telling the hikers about the flowers and animals that he considered the messages on his two-way radio distracting, so he switched it off. Nearing the tower, the ranger was met by a nearly breathless lookout, which asked why he hadn't responded to the messages on his radio. A grizzly bear had been seen stalking the group, and the authorities were trying to warn them of the danger. Any time we turn out the messages God has sent us, we put at peril not only ourselves, but also those around us. How important it is that we never turn off God's saving communication!

The Need for an Overall View

2 Tim. 2:15

When one studies the Bible, it is necessary to study books, chapters, verses and words. He must study sentences and words to determine their meanings. However, it is necessary also to have a general view of Bible history, so that you will be able to understand how what you read fits into that history. You might know about certain people or things:

- Where does Abraham fit into the history of the Bible?
- When did the Jewish nation begin?
- When and what were the tabernacle and the temple?

When an artist paints a picture, he paints the distant things first and works closer, at last putting on the finishing touches up front. In the same way we need to look at an overall view of Bible History

Getting an Overall View

Dallas Smith produced a book, which gave a simple method of learning the fifteen periods of Bible History. His book gave:

- the names of each period
- the length of each period
- the main events of each period
- the principal character of each period

Just learning the names will go a long way in helping the student. Learning the events that begin and end the period will help put things in the proper order.

Learning the people will also help put things into perspective.

When You Read the Bible

- keep this list of periods handy
- Try to keep the passage you are reading in perspective
- Know who is speaking to whom
- Handle the word accurately

Fifteen Periods of Bible History

Names	Events	Time Span	Character
Antediluvian	from Creation to the Flood	1,656	Adam
Postdiluvian	from the Flood to the call of Abraham	427	Noah
Patriarchal	call of Abraham to Egyptian bondage	215	Abraham
Egyptian bondage	descent to Egypt to Exodus	215	Joseph
Wilderness Wanderings	from Exodus to crossing Jordan	40	Moses
Conquest of Canaan	crossing Jordan to time of Judges	51	Joshua
Judges	from Judges to the Kingdom	305	Samuel
United Kingdom	From crowning Saul to the dividing of Kingdom	120	David
Divided Kingdom	from division of Kingdom to the fall of Israel (Samaria)	253	Elijah
Kingdom of Judah	from fall of Israel to the fall of Judah	135	Josiah
Babylonian Captivity	from fall of Judah to the return to Jerusalem	50	Daniel
Restoration of the Jews	from return to Jerusalem to the end of Old Testament history	92	Ezra
Between the Testaments	from close of Old Testament to opening of New Testament	400	Judas Maccabeus
Life of Christ	from birth of Christ to Ascension	34	Jesus
The Church	from Ascension to close of New Testament history	70	Paul

The Periods Connected to Scripture

Bible Period	Scripture Involved in Each Period
Antediluvian	Genesis 1-5
Postdiluvian	Genesis 6-11
Patriarchal	Genesis 12-45; Job
Egyptian Bondage	Genesis 42 – Exodus 11
Wilderness Wanderings	Exodus 12; Leviticus; Numbers; Deuteronomy
Conquest of Canaan	Joshua 1-24
Judges of Israel	Judges 1 - 1 Samuel 8; Ruth
United Kingdom	1 Sam. 9 - 1 Kings 11; 1 Chron. 10 - 2 Chron. 9; Psalms; Proverbs; Ecclesiastes; Song of Solomon
Divided Kingdom	1 Kings 12 - 2 Kings 20; 2 Chron. 10-32; Joel; Isaiah; Micah; Amos; Hosea; Jonah; Obadiah
Kingdom of Judah	2 Kings 21-25; 2 Chron. 33-36; Jeremiah; Nahum;
Babylonian Captivity	2 Kings 25:8-21; Daniel 1-8; Ezekiel; Lamentations;

Restoration of the Jews	Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, Zechariah, Esther, Daniel 9-12; Zephaniah; Malachi
Between the Testaments	No Scripture. History comes from Maccabees, Josephus, other sources.
Life of Christ	Matthew, Mark Luke, and John
The Church	Acts to Revelation

General Outline of the Bible

Old Testament

Pentateuch (Five Books of Moses)

1. Before Moses (Genesis)
 - From Creation to the Flood
 - From the Flood to Abraham
 - Abraham, father of the nation of Israel
 - Isaac
 - Jacob (Israel), the father of the twelve tribes
 - Joseph
2. Israel under Egyptian bondage
 - Call of Moses
 - The Exodus
3. Period of Wilderness Wandering (Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy)
 - At Sinai, the Commandments
 - From Sinai to Moab, Death of Moses

Historical Books

1. Israel under Joshua and the Judges
 - Taking possession of the promised land
 - The oppression of Israel's enemies and God's deliverance through judges.
2. Monarchy (1 Samuel 9-1 Kings 11)
 - Saul
 - David
 - Solomon
3. The Divided Kingdom (1 Kings 12-2 Kings 15)
 - Kingdom of Judah lasts from Rehoboam to Zedekiah, a continuous dynasty. The fall of the kingdom into Babylonian captivity in 607 B.C. The captivity lasted 70 years.
 - Kingdom of Israel lasts from Jeroboam to Hoshea. There were nine dynasties. Israel fell to Assyria and was carried away in 722 B.C.
4. After the Exile (Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther)

- Fall of Babylon and restoration of Israel under Cyrus in 537 B.C.
- Temple and Jerusalem rebuilt under the labor of Zerubbabel, Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai, and Zechariah.

Hebrew Poetry

1. Job. Deals with the problem of suffering.
2. Psalms. Song and prayer book of the Bible.
3. Proverbs. Wisdom from Solomon.
4. Ecclesiastes. Deals with the purpose of life.
5. Song of Solomon. Deals with the beauty of married love.

Prophecy

Major

- Isaiah, prophet of redemption.
- Jeremiah, the weeping prophet who saw the destruction of Jerusalem.
- Ezekiel.
- Daniel, prophet of the exile.

Minor Prophets

- Prophets of Judah: Joel, Micah, Zephaniah, and Habakkuk.
- Prophets of Israel: Amos, Jonah, Hosea, Micah.
- Nahum prophesies of Nineveh.
- Obadiah prophesies of Edom.
- After the Exile: Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi.

The New Testament

The Gospels, biographical of Jesus

1. Matthew, the gospel for the Jew.

2. Mark, the gospel for the Roman.
3. Luke, the gospel for the Greek.
4. John, the gospel for all.

Acts of the Apostles, history

1. Jerusalem the center and Peter is the focus (Chapters 1-12). Beginning of the church.
2. Antioch the center and Paul the focus (Chapters 13-28) Missionary journeys.

Paul's Epistles

1. First epistles (51-52 A.D.): 1 and 2 Thessalonians.
2. Doctrinal epistles (56-57 A.D.): Romans, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and Galatians.
3. Prison epistles (62–63 A.D.) from Rome: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
4. Pastoral epistles (66-67 A.D.): 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus.

Epistle to the Hebrews (anonymous, but likely Paul)

General Epistles

1. James (perhaps 45 A.D.)
2. 1 and 2 Peter
3. 1, 2 and 3 John
4. Jude

Prophetical Book: Revelation.

Comments about the Bible

The bible is a collection of 39 books in the Old Testament and 27 books in the New Testament. About 40 different men wrote these 66 sections. The writers lived in Europe, Asia and Africa and came from quite different backgrounds, doing their writing over a period of 1600 years.

The Old Testament writings came from about 1445 to 400 B.C. by about 32 men. It is made up of 5 books of law, 12 books of history, 5 books of poetry, 5 books of major prophecy and 12 books of Minor Prophets. It is mostly written in Hebrew, but a small amount in Daniel is written in Aramaic.

The New Testament writings were done from about 45 to 98 A.D. by 8 or 9 writers. It is made up of four books on the life of Jesus Christ, one

book on the story of the first century church, 21 letters to churches and individuals, and one book of prophecy. It was written in common Greek language.

The Old Testament was written on stone, clay, wood, and leather. The New Testament was written on papyrus, parchments and paper. None of the original manuscripts are in existence today. There are 5,480 total manuscripts of the Greek New Testament. About 4,200 manuscripts date from the 9th to the 15th centuries, written in cursive style and called miniscules. There are about 360 older manuscripts in the uncial style (all capitals with no spaces or punctuation).

Three of the oldest and almost complete manuscripts in the uncial style date from 350 to 400 and are on vellum (fine grained skins). They are the Vaticanus, Sinaiticus and Alexandrinus.

The Vaticanus manuscript (abbreviated as codex B) is very rare in that it is practically complete and is all written in Greek. It is in the Vatican library at Rome and has been there since 1401. It has 759 leaves of the finest vellum. Some of the missing leaves are: Genesis 1-46; Psalms 106—136; Hebrews 9-13; 1 Timothy; 2 Timothy; Titus and Revelation. It is considered to be the most exact of the New Testaments known today. It is the oldest of the uncials, which are written in all capital Greek characters. Our New Testament Greek texts of today rely heavily on this Vaticanus codex B.

The Sinaiticus manuscript (abbreviated as codex Aleph). It gets its name from Mt. Sinai, where Constantine Tischendorf found it in 1844 at St. Catherine's monastery. The codex Aleph was given to the Russian czar in the decade of 1660. In 1933 the Soviet authorities sold it to the British for 100,000 pounds, and it has remained in the British Museum for the last 67 years. The New Testament is complete, but parts of the Old Testament had dropped off prior to the time that Tischendorf found it. The writing is in four columns per page, done in clear Greek handwriting and is written with all capital letters..

The Alexandrinus manuscript (abbreviated codex A) takes its name from Alexandria, Egypt, from where it originated in the fifth century. A high Greek Church official made a gift of it to James I of England, and later Charles I received it. It has remained in the British Museum since

1627. It is written in all uncials and contains most of the Old and New Testaments. About 40 of the leaves have dropped off. It is not considered to be as high quality as the Vaticanus and Sinaiticus manuscripts.

One of earliest known fragments of New Testament writing is on papyri found in Egypt. Scholars date p52 as early as 125 A.D. It contains a portion of John 18:31-33 on one side and John 18:37, 38 on the other. This proves that the apostle John's gospel was in circulation in Egypt in the few years following his death in 98 A.D. This papyrus was found in 1920 and is in the Rylands Library in Manchester, England.

In all there are now 115 papyri dated prior to the fourth century A.D. They have been quite valuable in helping scholars to identify the Greek text of the New Testament.

Selected portions of the four gospels, Acts, and of certain epistles were copied from manuscripts for readings in public worship services. These copies were considered to be extremely accurate because they were designed for use in the worship of God and because of their early date. These selected written Scriptures are called

lectionaries. There are over 1800 of such sections done in both uncials and cursives (miniscules).

People who did not know the Hebrew of the Old Testament or the Greek of the New Testament needed a translation into their tongue. The Christians used the Septuagint, which is a translation in Greek of the entire Hebrew Scriptures. It was known to be in existence as early as 200 B.C. The Greek New Testament was translated into:

- Syriac versions (old Syriac and Peshitta, early 2nd century)
- Latin versions (old Latin and Jerome's Latin Vulgate in the 380s)
- Coptic version (2nd century Egyptian vernacular)
- Ethiopic and gothic versions (4th century translations)
- Armenian version (5th century translation)
- Arabic and Slavic versions (9th century translations)

The demand for early versions testifies to the wide spread respect the early Christians had for the Scriptures.

Understanding the Old and New Testaments

The word we use for testament ($\delta\iota\alpha\theta\eta\kappa\eta$) is better-translated "covenant" than "testament." The word describes a legal, binding relationship between two parties. A covenant between two nations may be considered a treaty; a covenant between two businesses would be a contract; and a covenant between a husband and wife would be a marriage contract or covenant. When a ruler and his subjects were the parties to a covenant, such a covenant served as a national constitution and spelled out the responsibilities of the ruler and the ruled. It should not be surprising that God used this word "covenant" to clarify the legal relationship he established with his people.

The Mosaic Law was given in the form of a covenant that a Ruler would establish with His people. This Law spoke to those who were in the covenant and under the law of the covenant (Rom. 3:19). The Ten Commandments, written on tablets at Sinai, gave the words of the old covenant (Ex. 34:27,28; Deut. 4:13; 9:11). The Law detailed the promises and obligations of

both parties. The individual laws are details of the covenant, rules that govern the relationship. The covenant made at Horeb (Sinai) was never made with the fathers of the Israelites who were at Sinai (Deut. 5:1-5). Nor did this covenant apply to the Gentile nations who never entered into a covenant relationship with Jehovah. Specifically, the Old Testament was addressed only to the nation of Israel or the Jews (Ex. 20:1,2).

By her sin and unfaithfulness to the Lord, Israel did not continue in that covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13). God determined to make a new covenant with His people, a covenant established by the blood of Jesus Christ. This covenant was for all people, Jew and Gentile alike, and invited all who wished to come under the covenant by faith obedience to the gospel. The establishment by the blood of Christ of the second covenant made the first obsolete (Heb. 8:13; 10:8-10).

Two Extremes:

Those who say that the Old Testament is equally binding with the New.

Those who say we have no practical need for the OT.

The Truth:

The covenant law of the OT has been made obsolete, but there are many things in the Old Testament that are for our learning, so that we will know how to live for the Lord.

The Purpose and Value of the Law or Old Testament:

- Rom. 15:4 "written to teach us, so that through endurance and the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope."
- 1 Cor. 10:11 "These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfillment of the ages has come." (Cf. 10:6; Jude 5).
- Gal. 3:19 "What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come."
- Gal. 3:24 "So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law."
- 2 Tim. 3:16,17 "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work."
- Acts 3:18 "this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Christ would suffer." (See Luke 24:27,44; Acts 10:43; 1 Cor. 15:3,4).
- Heb. 10:1 "The law is only a shadow of the good things that are to come..." The priesthood, tabernacle, and the offerings find their antitypes in the NT (Hebrews 9,10).
- Heb. 12:1 "such a great cloud of witnesses" who testify to us that our faith is not in vain and that we can be victorious through faith and obedience.

Many important truths revealed in the New Testament are based upon events of the past and recorded in the Old Testament. "In the Old the New is enfolded, while in the New the Old is unfolded." How could we understand these things without knowledge of the OT:

- the glory of Solomon (Matt. 6:29)
- the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6)
- Lot's wife (Luke 17:32)
- the lifted up serpent (John 3:14)
- Esau's birthright (Heb. 12:16)
- Noah's ark (1 Pet. 3:20,21)
- praying of Elijah (James 5:17,18)
- burning bush (Acts 7:30)
- details of creation (Genesis 1,2)
- the fall (Genesis 3)

While the laws, details, of the OT have been made obsolete, that does not mean that the truths of the OT are any less true. There are many principles taught in the OT which must surely be believed such as the infinite nature of God, the creation of the universe, the accountability of man to God, the mercy of God, etc. Many of the moral laws of the Old Testament are assumed in the New. We understand many concepts such as sexual immorality based on definitions from the OT.

The Old Testament Law of God Has Been Done Away

1. The Old Testament (the Law of Moses) was addressed only to the Jews (Deut. 5:1-3; Ex. 20:1,2; cf. 14:21-31). Paul said that the Gentiles do not have the Law (Rom. 2:14) and that the Law speaks only to those that are under the Law (Rom. 3:19). Paul did not consider himself under the Law (of Moses) but under the Law of Christ (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

2. The Old Testament Law did not offer absolute salvation from sins. Only by the shedding of blood can sin be forgiven (Heb. 9:22). But the blood offered under the OT could not take away sin (Heb. 9:11,12; 10:3,4). Only the blood of Christ can forgive sin (Eph. 1:7; Heb. 7:18-25; 9:15). "Therefore let it be known to you, brethren, that through Him forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and through Him everyone who believes is freed from all things, from which you could not be freed through the Law of Moses" (Acts 13:38,39).

3. The Old Testament Law was taken out of the way to make way for faith in Christ. (Gal. 3:15-29) The Law served as a tutor to lead us to Christ; but now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. Those who want to be

under the Law are under slavery rather than free (Gal. 4:21-31). Those who bind the Law on Christians sever themselves from Christ and have fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-4); this is the perversion of the gospel Paul speaks about in Gal.1:6-9.

4. The Old Testament Law was abolished so that Gentiles may draw near to God (Eph. 2:11-18). The OT law is described as a barrier, a dividing wall of hostility that had to be destroyed so that Christ could make "one new man out of

the two, thus making peace." Through Christ both circumcised and uncircumcised have access to God. (See also Col. 2:14-16).

5. Christians die to the Law so that they may be joined to Christ (Rom. 7:1-7). Christians serve in newness of the Spirit and not in oldness of the letter.

6. Christians are servants of a new covenant (2 Corinthians 3). Paul contrasts the old covenant made at Sinai with the new covenant made with all men through the blood of Christ.

old covenant (14)	new covenant (6)
tablets of stone (7)	tablets of human hearts (3)
servants of the letter (6)	servants of Spirit (6)
letter kills	Spirit gives life (6)
ministry of death engraved in stone	ministry of the Spirit (7,8)
fading glory	more glory, abounding (8,9)
ministry of condemnation	ministry of righteousness (9)
no glory	remains in glory (9,10)
Moses veiled (13,14)	Christ removes veil (16)
readers of Moses hardened (14)	liberty in Christ (17)
veils Christianity	unveiled

Must We Have Bible Authority?

1. We are living in times in which the Bible is being challenged as the one, genuine source of religious truth.

- the challenge of belief in the inspiration and innerancy of the Bible
- the questioning of authority--all authority, including that of the Scriptures
- the challenge to the all-sufficiency of the Bible
- the challenge of living in a pluralistic society
- the challenge of a "new hermeneutic," a new way of interpreting the Scriptures to allow broad freedoms
- the renewed interest in grace and the belief that grace makes what you believe irrelevant
- the renewed interest in unity; belief that the churches of Christ are one denomination among many--the question of "who is a Christian?" has become important

- the challenge of man's methods to God's ways--the arising of church growth dominance

2. These challenges are coming not from the religious world outside churches of Christ but are now coming from our own pulpits.

- some are speaking out about what "they think" or "they believe" or what "they feel"
- these are bright, intelligent, articulate, educated men who are making these challenges
- they have forgotten that the only, genuine source of truth we have is in the Word of God

3. Our purpose is to examine what is being said and ask "Is this what the Bible teaches?"

- Acts 17:11 Bereans considered noble for studying the Bible, checking out Paul and Silas
- 1 Thess. 5:21,22 "examine everything carefully"

- 1 John 4:1 we have responsibility to test the spirits
- Rev. 2:2 Ephesians commended for testing those who claimed to be apostles and were not
- Titus 1:9 qualification of an elder is that he hold fast to the faithful word so that he can refute those who contradict the teaching (see v. 10)

What is Bible Authority?

1. Jesus has all authority Matt. 28:18
2. Jesus gave the Holy Spirit to the apostles to teach them all things and guide them into all truth John 14:26; 16:12,13
3. The Scriptures are the writings of the apostles and prophets, who were inspired by the Holy Spirit
 - 1 Cor. 14:37 commandment of the Lord
 - 1 Thess. 2:13 preached the word of God's message
 - 2 Pet. 1:20,21 speaking of his own prophecy, Peter says that He was moved by the Holy Spirit
4. The authority of the Bible is in the fact that it comes from God through the Holy Spirit--the Scriptures are not the work of men but of God!

Why the Bible must be our Authority!

1. Matt. 7:21-27 because obedience to the teaching of Jesus is what distinguishes the wise man that survives and the foolish man who fails.
 - Some who think they are right with God are not right!
 - it does matter what we believe and how we live
2. John 12:47,48 Jesus' teaching is the standard by which we will be judged on the last day--Rev. 20:11-12
3. John 8:31,32 we must abide in the teaching of Christ to be true disciples and to be set free
4. 2 Tim. 2:15 we must handle the word of truth accurately
5. 1 Tim. 4:16 to insure our salvation and the salvation of those that hear us
6. Tit. 1:9,10 elders have a responsibility to guard the flock, hold fast the word of truth, and to refute those who contradict its message

7. Gal. 1:6-9 to preach a different gospel from that which is taught is to be condemned--anathema

8. 2 John 9-11 the Christian is to abide in the teaching of Christ; to do otherwise is to lose our relationship with God; we must not support false teachers

- to "go too far" or "go beyond" is to add new teachings
- no one has the right to add new doctrines to the word of God (whether on the deity of Christ or anything else)

Our task is to hear and do God's will, not our own will; we can be sure of the New Testament; we cannot be sure of any other source of authority. When men suggest ideas, we must examine them and ask if their teaching is Scriptural--this is noble (Acts 17:11).

<h2>Can We All Understand the Bible Alike?</h2>

There are a number of popular beliefs being taught about the Bible that we need to explore--perhaps you have heard people say some of them:

- The Bible is not meant to be understood.
- The Bible says different things to different people
- What is important is not so much what the Bible says but what the Bible says to me.
- The New Testament addressed the culture of the first century and really doesn't speak to us.
- It doesn't matter what you believe as long as you are sincere.
- You can make the Bible say anything you want it to.

One idea that seems to keep floating around is, "Take a passage of Scripture and read it to a group of people. There will be as many interpretations of that passage as there are people in that room." Is this really true?

- Was the Bible meant to be understood?
- Was the Bible intended to be understood alike?

Men Can See the Bible Alike

The Bible Was Written To Be Understood

Deut. 30:11-14 the word is not out of reach.

- 31:9-13 to be read to men, women, children every seven years, an enduring process
- It was to all Israel: smart, dumb, conservatives, liberals
- those who didn't know it were expected to learn it

Luke 1:1-4 Luke carefully investigated the life of Jesus that you might know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

2 Cor. 1:13 Paul wrote no other thing but what you can understand.

Eph. 3:3-4 Paul wrote so that "you can understand when you read."

1 John 2:21 John said Christians can know the truth and can distinguish a lie.

God Intended For Men to Understand the Bible Alike

Gal. 1:6-9 There is one gospel and no other. Eph. 4:4-5 There is one faith--system of belief. 1 Cor. 1:10 We are to be of the same mind and judgment.

The commands of obedience to Jesus Christ are universal. (Acts 17:30; 1 Tim 2:3,4). God desires all to come to a knowledge of the truth. God expects all men to come to the same understanding of Jesus Christ and to be obedient to the gospel.

- John 8:24 Jesus is the Messiah, and our salvation is dependent upon our believing the right thing about him.
- Gal. 5:1-4 Some fell from grace and were severed from Christ because they bound the Law in addition to gospel.

What kind of God says, "be of the same mind" and composes a Bible that says different things to different people? If we say that God cannot communicate clearly, what are we saying about God? A simple math lesson teaches the principles of addition; all that are in the class are expected to arrive at the same, correct answer. We assume that normally intelligent people would arrive at the same answer if they understood the principles. If someone came up with a wrong answer, we do not assume the book

is wrong, but that the person needed further teaching. So it is with the Bible.

If People Understand the Bible Differently, The Problem is With the People Not With the Bible

God wrote to us what he wanted us to know. Whatever He wrote was for our best interests. It is the truth that makes us free, but we have an obligation to abide in God's word.

Why Men Differ in Understanding the Bible

(J. D. Thomas, *Heaven's Window*, pp. 66-71.)

Laziness: Some do not study; they assume what they think the Bible should say based on poor knowledge. (2 Pet. 3:16-18; Ezek. 34:1-10; Hosea 4:6)

Wishful thinking: Some want it to say something so badly they assume it does say it and reject other views--this is especially true of doctrines surrounding salvation. (1 Cor. 6:12-20; 1 Tim. 1:3,4; Matt. 7:21-23)

Personal Prejudice: Some hold a doctrine because they have been taught it; the Pharisees held to the tradition of their fathers and put it before the Law or Jesus. (John 7:47-49; 9:28-34; Mark 7:1-13)

Unteachable because of pride: Some are unwilling to admit they are wrong and are unapproachable. (2 Pet. 2:10-20; 1 Tim. 6:3-5; Matt. 6:3)

Emotional Bias: Some hold such a love for a teacher that they not consider that their mentor could possibly be wrong. Some have "Preacheritus!" There was only one Jesus Christ. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Mark 3:1-6; 3:22-24)

Vested Interest: Some teach what they are paid to teach, whether it is right or not. Titus 1:10-11; 1 Tim. 6:3,4; 2 Tim. 4:3,4

Dishonest: Some have no integrity or regard for truth, so they handle the Bible dishonestly. (1 Tim. 4:1-5; 2 Thess. 2:8-12; 2 Pet. 2:1-3; 2 Cor. 11:13-15)

Faulty Logic: Some people do not reason correctly; they may miss the point; they may reach conclusions before they get all the facts; or they may not see the need for sound reasoning. (2

Pet. 3:16; Mark 6:14-16; Luke 6:6-11; 1 Tim. 6:20-21)

Lack of Thoroughness: Many people do not fully explore a subject before they form a doctrine in their mind. There is a difference between a truth and the whole truth. (John 7:40-44; Matt. 22:23-33)

Regard for Human Authority: Some favor a teacher, a commentary, a church council, or a creed book over plain Bible truths. (Matt. 15:1-14; Gal. 1:6-9; John 12:48)

Self-deception: People when they select their beliefs have filters to keep out things they do not wish to believe. If one tells himself a lie long and loudly enough, one will believe it. (2 Thess. 2:8-12; 2 Tim. 4:3,4)

Basic Rules of Bible Study

Correctly understanding the Scriptures means that there are certain, basic rules that must be followed. The Bible must speak for itself and should never be made to say things that were never intended by the writers. Solomon urges us to "Buy the truth and do not sell it, Get wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Prov. 23:23). The Lord expects us to "be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, handling accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15). Listed below are some basic instructions in how to understand the Bible correctly.

1. *Familiarize yourself with the sixty-six books of the Bible.* The Bible is actually a library of books. Note that there is an Old Testament and a New Testament, which are written to different audiences. The OT addressed the nation of Israel or the Jews, while the NT is addressed to Christians, both Jews and Gentiles. The books of the Bible are written in different styles of literature: history, narrative, poetry, wisdom, prophetic, exhortation, and apocalyptic. The Bible was written over a period of 1600 years by forty different authors who lived in a variety of places. Each book has its own historical and cultural setting.

2. *Select good Bible study helps.* It will help you greatly to acquire a Bible dictionary, a Bible atlas, and a concordance. These tools will help you define people, places and things that may be

unfamiliar to you. The concordance will give you the passages, which have the key terms you are studying.

3. *Read each individual passage in its context.* Each passage of each book has a context in which it is to be read and understood. Many passages are misunderstood because the reader has never taken time to investigate the context of the Scripture he is reading. Some questions he must ask of the passage:

- Who is writing the passage?
- To whom is the author writing? Not everything in the Bible is written to every person. The OT was written to Jews, and the NT was written to Christians.
- When was the passage written?
- What was the author's intent and purpose in writing? The direct or literal sense of a sentence is the meaning of the author, when no other is indicated; not any figurative, allegorical, or mystical meaning.
- What circumstance may have prompted the writer to give rise to this lesson?
- What kind of literature is he using to make his message known?
- What are the historical and cultural circumstances that bear on this passage?
- What would this message mean to its original recipients?

To interpret a passage and not regard its context is to misinterpret it; to interpret it contrary to its context is to teach falsehood for truth. The meaning of a word or phrase in a later book of Scripture is not to be transferred to an earlier book, unless required by the context. There are four circles of context:

The Historical-Cultural Circle of Context. Many concepts are not properly understood when one does not think about the customs of the people and the historical circumstances of the time. Further, since the OT was written originally in Hebrew and Aramaic and the NT was written in Greek, the sense of a sentence, and the relation of one sentence to another, must be determined according to the grammar of the language in which it is written.

The Biblical Circle of Context. Because the whole Bible is the product of inspiration, no two passages of Scripture conflict or contradict one

another. No two passages should be thought to teach contrary doctrines. Often the problem is that the reader has not studied enough to see how the passages harmonize with each other. The meaning of NT words and phrases are often influenced by the OT and should be determined in harmony with OT usage; not by Greek against Hebrew usage.

The Specific Author and Specific Book Circle of Context. Words and phrases sometimes take on a particular meaning whenever they are used often in the same book or by the same author. This particular meaning may not be normally understood if found used in another book or by another author.

The Immediate Context. The most important context for understanding any verse of Scripture is the verses before and after it. The final determinate of the meaning of any word is the way that it is used in its immediate context.

4. *Learn to draw out the meaning of a passage; do not read into the passage anything that was not originally there.* There is a difference between exegesis and eisegesis. Exegesis is the drawing out of the meaning of the passage. Eisegesis is the reading into the passage things that were never there. Those who study the Bible must be careful not to read into it their own personal prejudices or concepts that they think ought to be in the Bible. One must read God's Word with an open mind to learn what He has said and to understand the Bible for what it says for itself. The Bible is always its own best interpreter.

Let the Bible explain itself. A difficult prophecy in Joel 2 finds its fulfillment in Acts 2. On the day of Pentecost, Peter said, "This is that which was spoken of by the prophet Joel" (Acts 2:16). In Eph. 4:4 Paul says that there is "one body"; this body is defined as the church (Eph. 1:22,23). In Rev. 1:20 John explains that the seven stars are angels or messengers and the seven golden lampstands are the seven churches. There is no further need of wondering. The Bible is indeed its own best interpreter. A plain, clear passage should always be used to make the dark and abstruse passages clear. A difficult passage never denies or contradicts the plain teaching of the Scripture.

The Scriptures admonish us not to add or take away from what is revealed (Deut. 4:2; 12:32; Prov. 30:6; John 8:31,32; 2 John 9; Rev. 22:18,19). We must learn to stay within the teaching and observe the teaching carefully, completely, lovingly and accurately.

The Scriptures do contain a law of inclusion and exclusion. We must do all that God commands us to do (Matt. 28:19,20), yet we must also realize that specific commands exclude substitutes and additions. When God told Noah to build an ark of "gopher wood," this excluded all other kinds of wood. When God gives us an instruction in general terms, He allows us to use our common sense to fulfill that command in a variety of ways. For instance when God tells us to "go into all the world," He allows us to walk, run, swim, take a car, take a boat, take a plane, ride horseback, use a motorcycle, use a bicycle, or any other way that we choose. The good Bible student knows how to distinguish between general instructions and specific instructions. He accurately observes the specific.

5. *Take all that the Scriptures teach on any subject.* All the truth on any one subject is not usually in one passage. There is a difference between a true statement and the whole truth of a matter. John 5:24 says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life." It is true that we are saved by faith, but that is not the whole truth. Faith apart from repentance or baptism will not save (Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38).

6. *Recognize figures of speech.* There are many figures of speech in the Bible. Many problems occur because uninformed students interpret a passage literally when they should interpret it figuratively. "It may truly be said that most of the gigantic errors have their root and source, either in figuratively explaining away passages which should be taken literally, or in taking literally what has been thrown into a peculiar form or Figure of language: thus, not only falling into error, but losing the express teaching, and missing the special emphasis which the particular Figure was designed to impart to

them." (E.W. Bullinger, *Figures of Speech*, p. xvi.).

Important Figures of Speech:

Simile: a comparison of two things in one or more aspects, usually employing the words "like" or "as." Example: "Is not my word like a fire?" declares the Lord, "and like a hammer which shatters a rock?" (Jer. 23:29; cf. Isa. 53:6; Matt. 10:16; 17:2; 23:27).

Metaphor: the comparison of two things without the use of "like" or "as." Example: "You are the salt of the earth" (Matt. 5:13; cf. Gen. 49:27; Matt. 5:14; 7:15; Jude 12,13).

Parable: a comparison, an extended simile; a short, supposed story from real life that points to a moral or spiritual truth. Examples: The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:29-37); The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32); The Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-13).

Allegory: an extended metaphor. An allegory differs from a parable, in that a parable typically keeps the story distinct from its interpretation, while an allegory intertwines the story and its meaning. Examples of allegories: the Christian armor (Eph. 6:10-20); the true vine (John 15:1-17); and Paul's allegory of Ishmael and Isaac (Galatians 4).

Fable: an illustration story made by attributing human qualities to animals, plants, and inanimate things. Unlike the parable, which uses characters that are true to life, the fable uses actors that are unreal. There are only two fables in the Bible: Jotham's fable (Judges 9:6-21) and Jehoash's fable (2 Kings 14:9). (The NT uses "fable" as a translation of the word "myth" (μυθος), which may be defined as a religious story that has no connection with reality and contrasted with an eyewitness (cf. 1 Tim. 1:4; 4:7; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14; 2 Pet. 1:6).

Personification: representing an inanimate object or abstract idea as endowed with the personal attributes of a human being. Example: "tomorrow will be anxious for itself" (Matt. 6:34; cf. Num. 16:32; Prov. 8:1; Psalm 19:1; Isa. 55:12).

Anthropomorphism: the representation or conception of God as having human attributes. Example: the Lord God "walking in the garden in the cool of the day" (Gen. 3:8; cf. Gen. 11:5; Psalm 8:3; Prov. 15:3; Isa. 59:1). God, of course,

is spirit (John 4:24) and should not be considered as made of matter (Acts 17:22-30).

Irony: a method of criticizing or judging by seeming to praise or congratulate. Example: Elijah's mockery of the prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18:27; cf. 1 Cor. 4:8-13).

Euphemism: a soft or moderate expression for a more direct and perhaps shocking one. For example, those who are dead are called "asleep" (1 Thess. 4:13 cf. Gen. 15:15; 42:38; Judg. 3:24; 2 Sam. 18:32; John 11:11). Other phrases: "spreading the skirt" for marriage (Ruth 3:9); "them that are afar off" are Gentiles (Acts 2:39). To "uncover nakedness" is to have sex with (Lev. 18:6).

Hyperbole: the intentional use of exaggeration for effect. Example: "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 19:24; cf. John 21:25; Psalm 6:6,7; Judg. 7:12).

Paradox: the assertion of two propositions as true which seem to be contradictory, but in fact are not contradictory. For example: "but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away that which he hath" (Matt. 13:12; cf. Matt. 5:5).

Metonymy: the use of one noun for another that it suggests. For example, 1 Cor. 11:27 speaks of drinking "the cup," a reference to the contents not the container. Or "they have Moses and the Prophets; let them hear them," the writings of Moses and the prophets not the men (Luke 16:29). John turned to see a voice speaking, a reference to the speaker (Rev. 1:12). God so loved the world, not the earth but the people who live in it (John 3:16).

Synecdoche: a form of expression where a part represents the whole or a whole represents a part. For example, "preach the gospel to every creature" would not include dogs and cows (Mark. 16:15). In Matt. 12:40 Jesus is to spend "three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," yet he remains buried only about 37 hours, not 72. The apparent discrepancy is solved when one recognizes that in Jewish thought, any part of a day is counted as if it were a whole day.

Riddle: a riddle is a concise saying which is intentionally formulated to tax the ingenuity of the hearer or reader when he tries to explain it.

Samson's riddle is found in Judg. 14:12-20. The number 666 in Rev. 13:18 also contains a riddle.

"Figurative language is a pervasive feature of human discourse. It lends vivacity to expression and adds depth of meaning. In order to understand any figure, one must of course first recognize the literal meaning and then, by reflecting on the relevant points of similarity, interpret the significance of the figure."

How can we know the language is figurative?

- The sense of the context will indicate it.
- When the literal meaning of a word or sentence involves impossibility.
- If the literal makes a contradiction.
- When the Scriptures are made to demand that which is wrong.
- When it is said to be figurative.
- By the use of common sense.

7. *One must come to the Word of God with the right attitude.* Open-mindedness and humility are essential to good Bible study. The point of view that a miraculous event can't possibly have happened will lead one to endless speculation. One must have a good and honest heart if one is to bring forth fruit with patience (Luke 8:15). Christians are to "buy the truth and

not sell it" (Prov. 23:23) and so hold a high view of the truth. Christians must also come with a willingness to apply what they learn to themselves.

8. *Apply the message of the Bible to your life.* We ought to bring the message of the Bible home by responding to the passage with our hearts and lives. Here are some questions we can ask the Scriptures that will help us apply them to our lives:

- Does this command something I'm not doing?
- Does this suggest a change in my behavior?
- Does this reflect a spirit or an attitude I'm not manifesting?
- Does this confirm a belief I already hold?
- Does this suggest further study or a change in my beliefs?
- Have I accepted this promise and trusted God to fulfill it?
- Have I seen this promise fulfilled in my life?
- How would it change matters if everyone obeyed this command?
- What would Jesus do in my place?

One has failed to bring home a passage if one has applied the truths of the Scripture to everyone else and neglected to apply them to oneself (Matt. 7:1-5).

Christian Living

Why I Attend All the Meetings of the Church

Hebrews 10:19-25

When the Hebrew writer penned this passage, the church was experiencing a number of problems. Some were being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin (Hebrews 3:12,13). Some were remaining immature as Christians (Hebrews 5:12). Some were falling away from Jesus (Hebrews 6:4-6). Some were living immoral lives and were bitter and were causing others to be lost (Heb. 12:14,15).

The Hebrew writer knew they needed each other's strength to remain strong in their faith: He exhorted them:

- let us draw near to God (10:22);
- let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering (10:23);
- let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good works (10:24);
- and not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together like some, but encouraging one another--and all the more as you see the day drawing near (10:25).

Reasons Why I Attend Every Service of the Church

1. *Because Jesus is there.* Matthew 18:20 "For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them." Jesus' custom was to worship in the synagogue (Luke 4:16). Jesus is with us as we commune (Matt. 26:27-29).

2. *Because in my worship I show my love and gratitude.* When I think of all that God has done for me, it is one way I can sacrifice myself for Him. One who truly loves God never asks, "Do I have to attend all the services?" He wants to.

3. *Because I need the strength of fellow Christians.* Hebrews 10:24 asks us to consider how to stimulate to love and good works! Others strong in their faith encourage and strengthen me (Acts 2:42,45). I know that missing hurts me--those who are gone miss the good they could have received. I am stronger from the worship and the word of God! A coal of fire alone on the hearth

will die; so we by ourselves grow cold and lifeless. Together we can stay fervent in our love.

4. *Because I want to set the right example for others.* In 1 Tim. 4:12 Paul says we ought to set a good example for others. It certainly would be disappointing to others if I urged them to attend and I was not here. I want to impress upon my children the necessity of church attendance, so I attend (Eph. 6:4). My influence is either for against Christ! I do not ever want to be a stumbling block to anyone (Matt. 18:6). I don't want to be somebody's excuse for not coming.

5. *Because I want to put my priorities in the right order.* Jesus demands in Matt. 6:33 that we seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. The context suggests to us that seeking the kingdom ought to come before food or clothing. Jesus would not have said so if the kingdom were not so important.

6. *Because I am preparing to go to heaven.* Our time together in church is a foretaste of what it will be like in heaven with the Lord. Here is where we learn of God and His way and how to prepare ourselves for His everlasting service (2 Thess. 1:10-12).

Lord, Help Me through Today Matt. 6:34

These are difficult days filled with anxiety, frustration, and stress. There are all kinds of problems: family, financial, health, moral, aging, grief, and the nagging pressure of time. The accumulation of so many problems can make you sick! Many become chronically tired, tied up in knots with aching muscles, feeling overwhelmed with work, or getting easily irritated and hard to get along with. Several Biblical characters understood these anxieties:

- Jacob described his 130 years of life to Pharaoh as "few and unpleasant" (Gen. 47:9).
- Moses spent a period of his life "wearing himself out" by taking on the tasks too heavy for him to bear alone (Ex. 18:18).
- Job depicted life as "short-lived and full of turmoil" (Job. 14:1)

- Jeremiah complained that his preaching only brought “reproach and derision all day long.” (20:8). He became so discouraged that he said, “Woe to me, my mother, that you have born me.” (15:10)

Jesus gave us a marvelous prescription to deal with our daily pressures in Matt. 6:34. He said, “Therefore, do not be anxious for tomorrow, for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.” For many just getting through today is a struggle of its own. We ask what we can do about today. Can God help me today to have peace and joy? What will help me to bear my burdens and trials on this day? “I’m living one day at a time. But, Lord, help me through today.”

God does indeed hear the cries of His children and help them survive. Asaph said, “God is the strength (rock) of my heart and my portion forever” (Psa. 73:26). David, with all his troubles could sing Psalm 145:

The Lord sustains all who fall,
And raises up all who are bowed down. . .
The Lord is near to all who call upon Him,
To all who call upon Him in truth.
He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him;
He will also hear their cry and will save them.
The Lord keeps all who love Him. (14, 18-20)

Three Precious, Personal Promises of God:

1. *I Will Give You Strength (Isa. 40:28-31)*

Eric Liddel, the gold medal winner and preacher in *Chariots of Fire*, found his strength to run and preach in this passage. Few people win gold medals, but many people who face terrible struggles are heroes nonetheless. They are able to endure because God is their strength. There is strength in:

- *The Word of God* (Acts 20:32) “And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”
- *Prayer* (Psalm 10:17) "O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Thine ear."

- *God’s Grace* (2 Cor. 12:7-10) God gives His strength as people need it. Peter said in 1Pet. 5:10, "And after you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you." Phil. 4:13 is Paul’s affirmation in the midst of the struggle that Christ will strengthen us.

2. *I Will Hold You in My Hand*

Holding hands is a precious thing. Whether holding hands with my wife, at the dinner table, or at the hospital with a sick friend, holding hands is a way of being close to another. Others have strengthened me when they held my hand as my heart was breaking. I love my friends; they have helped me greatly. But they cannot do some things that my God can do. Isaiah 41:10 says, "Do not fear, for I am with you; Do not anxiously look about you, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, surely I will help you, Surely I will uphold you with My righteous right hand." God is not distant to His people; He is with them always, doing what no one else can do.

Have you thought about what it means to be in God’s hands? By God’s hands He created the world, brought Israel out of Egypt, brings us food and drink, picks us up when we fall headlong. By His hands Jesus cleansed the leper, raised up Jairus’ daughter, rescued drowning Peter, and saved you from sin. It is in God’s hands that you now live! Jesus promised, “no one is able to snatch them out of my Father’s hand” (John 10:29). God will stay with you, and no one can change that! (Except you.) I love the phrase, “Lord, help me to remember that there is nothing that you and I together cannot handle.”

3. *I Will Love You Forever*

David said in Psalm 103:17,18, "But the loving kindness of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, And His righteousness to children’s children, To those who keep His covenant, And who remember His precepts to do them." God’s love for us is not fickle, not an infatuation. God’s love is a sworn love from a righteous God who swears and will not take it back. Jeremiah said in Lam. 3:22-24, "The LORDS loving kindnesses indeed never cease, For His compassions never fail. They are

new every morning; Great is Thy faithfulness. 'The LORD is my portion,' says my soul, 'Therefore I have hope in Him.'" Jeremiah wrote this in the midst of a spiritually decaying world, falling down around him. Jeremiah preached for 40 years to people who closed their ears and hardened their hearts and hated him. He found peace in the sworn, covenant love of God. We can find that peace too. Rom. 8:35-39 asks, "who will separate us from the love of God?" The answer is nothing!

God's three promises to strengthen, to hold, and to love you are solid promises; yet they are conditional upon your faithfulness to Him. They are to those who fear Him, seek Him, love Him, and hold to Him. Many people fail at their faith in times of struggle, not because God is far from them but because they have grown apart from God. They have grown dull and indifferent toward God; their spiritual lives are haphazard (prayer, attendance, study); or they are too busy living their own lives and have forgotten God.

The strength of God comes to those who are close to Him, committed. David said in Psalm 68:19, "Blessed be the Lord, who daily bears our burden, The God who is our salvation." Is God bearing your burdens? Or are you bearing them alone? The key to Matthew 6:34 is 6:33, "But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you." Are you committed to the Lord?

The Ways Satan is attacking us

1 Peter 5:6-11

We are living in a time in which evil seems to be getting worse and worse. This evil threatens our families and our souls. The values of our very society are being pulled apart. We are told that there is no such thing as right and wrong. Parents are no longer included in the decisions society makes for our children. The highest courts in our lands will not speak out against the death of innocent, unborn children.

The changes that are taking place are not merely changes in people. We must understand who is at the bottom of this: Satan!

Satan is our enemy; he is deadly, seeking someone to devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Rev. 12:9 calls him the "deceiver of the whole world." 1 John

5:18-19 says, "the whole world lies in the power of the evil one." In Matt. 4:8-10 Jesus was tempted by devil who promised him the kingdoms of the world if he would bow down and worship him. We must not lose sight of how devious, powerful and dangerous Satan is!

How Satan Is Attacking Our Souls Today:

Satan is first, foremost and always a deceiver, a liar! Satan's whole history has been one of lying. He lied in the garden to Adam and Eve, "You will surely not die!" Jesus said in John 8:44 that the devil lies and murders by lying. In 2 Cor. 11:1-4 and 13-15 Paul's describes Satan's work through false apostles and pretending. Liars would not be convincing if people did not think they were telling the truth.

Some common myths and lies:

- There is no God; we cannot know God; God does not care about man.
- The Bible is not trustworthy.
- The church is only interested in what it can get out of you; all Christians are hypocrites.
- There is no hell; everyone will be saved eventually; purgatory
- You can sin and have no price to pay; God really won't judge us
- "Just a little won't hurt."
- "No one will know"
- Man isn't responsible for his sins--he was born a sinner, sinful
- An unborn baby is not a person but mere tissue.
- Man was not created but evolved from lower forms of life.

Satan is a "slanderer" and an accuser. Satan has spent his life as an "adversary" to God and good. One way he attempts to defeat God is by slandering and accusing any good of evil intent or purpose. The story of Job has Satan accusing God of unfairly blessing Job. Satan said, "you take the hedge away, let him suffer, and he will deny you!" Satan's accusations against God and Job were wrong. In Isa. 5:20-23 we learn that Satan's business is to turn our value systems upside down. He wishes to make evil look good and good look evil. In Rev. 12:9-10 Satan is the accuser of the brethren. Satan's way is to accuse and slander every good thing.

Satan persecutes us through people who accuse us of wrongdoing (John 15:20). Jesus Himself died for "doing good," for teaching the truth, and for pointing out sin (John 3:19-20). Those who fight Jesus and the church often do Satan's work (unaware). Some accusations made against God's people:

- All Christians are hypocrites or Pharisees; rarely are Christians portrayed in a respectful way on television or movies today.
- All churches are corrupt--such things said by those who are ignorant
- Early Christians were called cannibals, atheists, incestuous, eating flesh and drinking blood, unpatriotic, the poor and outcast, and fanatics.
- Early Christians were blamed for every catastrophe.
- Today we are condemned for censorship, narrow-mindedness, prejudice, or for not wanting freedom and for opposing sin.

Satan is one who loves to cause discord among brethren! Gal. 5:13-21 speaks of the works of the flesh by which Satan works. Satan will do all he can to cause problems between brethren in the church. Some works of the flesh include "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, and envyings" All are problems of the heart, fostered by the lies and the prompting of Satan, the tempter. James 3:8-18 teaches that we must be careful about the use of our tongues lest we become servants of the evil one.

Next time you pray, "Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil (or the evil one)," think of how he works on all of us to hurt us. Thanks be to God that through Christ we can be delivered from Satan (Jas. 4:7,8).

If I Were The Devil

James 1:13-15

Peter warns us in 1 Pet. 5:8,9, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls about seeking someone to devour. This is true! C. S. Lewis wrote in his fictional novel, *The Screwtape Letters*, about a chief demon that trains a recruit in how to steal the souls of men. We should know Satan is a cunning adversary (2 Cor. 11:14) and "masquerades as an angel of light."

We are encouraged not to give place to the devil (Eph. 4:27). Fortunately God gives us a way of escape (1 Cor. 10:13) so we may escape his strategies to take away our souls. It helps knowing a little bit about how the devil works.

Someone suggested the theme, "If I were the devil, I would..."

I Would Want You To Be Godless

1. *I would want you to be a fool (Prov. 14:1)* Fools do not believe in Hell or Heaven. Solomon said, "fools despise wisdom and instruction" (Prov. 1:7). Each of us without God was once foolish (Tit. 3:3) and believed myths and lies.

2. *I would want you to ignore the Word of God.* The devil does this because he doesn't want you to believe. Rom. 10:17 says that faith comes by hearing the Word of God. Faith is essential (Heb. 11:6; John 8:24) to our salvation, and because I don't want you to know the truth (John 8:31,32), I will keep you from the Word. I know this will also keep you from the freedom that comes from knowledge of the truth. I will tell you there is no absolute truth and keep you from the freedom from sin. I want you ignorant at the judgment (John 12:48).

3. *I'd offer you counterfeit religion.* I'd tell you that one church is as good as another. I'd tell you that it doesn't matter what you believe, as long as you love Jesus. I'd offer entertainment in place of worship, glorifying the performer instead of God. Pride is the door to so much that is wrong. I'd make your talents more important than God's instructions. In the end I'd make your beliefs a worship of self.

I Would Poison Your Relationships (Eph. 4:29-32)

1. *I'd tell you that you are #1 and the most important person.*
2. *I'd promote jealousy and envy (pride); forget kindness and compassion.*
3. *I'd encourage gossip and slander*
4. *I'd plant it in your heart to "get even" and take revenge! I'd say to you to be slow to forgive anyone.*

Could it not be Satan plants in our hearts evil thoughts, malice and ill will to tempt us and to divert our attention from the real work at hand? By doing so he destroys friendships and homes. Satan put it in Judas' heart to betray Jesus (John

13:2,27). We must ask what is he putting into your heart?

I Would Want You to Be Insensitive to Sin (Eph. 4:17-19)

1. *I would change the way we look at sin by using non-threatening words to soften the effects of sin. If I can label sin as something, which will not hurt you, then I can perhaps persuade you to do evil.* I will call adultery and fornication an "affair" or an "indiscretion." Homosexuals would become "gays." Some types of murder would become "mercy killing" or euthanasia. Lies would become "white lies" or "half-truths." Stealing would become "borrowing."

I'd label doctrinal matters as "non-issues": Baptism (reason or mode wouldn't affect salvation); instrumental music; and the day of Lord's Supper. I'd glorify personal opinion and minimize matters of faith. I'd minimize sin and tell you that small sins don't hurt anyone.

2. *I would emphasize being "politically correct" so that pointing out sin became bigotry and ugliness.* I'd make an enemy of the people anyone who dared to criticize any sin. I'd call them "hate mongers with phobias. I would support those who permissively see no evil in sin as our friends. I would make fun of and put down everything Christian, moral or decent. Being Christian isn't "cool." I'd label anything I didn't like as 'Pharisaical' and 'hypocritical.' I'd concentrate on all the things "wrong" with the church

3. *I would use humor to get you to laugh at sin and make it appear to be "fun" and "harmless."* I would develop television shows that make fun of the righteous and make heroes out of sinners. Archie Bunker, Roseanne, Bart Simpson, and Beavis and Butt-head have used humor to stimulate the worst in people. (How often movies and television with their canned laughter have prompted all of us to laugh at things that are no laughing matter. Sin will not be funny before God.)

4. *I would tell you any lie to promote the advantages of sin; remember I have no conscience!* I would hide the broken lives and destroyed homes and show you the pleasures of

sin. I'd make sinful behavior "fashionable" and "acceptable." I'd tell you how good you'd feel, how free you'd be, how good you'll look in front of your friends. I'd make you think that all this fun will last forever. Of course, I'd be lying.

5. *I'd tell you that "your faults are no worse than others; and besides, nobody's perfect!"* I'd work hard to take away your desire to do any better than the average guy on the street. I'd "stretch the truth" and tell you that "everybody's doing it." I'd remind you that "times have changed" and people don't think what you're doing is so bad anymore. I'd make every excuse possible to keep you doing what I know will cost you your soul.

Make no mistake; Satan is your enemy and wants to destroy you. The best defense is to draw close to God. (James 4:7,8) Are you?

God's People Know How to Get Along Rom. 14:13-19

David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious oil upon the head, Coming down upon the beard, *Even* Aaron's beard, Coming down upon the edge of his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon, Coming down upon the mountains of Zion; for there the LORD commanded the blessing--life forever. (Psalm 133:1-3)

We must learn how to get along with others:

God's People Watch Their Tongues

Paul said, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, so that it will give grace to those who hear" (Eph. 4:29). Christians are to build each other up, encourage and uplift. They should know when to put an arm around each other and to say what needs saying. Solomon said in Prov. 25:11, "A word aptly spoken is like apples of gold in settings of silver."

The Bible says in Col. 4:6, "Let your speech always be with grace, as though seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should

respond to each person. God's love needs to shine through in our speech. We should ask ourselves how would Jesus respond? Solomon said in Prov. 21:23, "He who guards his mouth and his tongue, Guards his soul from troubles."

Learn to say, "I love you" to those around you. Most people need to hear it from time to time.

Avoid gossip, avoid slander, and avoid unwholesome speech. James 1:26: "If anyone thinks himself to be religious, and yet does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this man's religion is worthless." Matt. 12:36,37 "And I say to you, that every careless word that men shall speak, they shall render account for it in the day of judgment. For by your words you shall be justified, and by your words you shall be condemned." Psalm 34:12-14 Who is the man who desires life, And loves *length of days* that he may see good? Keep your tongue from evil, And your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; Seek peace, and pursue it.

James 3:2-10 says we must be careful how we use our tongues. A man once told hurtful tales about some others and spread them broadly. The tales were untrue as well as unkind. When the truth became known, the man was truly sorry for his misdeed. He wanted to make things right. An older man sympathized with him but wanted him to see how hard that would be. He took him to a high hill and carried a bag. In the bag were feathers, which he threw into the wind to be spread all over the valley. Stopping a rumor is like retrieving all the feathers. We must watch our words.

We should always ask ourselves these questions before we speak about another: Is it true? Is it kind? Is it necessary?

God's People Watch Their Tempers

The character of man can be tested by what it takes to make him angry. James 1:19,20 *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. Prov. 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression. Prov. 14:29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly. Prov. 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, But a harsh word stirs

up anger. Prov. 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. Prov. 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression. Matt. 5:21,22 "You have heard that the ancients were told, 'you shall not commit murder' and 'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.' "But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, 'Raca,' shall be guilty before the Supreme Court; and whoever shall say, 'You fool,' shall be guilty *enough to go* into the fiery hell. An unforgiving spirit can cost us our souls

God's People Watch Their Hearts

Prov. 4:23 says, "Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life." Psalm 15:1,2 O LORD, who may abide in Thy tent? Who may dwell on Thy holy hill? He who walks with integrity, and works righteousness, And speaks truth in his heart. Luke 6:43-45 "For there is no good tree which produces bad fruit; nor, on the other hand, a bad tree which produces good fruit. "For each tree is known by its own fruit. For men do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they pick grapes from a briar bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil *man* out of the evil *treasure* brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.

Getting along with others means I watch my attitude:

- Am I feeling resentful or hateful toward my brother?
- Am I trying to understand things from his point of view?
- Am I a fault-finder?
- Am I being nit-picky?
- Am I being selfish?

Have I forgotten what Jesus did for me?

Eph. 4:31,32 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. And be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you. Jer. 17:9 "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? 17:10 "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind,

to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve." It is easy at times for us to fool ourselves or lie to ourselves; this is why we must watch our hearts.

Two kinds of birds fly over the California deserts: the hummingbird and the vulture. All the vulture can see is rotting meat because that is all he looks for. He thrives on that diet. But the hummingbird ignores the carcasses and the smelly flesh of dead animals. Instead, he looks for the tiny blossoms of the cactus flowers. He buzzes around until he finds the colorful blooms almost hidden from view by the rocks. Each bird finds what it is looking for.

What are you looking for? Better still what are you finding?

What you are finding tells what you are really looking for. Your expectations of brothers and life will determine your outcome.

People who want to get along usually can find a way. People who don't usually will not get along, no matter how much they share in common. God's People can get along when they watch their tongues, their tempers and their hearts. When a person's heart is not right with his brother, he has a hard time being right with his God. How about you?

The Pursuit of Excellence

Matt 5:38-48

The Lord Jesus has never been satisfied with half-hearted efforts; God has always demanded our very best. In Num. 18:29,32 Moses said, "Out of all your gifts you shall present every offering due to the Lord, from all the best of them, the sacred part of them." Moses told Israel in Deut. 6:5 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." Jesus said in Matt 5:48 "You shall be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." Paul claimed in Acts 24:16, "I also do my best to maintain always a blameless conscience both before God and before men." Paul urged us in Rom 12:1, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service." Peter said in 1 Pet 2:12

"Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles, so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation."

Amazingly, this is very different from what one hears about Christianity today. Often we hear preaching of a casual Christian that demands little of us. Today we are finding Christians who are less and less committed to their faith. We have in our minds that God does not care whether we do a good or a poor job, so long as we do something. We have in our minds that God does not care what we believe, so long as we believe something. It is very difficult to tell the difference between people in the church and people who are in the world in speech or in behavior. For many Christianity is an external religion; they call themselves Christians but they don't know why they are or to a great degree what they believe. This "mushy," weak faith causes us to be unable to make much of an impact on our world today. Who today knows about the church of Christ? Who cares? It takes staunch convictions to wake us up from the stupor of mediocrity and indifference.

Our God Is A God of Excellence!

He never did anything half way or half-hearted. He created a complete world, full, and sustaining. He made the sun, moon, stars, food and water. He gave us all the necessities. He created us capable people; we are incredibly complex creatures and unusually talented and skilled.

He gave us perfect instructions in His word (2 Tim. 3:16,17).

He gave a perfect sacrifice in Jesus, one who was sinless and perfect. His was a marvelous gift (John 3:16). Jesus was not a "token effort." He was not a gift quickly "thrown together." Jesus was not a cheap gift God could do without. He was the highest price God could pay.

When Jesus faced the cross, he gave EVERYTHING! He did not complain, did not make excuses, did not hold back, and did not ask His Father to find someone else. Jesus was willing to die for us. When the world asked, Jesus responded willingly.

- let me falsely accuse and try you--I will

- let me put a crown of thorns on your head--I will
- let me scourge your back--I will
- give me your hands for nails--I will
- give me your feet to pierce--I will
- let me shame you on the cross--I will
- bear all the sins of all the people, each one--I will

Jesus never failed to give His all in obedience to the commands of His Father.

Our God is an excellent God to us. He hears every one of our prayers and cares about our every need and problem. He gives us what is best for us. He blesses us with every spiritual blessing. Paul said in Rom 8:32, "He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also with Him freely give us all things?" God never quits giving to those who belong to Him. He plans for our eternal future to give us the best of everything in Heaven.

We Must Give Our Best to the Lord!

We must pursue our Christianity as an athlete pursues a win (1 Cor 9:24-27). We can never be satisfied with a weak faith, a token commitment, feeble efforts, or a shallow love. Let us become people of quality like Jesus who said, "for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him" (John 8:29).

When the Statue of Liberty received her much needed restoration in 1986, she was examining very closely. The craftsmen and artists who did the repairs had ample opportunity to study the original workmanship. They were deeply impressed with the design of her sculptor, Frederic Bartholdi of France, and his crew who applied their skills more than one hundred years ago. Nothing had been overlooked. One example is the beautiful work that was done high atop Liberty's spiked crown and head. The superb attention to detail was carried out so thoroughly, one would have thought that everyone would have viewed this section. But the fact is, no one would see her from above. Once she was raised to her full height, 151 feet, only a few seagulls would ever notice her coiffure. Little did the French artisans even imagine a day when helicopters would hover, giving time for the human eye to observe and enjoy such exquisite beauty. Excellence characterized the design of

Liberty's head whether or not anyone would ever stop to notice or admire.

God's Answers to Man's Concerns

- *Abiding in Christ*—John 15:5; 1 John 2:28; 2 John 9
- *Afflictions*—Job 5:17; 2 Cor. 4:17; Heb. 12:11
- *Anger*—Ps. 37:8; Prov. 16:32; James 1:19
- *Answered Prayer*—1 Kin. 18:37; Ps. 91:15; Luke 11:9
- *Backsliding*—Prov. 14:14; Matt. 24:12; Heb. 10:38
- *Christ's Love*—John 13:1; Rom. 8:35;
- 1 John 3:16
- *Contentment*—Prov. 15:16; Phil. 4:11;
- Heb. 13:5
- *Courage*—Josh. 1:9; Dan. 3:16, 17; Phil. 1:28
- *Divine Comfort*—Is. 40:1; Is. 61:1,2;
- John 14:1
- *Divine Deliverance*—Dan. 6:22;
- Job 5:19,2; Tim. 4:18
- *Divine Guidance*—Ps. 25:9; Ps. 48:14;
- Is. 42:16
- *Divine Power*—Rom. 4:21; Eph. 3:20;
- Jude 24, 25
- *Doubt*—Matt. 14:3; Mark 4:40; Luke 24:25
- *Faith*—Rom. 10:17; Eph. 2:8; Gal. 5:6
- *Fear of God*—Josh. 24:14; Eccl. 12:13; 1 Pet. 2:17
- *Fear of Man*—Prov. 29:25; Is. 51:12;
- John 12:42
- *Folly*—Prov. 15:14; Prov. 18:13;
- Ps. 53:1
- *Forgiveness*—Ps. 130:4; Matt. 6:14;
- Acts 5:31
- *Gentleness*—1 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 2:24; James 3:17
- *God's Care for You*—Gen. 28:15; Ps. 121:4,2; Tim. 1:12
- *God's Grace*—Rom. 4:16; Rom. 9:16; Titus 3:5
- *God's Love for You*—John 3:16; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19; Rev. 1:5
- *Greed*—Eccl. 5:10; Matt. 27:5; 1 Tim. 6:9
- *Heaven*—John 14:2, 3; Luke 10:20; Matt. 6:20

- *Hell*—Matt. 13:41, 42; Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10, 14, 15; Rev. 21:8
- *Humility*—Micah 6:8; Luke 22:26; Rom. 12:3
- *Joy*—Neh. 8:10; Ps. 16:11; John 16:24
- *Kindness*—Rom. 12:10; I Cor. 13:4; Eph. 4:32
- *Liberty*—Is. 61:1; Rom. 8:2; 2 Cor. 3:17
- *Love to Neighbors*—Mark 12:31; Rom. 13:10; James 2:8
- *Mercy*—Prov. 11:17; Matt. 5:7; Luke 6:36
- *Obedience*—Josh. 11:15; 2 Kin. 18:6; Acts 26:19
- *Patience*—Ps. 40:1; Is. 33:2; Acts 1:4
- *Popularity*—John 12:43; Acts 24:7;
- Col. 3:22
- *Power of Prayer*—Matt. 17:21; Matt. 21:22; John 15:7
- *Praise to God*—Ps. 67:3; Heb. 13:15; 1 Pet. 2:9
- *Prayerfulness*—Luke 2:37; Luke 6:12; 1 Thess. 3:10
- *Prayerlessness*—Is. 43:22; Dan. 9:13; Zeph. 1:6
- *Pride*—Prov. 16:18; 2 Chr. 32:25; I John 2:16
- *Promises to the Righteous*—Job 36:7; Ps. 34:15; Matt. 13:43
- *Repentance*—Luke 13:2, 3; Acts 3:19; Acts 17:30
- *Salvation*—John 3:16; Rom. 10:9-13; Eph. 2:8—10
- *Satisfaction in God*—Ps. 17:15; Ps. 107:9; Is. 58:11
- *Self-denial*—Matt. 16:24; Luke 14:26, 27; Rom. 15:1
- *Sin and Confession*—Prov. 28:13; Jer. 3:13; 1 John 1:9
- *Spiritual Growth*—Eph. 4:15; I Thess. 3:12; 1 Pet. 2:2
- *Spiritual Power*—Zech. 4:6; Acts 1:8; Acts 6:8
- *Spiritual Strength*—Is. 40:31; Is. 41:10; Eph. 3:16
- *Strength in Weakness*—I Cor. 1:27; 2 Cor. 12:9; Heb. 11:33, 34
- *Suffering for Christ*—Acts 5:41; Rom. 8:17; 1 Pet. 2:20
- *Thankfulness*—Ps. 100:4; Col. 1:12; 1 Thess. 5:18
- *Unworldliness*—Rom. 12:2; 1 Cor. 7:31; 2 Tim. 2:4

- *Worldliness*—Matt. 16:26; Col. 3:2; Titus 2:12
- *Worship*—1 Chron. 16:29; Ps. 95:6; John 4:24

The Providence of God

Gen. 22:1-14

Providence:

The concept of providence may be found in the Greek word *pronoia*, which is found twice in the New Testament (Acts 24:2; Rom. 13:14). The word is used with the idea of purposive foresight. Providence is normally defined in Christian theology as the unceasing activity of the Creator whereby in overflowing bounty and goodwill (Ps. 145:9; Mt. 5:45-48), God upholds his creatures in ordered existence (Acts 17:28; Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3), guides and governs all events, circumstances and free acts of angels and men (cf. Ps. 107; Job 1:12; 2:6; Gen. 45:5-8), and directs everything to its appointed goal (Eph. 1:9-12).

Providence must be distinguished from:

- *Pantheism*, which absorbs the world into God
- *Deism*, which cuts it off from God
- *Dualism*, which divides control of it between God and another power
- *Indeterminism*, which holds that it is under no control at all
- *Determinism*, or fatalism, which regards God's control of such a kind that it destroys man's moral responsibility
- *Chance*, which denies the controlling power is rational
- *Fate*, which regards God as not being benevolent

Providence is presented in Scripture as a function of Divine Sovereignty. God is King over all, doing just as He wills (Psalms 103:19; 135:6; Dan. 4:35; cf. Eph. 1:11).

God Rules over the Natural Order

- over all natural forces (Ps. 147:8f.)
- over all wild animals (Job 38-41)
- over all happenings in the world, great and small
- thunderstorms (Job 37; Ps. 29)
- plagues (Ex. 7:3-11:10; 12:29ff.; Joel 2:25)
- death of a sparrow (Mt. 10:29)
- fall of a lot (Pr. 16:33)

- over the lives of men and animals, which are His to give and take away (Gen. 2:17; 1 Sam. 1:27; 2 Sam. 12:19; Job 1:21; Pss. 102:23; 104:29-30; 127:3; Ezek. 24:16ff.; Dan. 5:23, et. al.)
- over health and sickness (Deut. 7:15; 28:27, 60)
- over prosperity and adversity ('evil', Amos 3:6; Isa. 45:7)
- Governing over the natural order means that God is also able to work miraculous events, which supercede the natural order. Nothing is too hard for him (Gen. 18:14).
- God's providential power in the created order proclaims His wisdom, power, glory and goodness (Pss. 8:1; 19:1-6; Acts 14:17; Rom. 1:19f). The man who does not acknowledge God is without excuse (Rom. 1:20).
- God's constant fulfilling of His kindly purposes in nature are reassuring:
 1. they are a reason for praise (Psalms 104; 147)
 2. they are a guarantee that God is Lord and will fulfill His gracious promises in history (Jer. 31:35ff.; 33:19-26).

God's Rule in World History

1. Since the beginning, God has been executing His plan of redemption. This plan pivots upon Christ's death (John 3:16,17; Acts 2:22-24), burial and resurrection and culminates in His Second Coming and judgment. The goal of God's plan is the spreading of the gospel throughout the world so that His kingdom, the church, may be established in every nation (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15). The climax of history will be the overthrow of those who fight against God and His kingdom, as the book of Revelation shows (Rev. 17:14; 19).

2. God's control over individual nations is another evidence of His sovereignty. Jeremiah notes that kingdoms are planted and rooted up by the will of God (Jer. 1:10; 18:1-10; cf. Gen. 6:6). Daniel foretells the establishment of four separate worldwide kingdoms (Daniel 2). Jonah spoke of God's overthrowing Nineveh unless they repent (Jonah 3). Paul argues that governments are ministers of God that punish evildoers and provide peace (Rom. 13:1-7). The book of Revelation is a classic conflict between God's purposes and the evil kingdoms of the world.

God's kingdom is established and the kingdoms of the earth fail.

God's Rule and Personal Circumstances

God told Israel as a nation that he would prosper them while they were faithful but bring disaster on them if they sinned (Lev. 26:14ff. Deut. 28-30). The attempt to understand the fortunes of individual Israelites in the light of this principle raised problems:

- Why does God allow the wicked to prosper, while they are victimizing the just?
- Why is disaster so often the lot of the godly?
 1. The first question is answered by affirming that the wicked prosper only for the moment; God will soon visit them and take vengeance (Psalms 37; 50:16-21; 73), though for the present he may have patience in order to give them opportunity to repent (Rom. 2:4f; 2 Pet. 3:9-15; Rev. 2:21). The New Testament identifies the Day of Judgment as a day of retribution for our works (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15).
 2. The second question may be answered several ways:
 - The righteous will be vindicated when the day of visitation for the wicked comes (Ps. 37; Mal. 3:13-4:3; 2 Thess. 1:7-12).
 - b. Suffering is a valuable God-given discipline (Pr. 3:11f.; Ps. 119:67, 71; Heb. 12:4-11).
 - Suffering, when faithfully endured, even if not understood, glorifies God and leads to blessing in the end (Job 1-2, 42; Jam. 1:12; 1 Pet. 2:18-25).
 - Communion with God is the supreme good, and outward impoverishment is of no ultimate importance (Ps. 73:14, 23ff.; Hab. 3:17ff.)
 - Christians share in Christ's sufferings (Matt. 10:24f.; John 15:18ff.; 16:33; Acts 9:16; 14:22; Phil. 3:10ff.; 1 Pet. 4:12-19).

This recognition, in conjunction with the former principles, was sufficient to completely dispose of the "problem of suffering" for the first Christians.

3. Early Christians knew something of their glorious hope (1 Pet. 1:3ff.) and of the strengthening and sustaining power of Christ (2 Cor. 1:3-7; 12:7-10). As a result, they could contentedly face all situations (Phil. 4:10-13) and could rejoice in all troubles (Rom. 8:35-39; James

1:2). They were confident that their loving Father was:

- disciplining them for their best interests (Heb. 12:5-11),
- developing their Christian character (James 1:2ff.; 1 Pet. 5:10; cf. Rom. 5:2-5),
- proving the reality of their faith (1 Pet. 1:7),
- so preparing them for glory (1 Pet. 4:13).

4. God causes all things to work together for good for those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Rom. 8:28). Not all things are good, but God causes all things to work for good.

- Was Onesimus separated for his benefit? perhaps (Philemon 15)
- Perhaps difficulties in our lives are for our long-term good.

5. God supplies His people with whatever material things they need throughout their earthly lives.

- Matt. 6:25-33
- Phil. 4:19
- Acts 17:24,25; James 1:17

6. Belief in providence determines many of the basic attitudes of biblical commitment. The knowledge that God determines their circumstances teaches the faithful to wait upon Him in humility and patience for vindication and deliverance (Psalms 37; 40:13ff.; James 5:7ff.; 1 Pet. 5:6,7). The faith forbids them to grow despondent or despairing (Psalms 42,43), and brings them courage and hope when harassed (Psalms 60,62). It inspires all prayers for help, and praise for every good thing that is enjoyed.

God's Rule and Prayer

1. Faith in prayer to God means that one realizes that God acts in response to prayer in such a way that He would not have acted had men not prayed. (Matt. 7:7-11; Mark 11:22-24; Eph. 3:20,21; James 1:5-8)

2. How God answers prayers:

- Sometimes He says yes (James 5:13-18)
- Sometimes He says no (2 Cor. 12:7-10)
- Sometimes He says wait (Ex. 1; 3:7; Ps. 27:14; Lk. 11:5-8)
- Sometimes He gives us something different than what we ask (1 Kings 3:5-14; Eph. 3:20-21)

Because God is benevolent, wise and good, He will do what is best for His children. God sees everything (1 Pet. 3:12). We receive mercy and grace in time of need (Heb. 4:16).

This poem was found on the body of an anonymous soldier of the Confederacy more than a century ago: (2 Cor. 12:7-10)

*I asked God for strength, that I might achieve--
I was made weak, that I might learn humbly to obey.*

*I asked for health, that I might do greater things--
I was given infirmity, that I might do better things.*

*I asked for riches, that I might be happy--
I was given poverty, that I might be wise.*

*I asked for all things, that I might enjoy life--
I was given life, that I might enjoy all things.*

*I got nothing that I asked for--
But everything I had hoped for.*

*Despite myself, my prayers were answered.
I am, among all men, most richly blessed!*

Why God does not hear our prayers?

- Because of our sins and iniquities (Isa. 59:1,2; Prov. 1:24-28; 15:29; Ps. 68:18 "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me"; Jer. 11:11; 14:12).
- Because of doubting (James 1:5-8; Mark 11:24)
- Because one does not hear the cries of the poor (Prov. 21:13)
- Because one does not forgive others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35)
- Because of selfish, impure motives (James 4:3)
- Because husbands do not treat wives kindly (1 Pet. 3:7)
- Because we put other priorities first (Matt. 6:33).

The Temptation Trap Luke 4:1-13

Introduction:

"No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man" (1 Cor. 10:13). Some people have the odd notion that the victorious Christian never experiences temptation. But to be tempted is

to be human. Even Jesus was tempted in his humanity

Let's examine the temptation of Jesus. After his baptism in Jordan, God said, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well-pleased." The Spirit has led Jesus into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil (Mt. 4:1). These temptations were the devil's attempt to give Jesus a crown without a cross. G. Campbell Morgan: "The temptation is the story of hell's attempt to thwart heaven's purpose." Jesus faced temptation when he was "full of the Spirit"; yet he was weak in body, having fasted 40 days.

The Three Temptations:

1. *Luke 4: 3-4* "If indeed You are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." The issue is will Jesus continue to trust and obey His Father or will he turn to Satan for something to eat? Jesus' answer (Deut 8:3) "Man shall not live on bread alone." Man's needs are more than physical, more than bread. Satan's big lie is that fulfillment comes by meeting the physical needs and drives. There is also an appeal here to Jesus' pride: "if you are the Son of God. . ." Jesus didn't need to prove anything.

2. *Luke 4:5-8* "Therefore if You worship before me, it shall all be yours." The prince of this world promised, "I will give You all this domain and its glory; for it has been handed over to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." To worship the devil meant unlimited glory, power and wealth. "I'll make you Messiah by a shortcut. Instead of the cross, you can be King right now." Compromise with evil to achieve your goal. Satan's scheme: the end justifies the means. Jesus was smart enough to know that worshipping Satan also meant serving him; Satan always has a price. It stands written: "You shall worship the Lord your God, and serve Him only." You will serve what you worship. (Deut. 6:13)

3. *Luke 4:9-12* "If you are the Son of God, cast Yourself down from here." Jesus had been led to the pinnacle of the Temple (a sheer drop of 400-500 feet from the pinnacle into the Valley of Kidron). Satan: "You can trust God! Give the people some razzle-dazzle. The angels will swoop you up; you won't be injured; the people will immediately acclaim you as Messiah." You have a shortcut, if you are who you say you are! Deut. 6:16 "You shall not force a test on the Lord your God."

4. When the devil had finished with every (possible kind of) temptation, he departed from Him until an opportune time. (4:13). Satan always has a follow-up program, and he did come back later.

- Mark 8:31-33 Peter's trying to dissuade Jesus concerning the cross.
- Luke 22:40-46 Jesus at Gethsemane. Pray that you may not enter into temptation.

What We Can Learn from the Temptation of Jesus?

1. *We learn not to expect to be free from temptation.*

Jesus was not free, nor was Adam & Eve, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Samuel, David, Solomon, Jonah, Esther, Peter, Paul, Timothy, or Demas. Paul said in 2 Tim. 3:12, "And indeed, all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will be persecuted." Our temptations are those "common to man"; many others have gone through what you are going through and have overcome (No one can say, "you just don't understand.")

2. *We must distinguish between temptation and sin.* All are tempted; only those who yield to temptation sin. Jesus was tempted but did not sin (Heb. 4:14-16). We can hold fast our confession. Jesus understands temptation and sympathizes with our weaknesses. We can draw near to God with confidence not fear. We can receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need (2 Cor. 12:7-10).

3. *We learn that the way to victory is to know and use the Word of God.* Psalm 119:11 says, "I have hidden (treasured) your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:9 says, "How can the young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word." Paul said in Acts 20:32, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." Bible study is not merely to know God's will; it is protection and reassurance and instruction in life. (Rom. 15:4) David said in Psalm 119:24, "Your statutes are my delight; they are my counselors." Again David says in Psalm 119:104, "I gain understanding from your precepts; therefore I hate every wrong path." David also says in Psalm

119:114, "You are my refuge and my shield; I have put my hope in your word."

4. *We must remember that Christ prays for us.* In Luke 22:31-32 Christ prayed for Peter. The Hebrew writer said that Christ ever lives to make intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). Christ is praying for you today to overcome your trials and temptations.

Each of us can win against temptation (1 Cor. 10:13). God will either help us or give us a way of escape, so that we may endure. Let us build our strength by trusting in God and His way.

Dealing with Anger

Definitions Describing Anger:

Anger is a temporary state of arousal in response to troubling situations. By itself anger is a neutral state. It is a natural response that may be expressed constructively or destructively.

Hostility and bitterness arise when people hold their angry feelings in an unforgiving attitude of resentment. Hostile people become progressively more negative about people and events as they fail to deal with their anger constructively.

Hostility tends to persist even without a cause.

Rage is violent, uncontrolled anger.

Resentment is the suppressed feeling of anger that seeks revenge. For Christians who see rage as a sin, resentment becomes a common expression of anger. Both rage and resentment seek to destroy people and are guided by selfishness.

Indignation, on the other hand, seeks justice and usually defends some other person.

θυμος means a turbulent commotion, an explosion of temper, or rage. It is used about twenty times in the New Testament. See Luke 4:28; Rom. 2:8; cf. Matt. 2:16.

οργη is a long-lasting attitude that continues to seek revenge. It occurs forty-five times in the New Testament and may be translated resentment. See 1 Tim. 2:8; Matt. 5:22; Tit. 1:7.

αγανακτησις is translated indignation and refers to anger without inappropriate behavior. It is used only five times in the New Testament. See Mark 10:41; 2 Cor. 7:11.

Causes of Anger

1. We become angry when people show what we consider a lack of respect. This offends us, and we become angry.
2. We become angry when we think some right of ours has been violated. Anytime we feel threatened, rejected or hurt by the inconsiderate behavior and attitude of others, we may become angry.
3. We often become angry when we get what we want by our anger. A temper tantrum by a small child can accomplish what milder methods fail to achieve. People learn to react in anger in order to intimidate others and get their way.

Determining the Nature of our Anger:

1. How often do you get angry?
2. What things or events make you angry?
3. How long do you stay angry?
4. At what or whom is the anger directed?

How Anger Hurts an Individual

1. It emotionally blocks one's logic so that one does not think clearly. Anger shuts down an open mind. When you get angry, you're through solving problems. Anger will cloud your judgment, block your concentration, and distort your memory. It is difficult to reason with hostile people. Research by David Mace shows that 68% of problems are never resolved because anger shuts down the problem solving process. Further, an angry person tends to overstate his case and distort the truth. "You're always late." "You never think about anyone but yourself."

2. It lessens the respect that other people have for the angered person. Hostile people often are lonely, suspicious, irritable, bitter, guilt-ridden, and sometimes "mad at the whole world." If you give a speech when you're angry, it'll be the best speech you'll ever regret.

3. Continued inappropriate anger takes a heavy toll on body, mind and spirit. It can lead to diseases of all kinds. Dr. Carl Simonton says that one trait he found to be at the root of some kinds of cancer is a tendency to hold in resentment and anger.

4. Spiritually, wrongful anger is sinful, so it cuts one off from fellowship with God.

5. It can make you feel anxious and fearful. You may fear that you will lose control and say or do something that will be regretted later.

6. Hostility can lead to gullibility; it may block a more balanced viewpoint and cause you to see what you want or expect to see.

7. Hostility can give rise to a self-centered superiority. The more hostile you become, the more you are convinced that "I am right, and the other guy is wrong!" Hostile people may refuse to admit making mistakes or to cooperate; they may perpetually blame others. This posture may hide the miserable feelings of inferiority and may give the hostile person some presumed reasons for being angry.

8. Hatred, bitterness, and hostility enslave the person who is caught up in it.

"The man I hate may be many miles from my bedroom; but more cruel than any slave driver, he whips my thoughts into such a frenzy that my innerspring mattress becomes a rack of torture. The lowliest of serfs can sleep, but not I. I really must acknowledge the fact that I am a slave to every man on whom I pour the vials of my wrath." (S.I. McMillen, *None of These Diseases*, p. 72)

9. This addiction to hostility can replace normal, everyday joy and contentment with hatred and bitterness. Happy dinners or holidays may be ruined by the nagging outbursts of bitterness and hostility. One may walk away from an angry encounter or a humiliating experience but rehearse the situation over and over again in his mind.

Popular Suggestions for Controlling Resentments that Simply Do Not Work

According to Dr. Milton Layden, an expert on hostility, people who are caught in the hostility trap rarely change when they are told to:

- Control your temper! Bury your anger.
- Look on the bright side of things and think positively!
- Take it easy, relax, and let bygones be bygones!
- Keep busy so you don't have time to get angry!
- Put on a happy face!
- Use your sense of humor!
- Vent your emotions and clear the air!

A common way that many inappropriately deal with their anger is through passive-aggressive behavior. Passive-aggressive behavior is a

disguised form of hostility, wherein a person who would not show anger by an outburst uses more subtle means to get even with the person with whom he is angry. An angry husband may refuse to help his wife when he sees her struggling with several tasks or the kids. An angry parent may poke fun at a child, knowing that it hurts the child's feelings. Obstructionists are often passive-aggressive. Sarcastic humor, sexist slanders, and ethnic slurs are often disguised hostility.

Suggestions for Controlling Anger

1. *You must admit that you anger easily.* If other people have noticed hostility in you, don't reject their opinion too quickly. They may see something real that your mind is trying to deny.

2. *When you feel that you are becoming angry, stop and get your emotions under control before you say anything.* Counting to ten or to one hundred does help.

3. *Vent your anger positively.* For example, go out and work in the yard or the garden. Fling dirt, dig up weeds, or kill bugs. Put your angry energy to work for you. (Anger causes adrenaline to enter the bloodstream. If the extra energy is not used appropriately, it can do harm.)

4. *Change what you are doing at the moment.* Force yourself to walk away from the situation until you are under control and can do what is best in the situation rather than just venting your temper.

5. *Stand away from yourself and look at what is happening as objectively as possible.* What is triggering the upset?

6. *You must change your belief system.* Some get mad because they think it will benefit them; otherwise, they wouldn't do it.

7. *Take life one day at a time.* Stop anger one day at a time, at this present moment, and you have controlled it. "Do not let the sun go down on your wrath" (Eph. 4:26).

8. *The emotional energy of your anger must be turned toward the problem, not toward other people and not toward yourself.*

9. *It is possible to control our anger under circumstances where it is advantageous to do so.* Most people have learned to control their tempers in front of authorities.

10. *You must want to control your temper.* Notice the early warning signs of anger and cease the conversation or activity.

11. *Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger.* Settle daily the emotional issues that separate you from others. Avoid building a reservoir of resentment. Forgive all that you can, but do not let troublesome offenses continue unresolved.

12. *Ask God to enable you to rid yourself of any bitter or critical attitudes.*

13. *Resist the temptation to think unkind thoughts about people when you are alone and when you are with others who feel free to criticize or gossip.*

14. *Avoid the practice of "collecting grievances," that is, making mental lists of what is wrong with someone else so that we can dump all our complaints on the victim when we get a chance to assert our superiority.*

15. *Prevent the outpouring of your anger. Don't let your anger misfire.* Stop yourself before you pull the trigger. The Lord is slow to anger (Nah. 1:3).

Anger may become sinful and destructive By Its Ventilation and Its Internalization

1. Ventilation of Anger is "blowing up."

When one blows up, his emotional energies are aimed and fired at someone else. Ventilation may result in the loss of friendships and significant relationships. Ventilation is dangerous to all. Notice these Scriptures:

- Prov. 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger pacifies contention.
- Prov. 14:17 A quick-tempered man acts foolishly, And a man of evil devices is hated.
- Prov. 14:29 He who is slow to anger has great understanding, But he who is quick-tempered exalts folly.
- Prov. 19:11 A man's discretion makes him slow to anger, And it is his glory to overlook a transgression.
- Prov. 19:19 A man of great anger shall bear the penalty, For if you rescue him, you will only have to do it again.
- Prov. 22:24 Do not associate with a man given to anger; Or go with a hot-tempered man, Lest you learn his ways, And find a snare for yourself.

- Prov. 25:28 Like a city that is broken into and without walls is a man who has no control over his spirit.
- Prov. 29:11 A fool always loses his temper, But a wise man holds it back.
- Prov. 29:20 Do you see a man who is hasty in his words? There is more hope for a fool than for him.
- Prov. 29:22 An angry man stirs up strife, And a hot-tempered man abounds in transgression.

Internalization of Anger is "clamping up."

When one clams up, bodily tensions are released within oneself. Internalization directs emotional energies against one's own self, injuring his own body and making him irritable, sullen, tense and miserable. Internalization is like pushing poison into your system. John Powell said, "When I repress my emotions, my stomach keeps score." Internalization can also hurt one's relationship with others. People who clam up are not good company. Internalized anger is usually an indication of an unreconciled condition. Paul said in Eph. 4:26,27, "Be angry, and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, and do not give the devil an opportunity." God deals with anger quickly. Psalm 30:5 says, "For His anger is but for a moment, His favor is for a lifetime; Weeping may last for the night, But a shout of joy comes in the morning."

Confronting the Person With Whom You are Angry

1. Turning anger toward the problem, however, almost always involves confronting another in anger. Yet the way in which they are confronted makes the difference. They must be confronted to the extent that they are involved responsibly in the solution to the problem.

Matt. 5:23 "If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering. 25 "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, in order that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. 26

"Truly I say to you, you shall not come out of there, until you have paid up the last cent.

Matt. 18:15-18 The Christian has an obligation to go to his brother and reprove him in private; with the hope of winning his brother and reconciliation. The Christian is never to go to a brother to avenge a wrong.

Rom. 12:18 "If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. 20 "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

When Anger Is Right

1. Anger itself is a feeling; it is neither right nor wrong to have feelings. Anger is judged by the fruit that it produces. Anger is expressed appropriately when it is directed toward two goals:

- a. the solution to the problem
- b. the reconciliation of a friend or brother.

A person that's praised is the one who is angry for the right reasons, with the right people and also in the right way and at the right time for the right length of time.

2. Some examples when anger was expressed in righteousness.

a. Psalm 4:26 "Be angry and yet do not sin" (cf. Eph. 4:26,27).

b. God is spoken of as being angry (Psalm 2:5-9; Neh. 1:2-8). In 1 Chron. 13:10 we learn, "And the anger of the Lord burned against Uzza, so He struck him down because he put out his hand to the ark; and he died there before God."

c. Jesus became angry at the Pharisees (Mark 3:5) and in cleansing the temple (John 2:17). Jesus' zeal for God consumed Him or "ate him up."

d. 1 Sam. 11:6 Saul under influence of the Holy Spirit became angry, which impelled him to carry out his work for God.

e. The Corinthians anger led them to correct a sinful problem (2 Cor. 7:11). "For behold what earnestness this very thing, this godly sorrow, has produced in you: what vindication of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what avenging of wrong! In everything you

demonstrated yourselves to be innocent in the matter."

f. Righteous indignation is justified. It is when anger becomes destructive that it does not achieve the righteousness of God. (James 1:19).

God Grant Me the Serenity

"God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can; and the wisdom to know the difference."

1. *Some "can'ts" we face with regard to anger:*

- a. We can't change anybody but ourselves.
- b. We can't change the past and rewrite history.
- c. We can't always get our own way about things.
- d. We can't always make people do what we want them to do.

2. *Some "cans" we are able to realize with regard to anger*

- a. We can change ourselves.
- b. We can change our future.
- c. We can change how we feel when we do not get our way.
- d. We can change how we act when people will not do what we want them to do.

Dealing with Anger in Others

1. Don't argue with the hostile person.
2. Don't belittle or cast blame on a hostile person.
3. Be considerate and encouraging.
4. Build up the other person's self-respect.
5. Determine to be humble.
6. Prov. 15:1 "A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger."

Recharge Your Spiritual Battery Jer. 20:7-9

Each of us at times gets down; we feel as if our spiritual batteries have run down. We find ourselves lacking interest and desire. We begin to allow ourselves to drift away from our devotion to Christ. Our prayer lives, Bible study, worship attendance lack any excitement. We lack the discipline to do the good deeds we once did.

Paul cautions us against the problems of a sagging faith. In Gal. 6:9-10, Paul urges us not to lose heart or faint. He does not want anyone to

give up, to give out, or to be unable to produce as the Christian fruit you would like.

What Causes This Spiritual Drain of our Resources?

1. *Stress and Overload* (Moses could not do it all--Ex. 18:13-23). We all have our limits beyond which we cannot go (2 Cor. 8:12). When we overdo, we can easily get tired out.
2. *Loss of Focus* (Some focus on the cost and not the benefit; the sacrifice and not the value of our efforts--Gal. 6:9,10).
3. *Lack of Balance* (Mk. 6:31 speaks of Jesus and the disciples going to a lonely place for rest.)
4. *Major Trauma* (Jacob's mourning for Joseph--Gen. 37:33-36)
5. *Weak Devotional Life* (Lack of study, meditation, and prayer causes weakness--1 Pet. 2:2; Psalm 119:24, 28, 50, 67, 71, 92-93, 143).
6. *Lack of Affirmation or, Support* (Jer. 20:7-9) We all of us need affirmation, support from family and spiritual family, the church. People lose heart, quit, or burn out over this more than any single factor.
7. *Weight of Other People's Problems* (2 Cor. 11:28,29; Jer. 9:1,2)
8. *Physical Weakness, Illness* (Hezekiah in Isa. 38:1-3)
9. *Unresolved Conflict* (Matt. 5:23-25; Eph. 4:26,27; Heb. 12:15)
10. *Unresolved Sin* (Psa. 32:1-5)

There are many pitfalls in this life, which can trap us and make us think our situation is hopeless. Christ who is our shepherd can lift us out of that pit (thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me--Psalm 23). Jesus calls us to help and comfort: "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light" (Matt. 11:28-30).

Recharge Your Spiritual Battery

Eph. 3:14-21

God strengthens us, establishes us in love, and is able to do immeasurably more than we ask or

think He does what he does through the power that is at work within us.

What You Can Do:

1. *Reconnect to spiritual people you love.* Get close to the congregation and to the Lord. Intimacy is the freedom from anxiety in the presence of vulnerability. Every person has the need for a friend, counselor, sounding board. Solomon said, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another" (Prov. 27:17).
2. *Restore Your Physical Health.* Each of us needs to improve our health by a good diet, regular exercise, and sufficient sleep. Take time for yourself physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually.
3. *Renew Your Mindset* (Rom. 12:1,2; 1 Pet. 1:13-15). Get your head together. Refocus on what matters; avoid the peripherals.
4. *Return to your roots and remember your beginning* (Rev. 2:4,5).
5. *Repent of the sin in your life* (Rom. 8:5-13).
6. *Recapture your FAITH* (Rom. 10:17), *LOVE* (John 14:23), and *HOPE* (Rom 15:4).
7. *Realize that God is Working In and Through You* (1 Cor. 15:8; 2 Cor. 6:1,2; Phil. 3:12,13).
8. *Reassure your heart* (Prov. 4:23; Psalm 46:11). God said, "Be not afraid, for I am with you" (Josh. 1:4-6; Acts 18:9-11). "I am with you always, even to the end of the world" (Matt. 28:20).
9. *Re-establish yourself in Christ* (Eph. 6:10ff). "Be strengthened" and wear the armor of the Lord. Zech 10:12 "I shall strengthen them in the Lord, And in His name they will walk," declares the Lord.
10. *Respond to the Needs of Others* (Gal. 6:10).

God is able to strengthen us, but we must cooperate with Him and be willing to allow Him to work in our lives! Too often we close ourselves off from God, close our eyes to His goodness and willingness to bless us. Open your heart to His love, His strength, His power!

Last Things

The Immortality of the Soul

2 Tim. 1:8-12

In the earliest times Job asked, "If a man dies, will he live again?" (14:4) There are any number of answers to that question:

- Elisabeth Kubler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, observing the terminally ill, said, "I do not simply believe in life after death. I know there is life after death."
- There are those who have reported to me personally that they have had "out-of-body" experiences: a dark tunnel, bright light at the end, seeing Jesus. Ray Moody in *Life After Life*. (I have not been convinced by these "resuscitation" stories.)
- Materialists, who like the Sadducees did not believe in life after death; this life is all there is
- There are many today who espouse the idea of "reincarnation": that one continuously lives and is reborn in another life form after death

The Bible is our source of truth on the matter and on every matter

Man Has A Soul or Spirit from God

- Gen. 1:26-28 man, made in God's image, is unlike any other creature made by God
- Heb. 12:9 God is the "father of our spirits"-- God Himself is a spirit being John 4:24
- James 2:26 Death is the separation of the body and the spirit
- Matt. 10:28 Fear God who can destroy both body and soul in hell
- 1 Thess. 5:23 Salvation is of the body, soul and spirit--our spirits are more than just the breath of our bodies

The Bible teaches that Man's Spirit Survives Death

- Eccl. 12:7 "then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it." He is not here speaking of one's breath
- Luke 23:43,46 "Truly I say to you, today, you shall be with me in Paradise." Three

hours later, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, "Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit." And having said this, He breathed His last." Spirit and breath are not the same!!

- 2 Cor. 5:6-8 "absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord."
- Phil. 1:21-24 "to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better."
- Luke 16:19ff Lazarus and the rich man both had conscious existence after this life is over

The Bible says that Men Choose Their Eternal Destiny

- John 5:28-29 the coming resurrection of all
- Rom. 2:6-11 God is impartial and will judge all men fairly on the basis of how they live and whether they respond to the grace of God!
- 2 Cor. 5:10 "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad."

You today are making choices of how you will live and whether or not you will respond in obedience to the grace of Christ. The decisions you make in this life will determine whether our eternity is a paradise or a hell.

- Matt. 25:34 "Come, you who are blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
- Matt. 25:41 "Depart from Me, accursed ones, into the eternal fire which has been prepared for the devil and his angels."

Every man, woman, boy and girl will one day face God--I pray that it will be with joy and blessing.

It has truly been amazing to me what people have done to prepare for the future: life insurance, last will and testament, arrangements with a funeral home, and trusts for our children and grandchildren. A cabinetmaker built a casket for himself and displayed it on his front porch. How foolish it would be to have prepared for all these things and then to have neglected to prepare our souls for heaven!

The Soul after Death

Where Saved Souls Go	What Happens in Death	Where Lost Souls Go
<p style="text-align: center;">Paradise Gen. 2:8 Luke 23:43 2 Cor. 12:4 Rev. 2:7 Rev. 22:1,2</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Abraham's Bosom Luke 16:23</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Place of joy Place of comfort Place of good things Place of God's favor Place of rest</p> <p style="text-align: center;">With Christ Phil. 1:21-23 2 Cor. 5:1-10</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Death is the Separation of the body from the spirit James 2:26 Eccl. 12:7</p> <p style="text-align: center;">The spirit of man will be in:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>A conscious state</i> Luke 16:19-31 Rev. 6:9-11 Matt. 17:1-5 Luke 9:28-36 2. <i>A fixed state until the resurrection</i> Luke 16:19-31 Rev. 20:11-15 3. <i>A disembodied state</i> 2 Cor. 5:1-10 1 Cor. 15:50-58 1 Thess. 4:13-18 	<p style="text-align: center;">Hades Luke 16:23-31 Rev. 20:13,14</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Tarturus 2 Pet. 2:4-10</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Abyss Luke 8:31</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Place of Separation from God Matt. 25:31-46 Luke 16:19-31</p> <p style="text-align: center;">A Place of Punishment Luke 16:23-31 2 Pet. 2:4-9</p>

What Happens At Death?

"If a man dies, will he live *again*?" (Job 14:14)

The Brevity of Life:

- James 4:13-17 your life is a vapor that appears for a little while
- Job 16:22 For when a few years are past, I shall go the way of no return.
- Ps. 89:47,48 Remember what my span of life is; For what vanity Thou hast created all the sons of men! What man can live and not see death? Can he deliver his soul from the power of Sheol?
- Psalm 39:4-6 LORD, make me to know my end, And what is the extent of my days, Let me know how transient I am. Behold, Thou hast made my days *as* handbreadths, And my lifetime as nothing in Thy sight, Surely every man at his best is a mere breath. Selah. Surely every man walks about as a phantom; surely

they make an uproar for nothing; He amasses *riches*, and does not know who will gather them.

- Ps. 90:10-12 As for the days of our life, they contain seventy years, Or if due to strength, eighty years, Yet their pride is *but* labor and sorrow; For soon it is gone and we fly away. Who understands the power of Thine anger, And Thy fury, according to the fear that is due Thee? So teach us to number our days, That we may present to Thee a heart of wisdom.
- Ps. 144:4 Man is like a mere breath; His days are like a passing shadow.

God Knows the Length of Our Days

Psalm 139:16 Thine eyes have seen my unformed substance; And in Thy book they were all written, The days that were ordained *for me*, When as yet there was not one of them.

Job 14:5 "Since his days are determined, The number of his months is with Thee, And his limits Thou hast set so that he cannot pass.

Heb. 9:27 And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this *comes* judgment.

The Meaning of Death

The word "death" means "separation." It is the end of life and the loss of all vital functions. It takes place physically when the spirit (or soul) separates from the body (James 2:26; 1 Kings 17:21,22). Genesis describes the death of Rachel: "And it came about as her soul was departing (for she died), that she named him Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin. So Rachel died and was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem)" (Gen. 35:18,19). The Bible regards a live person differently than a dead body. Notice the references to Dorcas in life and in death (Acts 9:36-42). While dead, the references are not to "her" but to a "body." We cannot have physical life and death at the same time (Phil. 1:20-23). Death is the result of sin (Gen. 3:16ff.; Rom. 5:12).

Uses of the Word "Death"

1. Physical Death (Matt. 20:18; Luke 2:26)
2. Evil Living (Rom. 8:6; 1 Tim. 5:6)
3. Spiritual Death in Sin (Col. 2:13) because one is separated from God (Isa. 59:1,2; Eph. 2:1, 11-12)
4. Spiritual Death to Sin (Rom. 6:1-6) we are no longer alive to sinful living
5. Second Death, which is the lake of fire or hell (Rev. 2:11; 20:14; 21:8)

Assurance of Life after Death

There are some things about which we will never know in this life.

(Eccl. 3:11; Deut. 29:29)

Old Testament Passages Which Teach Life after Death

Deut. 32:29 "Would that they were wise, that they understood this, That they would discern their future!

Psalms 17:15 As for me, I shall behold Thy face in righteousness; I will be satisfied with Thy likeness when I awake.

Eccl. 12:7 then the dust will return to the earth as it was, and the spirit will return to God who gave it.

Isa. 26:19 Your dead will live; Their corpses will rise. You who lie in the dust, awake and shout for joy, For your dew is as the dew of the dawn, And the earth will give birth to the departed spirits.

Job 3:17-19 "There the wicked cease from raging, And there the weary are at rest. The prisoners are at ease together; they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster. The small and the great are there, and the slave is free from his master."

Job 19:26,27 "Even after my skin is destroyed, Yet from my flesh I shall see God; Whom I myself shall behold, And whom my eyes shall see and not another. My heart faints within me.

2 Sam 12:23 "But now he has died; why should I fast? Can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me."

Dan. 12:2 "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

New Testament Passages Which Teach Life after Death

1. *Jesus' Teaching in the Gospel of John*
John 4:36; 5:28,29; 6:40,44,54; 10:28; 11:25,26; 12:25; 14:19; 17:2,3
2. Other passages
Acts 13:48
Rom. 2:6-10
2 Tim. 1:10 our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

When Jesus Comes Again:

1. Jesus will find wickedness and unfaithfulness on earth (Lk. 17:26-30; 18:8).
2. The dead will hear his voice and be raised—both the righteous and the unrighteous. (John 5:25-29; 1 Thess. 4:13-17).
3. This will be the end of death (1 Cor. 15:26,55; Rev. 20:14).

4. Living Christians will be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye to have an immortal body (1 Cor. 15:51ff.)
5. Then Christians will be caught up to be with the Lord in the air and ever be with Him there (1 Thess. 4:16-17).
6. God will take vengeance in flaming fire upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel (2 Thess. 1:7-9).
7. The earth and its works will be burned up (2 Pet. 3:10-12; Matt. 24:35; Rev. 20:11.).
8. The devil's work will end, and his torment will begin (Matt. 25:41; Rev. 20:10).
9. Christ will be glorified in his saints (2 Thess. 1:10-12).
10. All people will be gathered before the great white throne and separated—the righteous from the unrighteous (Rev. 20:11-15; Matt. 25:31-46; John 5:22; 2 Tim. 4:1). The “day of salvation” will have passed (2 Cor. 6:1,2).
11. Each person will stand before the judgment seat of Christ and be judged according to his works (Rom. 14:10; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:12-15).
12. Christ will deliver up the kingdom to God (1 Cor. 15:23-24).
13. The unrighteous will be cast into the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:14,15; 21:8; 22:15).
14. The righteous, whose names are in the Lamb's book of life, whose robes are washed, will enter the city and have a right to eat of the tree of life (John 5:29; Rev. 22:14; cf. 1 Pet. 1:3-5; John 14:1-3). We will enter the place he has prepared for us.

Christians should be:

- looking for His coming and preparing ourselves (2 Pet. 3:12).
- eagerly waiting His coming for His coming (1 Cor. 1:7; 1 Thess. 1:10; James 5:7).
- continuing to endure until it happens (Matt. 25:1-13).
- doing what is necessary to prepare for His coming (Matt. 24:44; 25:14-30).
- love His appearing (2 Tim. 4:8); rejoice at His coming (1 Pet. 4:13).
- those who refuse to obey will be afraid and mourn (Heb. 10:31; Rev. 1:7; 6:15-17).

The Second Coming of Christ

Acts 1:6-11

Godet said the history of the world in its essential character is summed up in three sayings: He is coming; He has come; and He is coming again. We live between two visits of the Lord. The first is history; the second is prophecy. (Heb. 9:27,28)

The Certainty of His Coming

- John 14:1-3 “If it were not so, I would have told you”
- Acts 1:6-11 He will come in the same manner as you see Him ascending
- 1 Cor 11:26 our supper proclaims His death “until He comes”

The Manner of His Coming

- Personal “this Jesus” (Acts 1:6-11) “I will come again” (John 14:1-3)
- Audible (1 Thess. 4:16)
- Visible (Rev. 1:7; 1 John 3:2)
- In the clouds (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:16-18)
- Jesus will not set foot on the earth (2 Pet. 3:7)
- In the glory of God and the angels and fire (Matt. 16:27; 25:31; 2 Thess. 1:5-9; Tit 2:11-14; Heb. 9:27,28)

The Time of His Coming

- Matt 24:35-25:13 Jesus himself does not know the day nor hour
- 1 Thess. 5:1-5 “like a thief in the night” (no one knows when a thief comes)
- 2 Pet. 3:3-10 “like a thief in the night” (unexpected)

What He Will Do

- Sound the Trumpet: 1 Thess. 4:16; 1 Cor. 15:52
- Christ will appear in Glory with His angels: Acts 1:9-11; Rev. 1:7
- Christ will bring back with Him those who have Died: 1 Thess 4:13-17
- The Dead will be raised: John 5:28,29; 1 Cor. 15:20-23; 1 Thess. 4:13-18
- Resurrected Saints and changed, living Christians will be caught up to meet the Lord in the air: 1 Thess. 4:15-17; Matt. 24:40,41; 1 Cor. 15:52

- Judgment: 1 Tim. 4:1; Matt. 25:31-46; Rev. 20:11-15; Malt. 7:21-23.
- The Earth and Its Works to Be Burned up 2 Pet. 3:10-15; Heb. 1:10,11; Malt. 24:34, 35.
- Christ will Deliver His Kingdom to the Father: 1 Cor. 15:23-28
- Christians will receive their inheritance: 1 Cor. 15:50; 1 Pet. 1:3-5
- Those whose names are not written in the Lamb's Book of Life will be cast in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone: Rev. 20:11-15

The Judgment

By What Will We Be Judged

- By the Word of God John 12:48; Rom. 2:16; Rev. 20:12; James 2:12
- By our words Matt. 12:32-37; Jude 15
- By our thoughts Matt. 5:22,28; Eccl. 12:14; Jer. 17:10; Rev. 2:23
- By our actions Matt. 10:43; Rom. 2:5-11; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11ff.; Eccl. 12:13; Rev. 11:18,22:12; Matt. 25:31-46; Matt. 16:27; Gal. 6:7,8
- By our secrets Rom. 2:16; 1 Cor. 4:5; Mk. 4:22
- By sins of omission James 4:13-17
- By the use of talents Matt. 25:14-30; Lk. 19:12-27; John 15:5-8

All People Will Be Judged

- The dead and the living 2 Tim. 4:1; 1 Pet. 4:5; Rev. 20:12
- All will be gathered Malt. 25:31-33; Heb. 9:27; 12:23; Eccl. 3:17
- Those who do not believe Mark 16:16; John 3:18; John 8:24
- Those who do not believe the truth 2 Thess. 2:12
- Angels will be judged 2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; 1 Cor. 6:3
- Fornicators and adulterers Heb. 13:4
- Judgment will begin with the house of God 1 Pet. 4:17
- Satan was judged by the death of Jesus John 12:31; 16:8-11
- Against all ungodliness and unrighteousness Rom. 1:18; John 3:19,36

How God Will Judge Various People

- Teachers will receive a stricter judgment James 3:1; Mk. 12:38-40
- Those who know the will of God will receive greater punishment Lk. 12:42-48
- Those who neglect advantages increase condemnation Mt. 11:20-24; Lk. 11:29-32
- Those who turn from God will be punished worse than unbelievers 2 Pet. 2:20-22
- God judges impartially Rom. 2:11; Acts 10:34; Col. 3:25
- God judges righteously 1 Pet. 2:23; Rev. 16:17; 19:2; 2 Tim. 4:8; Ps. 98:9; Acts 17:31
- God rewards the righteous 2 Tim. 4:8; Heb. 10:35-38
- God will punish the wicked Malt. 13:40-42; 25:46; Heb. 10:26-31
- How God will punish heathens Rom. 2:12-15
- How God will judge the Jews Rom. 2:15
- The religiously deceived and deceiving Matt. 7:21-27; Tit. 3:10,11; 1 Pet. 2:7,8; 2 Pet. 2:1-10

The Place of Christ in the Judgment

- God gave judgment into the hands of Christ John 5:22; Acts 10:42; 17:31.
- Jesus first came not to judge but to save John 3:17; 12:47
- But his coming separates the good from the evil and thereby judges Mt. 10:34; Jn. 9:39
- The work of Christ prior to Judgment Heb. 7:24; 1 Tim. 2:3-6; 1 John 2:1,2

The Day of Judgment is called

- Day of God 2 Pet. 3:12
- Day of the Lord 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:2
Lord Jesus 1 Cor. 5:5; 1:8
- Day of Christ Phil. 2:16
- That Day 2 Thess. 1:10
- The last day Jn. 12:48
- The great day Jude 6
- Day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God Rom. 2:5
- Great day of their wrath Rev. 6:17
- Great day of Almighty God Rev. 16:14
- Day of Judgment 1 John 4:17; Matt. 10:15; 11:22,24; 12:36; Mk. 6:11; 2 Pet. 2:9; 3:7
- Day of visitation 1 Pet. 2:12

Who will be in the Judgment? Acts 17:30,31

Man's most urgent task is to prepare to meet God. Judgment day is the great day of all; it is the culmination and consummation of the Christian system and the eternal purpose of God. The thought of such a day is often vague and "far off"; we are too prone to live for today. Eccl. 8:11 says, "Because the sentence against an evil deed is not executed quickly, therefore the hearts of the sons of men among them are given fully to do evil." The certainty of just such a day is proven by the resurrection; that day truly is the "last day." John 6:44 says we will be raised on the "last day." John 12:48 says the words of Jesus will judge men at the "last day."

Who will be In the Judgment?

- Rev. 20:11-15 every person great and small of all ages
- Jude 14,15 the ungodly will be judged
- Matt. 7:21-23 religious people who practice lawlessness
- 1 Cor. 4:5 secret sins will be brought to light
- Luke 10:13-15 those who have lived beneath their opportunities; some have had many opportunities but never grasped them.
- Matt. 13:41 those who are in the church (cf. 1 Pet. 4:17,18; Rom. 14:10-12)
- Matt. 5:7; James 2:13 the merciful and the unmerciful
- Matt. 25:31-46 those who have done good and those who have neglected to do good
- 2 Thess. 1:7-9 those who know not God and those who do not obey the gospel

Christ Will Be There As Our Savior and Our Judge

1. We can rejoice in the fact that He knows and loves us
2. What will matter is if we are in His kingdom, the church, if we have been washed by His blood, if we have been faithful, and if our name is written in the Lamb's book of Life
3. God is no respecter of persons (Acts 10:34; Rom. 2:6-11)
4. Gen. 18:25 "Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Favoritism or emotional outcries will not sway God.

6. Each one will receive according to his works (Rom. 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10; Rev. 20:11-15).

Is Man Reincarnated? Heb. 9:27

1. Reincarnation is a doctrine found in both the East and the West: Among the Eastern religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikism. They believe that our "karma" in this life determines whether we will have a good next life. Buddhists recycle 49 days after death. In Western philosophy, Pythagoras was the first to suggest reincarnation. Plato in his *Republic* believed that the recycling took place in groups of fifty and that each one chose what form he was to take.

2. *Reincarnation is not a Biblical concept.* The word means that one's soul "recycles" in various bodies of men or animals (transmigration of souls). The prefix "re" means "again"; and incarnation means "to take on flesh." Thus, reincarnation means to take on flesh again after death. "Reincarnation" suggests a number of unbiblical ideas. Jesus was an incarnated being (John 1:1,14) and took on flesh, but was never reincarnated.

What the Bible Teaches about Life and Death.

1. Heb. 9:27 Men die once (and only once), and then comes judgment
2. Eccl. 9:5,6 after death, men have no more part in matters "under the sun," i.e., on earth
3. Luke 16:19-31 at death, angels take men either to torment or Abraham's bosom
4. 2 Cor. 6:1,2 if we are reincarnated, there is no urgency to the gospel
5. Luke 23:43 at death Jesus and the thief went to paradise (same as Abraham's bosom)
6. Men retain their identities at death: Moses and Elijah (Matt. 17:3); Abraham, Lazarus and the rich man (Luke 16:19-21); souls under the altar (Rev. 6:9-11).
7. 2 Cor. 5:10 we are given only one body per person
8. Matt. 17:12,13 are to some a Biblical support for reincarnation. But John the Baptist was to come to Israel "like" Elijah (Matt. 16:13,14; Mal. 4:4).

9. Rev. 20:11-15 our final judgment will be at the last day and will pertain to our lives on earth. The idea of a second chance is never contemplated in Scripture.

Purgatory -- Not A Biblical Concept

by Wayne Jackson as it appeared in Christian Courier

In the August 27, 1980 issue of the *National Catholic Register*. Roman Catholic theologian Raymond Bosler was asked the following question: "Does the Catholic Church still teach there is a purgatory? Where are the Scripture proofs for it, especially punishment by fire?" In part, Mr. Bosler replied: "*The notion of purgatory cannot be found explicitly in Scripture, but tradition, the living experience of the Church with the word of God, discovered that it must be presumed from other truths clearly contained in the Bible.*"

In other words, the doctrine has been invented! The concept of purgatory cannot be found explicitly — nor can it be found implicitly in the sacred Scripture. The fact of the matter is, it contradicts the word of God at several points. The word "purgatory" derives from the Latin term *purus* (purging or "pure"), and *ago* ("to do or to make"), hence, to make pure. A Biblical concordance will reveal that the term is not to be found in the Scriptures. But what is the concept supposed to be? A book distributed by the church of Rome declares: "*Catholics believe that the generality of mankind are neither so obstinately wicked as to deserve everlasting punishment, nor so good as to be admitted into the society of God and His blessed spirits, and therefore that God is gracious to allow a middle state where they may be purified by certain degrees of punishment*" (*Truth About Catholics*, p.12).

Moreover, a kindred concept among Catholics is that one may, for various financial considerations, have masses said on behalf of loved ones in purgatory, and thus speed up their release from the penal fires. John Tetzl, the Roman mercenary of the early 16th century, was fond of proclaiming, "At the very instant that the money rattles at the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies liberated to heaven" (D'Aubigne. *Life And Times of Martin*

Luther., p.93). St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome was completed with such revenues.

The doctrine of purgatory is anti-biblical for the following reasons: (1) It contradicts the principle of *personal preparation*. "So then each one of us shall give account of *himself* to God" (Rom.14:12; cf. II Cor.5:10). (2) It is contrary to the truth that neither wickedness nor righteousness is transferable from one person to another. "...The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon *him*, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek.18:20). (3) The notion of purgatory ignores the scriptural teaching that all preparation must be made *before* a person dies. In the Parable of the Virgins, the Lord made it abundantly clear that those foolish virgins who "slumbered and slept" (i.e., died] without an adequate supply of oil (i.e., the necessary preparation] could neither borrow from others, nor were they prepared when the bridegroom came (Matt.25: 1-12]. (4) The Bible plainly teaches that after death, there is *judgment*; not a state for further purification (Heb.9:27). (5) Christ made it clear that the fate of the dead is irrevocable. In the narrative regarding the rich man and Lazarus, the Lord revealed that these men were separated from one another by a "great gulf" that had been "fixed" between them (Lk.16:26). The perfect tense form of the verb "fixed" reflects the *abiding* nature of their respective fates. One could no more leave the state of punishment and enter the state of bliss than he could depart from the latter to the former. The gulf is impassible!

Though there are some things about the regions beyond death that we may not be able to Understand at present, one thing is for sure: the *doctrine of purgatory is not a part of it*. May more people have the disposition of the querist cited above and demand *scriptural* proof for theological assertions. The final authority is the Bible; not clerical presumptions!

A Citizen of Heaven

Phil. 3:20,21

It is a wondrous thing that you and I can become a citizen of heaven in this life. Jesus is now preparing a place just for us (John 14:1-3).

Jesus is now preparing us just for that place (2 Cor. 5:1-5). Matt. 25:34 says, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

Heaven is a real place that has been assured to those who remain faithful in following the will of God--it is a place that every Christian should know something about! No one stumbles into heaven--people must intend to go there! Our inheritance in heaven is worth more than any thing we have here. For us heaven can never cost too much, whatever the cost (Rom. 8:18). Heaven was not cheap for Jesus; He died for us.

Heaven Is the Place God Has Prepared To Bless Mankind

We will never be able to understand some things about heaven until we go there. Heaven would hardly be heaven if we could define it. 2 Pet. 3:12,13 says we are looking for a NEW (in kind and quality) heavens and earth; because the old ones we know are gone! When Jesus describes heaven to us, he uses things we know about to describe and suggest what this new home of ours will be like.

"If God hath made this world so fair
where sin and death abound,
how beautiful beyond compare
Will paradise be found." (James S. Montgomery)

What Will NOT be in Heaven.

- Rev. 21:2-4 no weeping, no death or separation, no sorrow
- Rev. 21:21-27 no night, nothing unclean, no one commits sin
- Rev. 22:1-3 no division, no curse
- Rev. 7:16,17 no discomforts

What WILL BE in Heaven

1. *Joy* (Matt. 25:21) "enter into the joy of your Master." C. S. Lewis said, "Joy is the serious business of Heaven." Heaven will not be a place of boredom, monotony, or indifference. 1 Pet. 4:13 says His coming will be a time of "exceeding joy."

2. *Service* (Rev. 22:3) "latreuo" is a service of worship as in the temple of the Old Testament. We are God's bond-servants (slaves); our task is to serve Him; it is inconceivable that we would do

nothing in Heaven. In Matthew 25 those who used their talents were given greater roles of service in the kingdom. Service implies a kind of worship that glorifies God. If you do not enjoy worshipping down here, you probably will not enjoy heaven, for it is a place where worshipping God will be pure joy and overflowing!

3. Rich With Treasures--Our Inheritance

- 1 Pet. 1:3,4 born to receive an inheritance undefiled
- Eph. 2:6,7 in the ages to come to show us the incomparable riches of his grace
- Matt. 6:20 "lay up for yourselves riches in heaven"
- Luke 12:21 The rich fool learned, "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."
- The riches of heaven will satisfy us spiritually unlike the treasures of this earth

4. *Fellowship.* What makes heaven precious is who is there! All of God's people will be in heaven--everyone whose name is written in the Lamb's book of life. We will be surprised at who is there, for God's grace is wondrous.

We will be surprised at who is not there, for men have many secret sins. We will be "at home with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:8; Phil. 1:21-23; 1 Thess 4:17). Luke 13:22-30 tells us that heaven is a place of great fellowship in the Kingdom of God.

Who will be there?

- God (to be removed from His presence is the worst thing in hell; to be in his presence is the best thing about heaven.)
- Jesus Christ. We will see His face and can say "Thank You"
- Holy Spirit who has been our constant companion indwelling us
- Heavenly host: angels, cherubim, seraphim
- Bible characters: Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Peter, Andrew, James, John, Stephen, Paul, Esther, Ruth, Mary, Mary Magdalene, Dorcas, and many others.
- Christian loved ones, family, teachers, friends
- Infants, small children
- Kings and people from all nations (Rev. 21:24).

The Doctrine of Hell

The term hell (**geevva**) may be found twelve times in the New Testament and is mentioned primarily by Jesus in Matt. 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 18:9; 23:15,33; Mark 9:43,45,47; Luke 12:5. Only James (3:6) mentions it outside the gospels. The term points to the "Valley of Hinnom," which is south of Jerusalem. It was once celebrated for the horrid worship of Moloch. Idolaters sacrificed children there (2 Kings 23:10; 2 Chron. 28:3; 33:6; Jer. 7:31; 32:35). In later Jewish writing it came to be depicted as the place of punishment for sinners.

It soon began to be polluted with filth: the dead bodies of both animals and humans were dumped there. The valley was always burning in order to consume the dead bodies and filth in hope to avert any spreading disease. The Jews used this word to describe the place of eternal torment. Jesus warned, "And if your eye causes you to stumble, cast it out; it is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes, to be cast into hell, where their worm does not die, and the fire is not quenched" (Luke 9:47,48). Hell is indeed the lake that burns with fire and brimstone (Rev. 20:10,15).

The real existence of hell is irrefutably taught in Scripture as both a *place* of the wicked dead and a *condition* of retribution for the unredeemed (e.g., Ezek 3:18; Dan 12:2). Sheol, which is in one sense the undifferentiated place of all the dead (cf. Job 3:13-22), is in another sense the special doom of the wicked (Ps 49:14). It is necessary to follow the NIV footnotes in such references, for if KJV was inaccurate in translating Sheol as "hell" (e.g., Ps 9:17), NIV is equally inaccurate in formalizing it as "the grave."

The *nature* of hell is indicated by the repeated reference to eternal punishment (Matt 25:46), eternal fire (18:8, Jude 7), everlasting chains (Jude 6), the pit of the Abyss (Rev 9:2, 11), outer darkness (Matt 8:12), the wrath of God (Rom 2:5), second death (Rev 21:8), eternal destruction from the face of God (2 Thess 1:9), and eternal sin (Mark 3:29).

The eternal punishing is not annihilation. The term **kolasij** refers to chastisement or torment in Matt. 25:46, not to the end of existence. 2 Pet. 2:9 uses the verb cognate

kolazw to describe the punishing of the wicked angels. Rev. 20:10 says, "And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever."

The *duration* is explicitly indicated in the NT. The word "eternal" (*aionios*) is derived from the verb *aion*, signifying an "age" or "duration." Scripture speaks of two *aeons*, or ages: the present age and the age to come (Matt 12:32; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; Eph 1:21). The present age--this world--is always contrasted with the age to come as temporal, while the future age will be endless. As the everlasting life of the believer is to be endless, just so the retributive aspect of hell refers to the future infinite age. In every reference in which *aionios* applies to the future punishment of the wicked, it indisputably denotes endless duration (Matt 18:8; 25:41, 46; Mark 3:29; 2 Thess 1:9; Heb 6:2; Jude 7).

The basic ideas associated with the concept of hell are: absence of righteousness (Mark 3:29), separation from God (John 3:36), and judgment (Matt 8:12; 25:31-46), and punishment (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:10).

A special note: In 2 Pet. 2:4 only, we find the verb *ταρταρω* translated means to "cast into hell." Tartarus was the name in classical mythology for the subterranean abyss in which rebellious gods and other such beings as the Titans were punished. The word was, however, taken over into Hellenistic Judaism and used in connection with fallen angels (Enoch 20:2).

Angels

The Nature of Angels

1. Angels are spirit beings (Heb. 1:14; 1 Kings 22:19-21)
 - a. angels are sexless and do not marry (Matt. 22:30)
 - b. angels are never represented as females
 - c. they are created beings (Psalm 148:2,5; 1 Kings 8:27; Deut. 10:14; Ex. 20:11). They are not equal with God. Note Job 38:4-7 where angels are pictured as shouting for joy when the foundation of the earth was laid.

d. they have distinct personalities and possess names such as Michael and Gabriel.

- OT: Dan. 8:16; 9:21; 10:13, 21; 12:1
- NT: Luke 1:11-20, 26-38; Matt. 1,2; Acts 8:26; 10:3ff.; 27:23; Jude 9; Rev. 12:7ff.

2. Angels are "heavenly hosts" (2 Kings 21:3; Jer. 33:22; Dan. 7:10; Zeph. 1:5; Luke 2:13,15)

- called "sons of God" (Job 1:6; 2:1; Psalm 29:1; 89:6)
- they are 'elohim or godlike beings (Ps. 8:6; 97:7; 138:1; cf. Heb. 2:7). 'elohim is translated *aggelos* in these passages.

3. Angels regarded as "holy ones" (Job 5:1; 15:15; Psa. 89:5-7; Dan. 8:2,13; Matt.25:31; Gal. 4:14; Jude 14).

- These holy ones assemble in a council (Psa. 89:5-7)
- They may be regarded as of unquestioned integrity, goodwill and obedience (cf. 1 Sam. 29:9; 2 Sam. 14:17,20; 19:27).

4. They are subject to Christ (Heb. 1:4, 13) Not to be worshipped, they are fellow servants (Rev. 19:10).

5. They almost always take human form when in contact with men

- At the tomb: Matt. 28:2-6 "angels"; Luke 24:4-8 "men"
- With Abraham and Lot (Gen. 18:2,33; 19:1,2)
- With Joshua (Josh. 5:13-6:2)
- With Gideon (Judges 6:11-13)
- With Manoah and his wife (Judges 13:3-6)
- The "man" Gabriel speaks to Daniel (Dan. 9:21)

Angels were capable of making themselves both visible and invisible (Num. 22:31) and to appear under circumstances obviously miraculous in nature (Ex. 3:2).

6. Angels are capable of sin (2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6; Rev. 12:7). See also Job 4:18; Ezek. 28:12-19; 2 Cor. 11:14; Gal. 1:8,9. Eternal fire was prepared for the devil and his angels (Matt. 25:41).

7. While angels are never pictured as having wings, cherubim and seraphim do have wings (Isa. 6:2; Ex. 25:20). The living creatures around

the throne of God have wings (Ezek. 1:6; Rev. 4:8).

a. Cherubim function as throne-bearers and custodians of the sacred places (see Gen. 3:24; Ex. 25:18-22; 26:1, 31; Num. 7:89; 1 Sam. 4:4; 2 Sam. 6:2; Isa. 37:16; Ps. 80:1; 99:1). Compare the four living creatures of Ezek. 1:5ff.; 10:20.

b. Seraphim appear only in Isaiah 6. Their reverence is graphically depicted and they praise God. They are described as winged creatures. The root word seems to signify "to burn," and is found in Numbers 21 as "fiery serpents." Note the burning coal in Isaiah 6. Seraphim have six wings.

c. Angels do have the ability to cover vast distances immediately (Ex.12:29, 30). Gabriel came from the presence of God into the presence of Daniel. Angels are pictured as flying (Rev. 14:6). Artists have assumed that they have wings.

8. Number of angels: innumerable company (Dan. 7:10); camps or army (Gen. 32:2,3); myriads (Heb. 12:22; Rev. 5:11).

The Function of Angels

1. God's Messengers (*malak*, *aggelos*)

a. At the conception of John the Baptist (Luke 1:11-20)

b. Gabriel appeared to Mary (Luke 1:26-38) to announce the news to her that she would conceive. After the conception of Christ, angels appeared to Joseph (Matt. 1:20-24).

c. At the birth of Jesus to the shepherds (Luke 2:8-15)

d. Joseph warned to go to Egypt (Matt. 2:19,20)

e. At the resurrection of Jesus and the tomb (Matt. 28:2-6)

f. At the ascension (Acts 1:10,11)

g. At the birth of Samson (Judges 13:3-23)

h. "you have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it." (Acts 7:53)

i. "The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator" (Gal. 3:19)

j. "For if the message spoken by angels was binding, and every violation and disobedience received its just punishment . . ." (Heb. 2:2)

2. Agents of Divine Judgment (destroying angels)

- a. Gen. 19:1,13 two angels sent to destroy Sodom
- b. Ex. 12:21-23; Psalm 78:49-51 band of destroying angels killed firstborn in Egypt
- c. 2 Sam. 24:1-17 the pestilence sent for David's sin killed 70,000 (cf. 1 Chron. 21:9-16).
- d. 2 Kings 19:35 the angel of the Lord struck down 185,000 Assyrians (cf. 2 Chron. 32:21; Isa. 37:36)
- e. Acts 12:23 Herod struck by an angel because he did not give God the glory.
- f. Ex. 33:2 God sent an angel to drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites
- g. Present at the Judgment: Matt. 13:39,41 angels will weed out of the kingdom everything that causes sin and all who do evil, throw them into fiery furnace; Matt. 13:49 angels will come and separate the wicked from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace
- h. Angel guarded way to the tree of life (Gen. 3:24)
- i. Angel binds Satan and throws him into the abyss for a thousand years (Rev. 20:1-3).

3. Unseen protectors of those who fear God

- a. Psalm 34:7 "The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear him, and he delivers them." Isa. 63:9 "In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them."
- b. Gen. 48:16 Jacob's blessing of Joseph's sons: "the Angel who has delivered me from all harm; may he bless these boys."
- c. 2 Kings 6:15-17 chariots of fire surrounding Elisha at Dothan
- d. Matt. 26:53 Jesus could call more than twelve legions of angels (cf. Ps. 91:11)
- e. Rev. 12:7 Michael and his angels fought against the dragon (devil) and his angels
- f. Dan. 6:22 "My God sent his angel, and he shut the mouths of the lions." (cf. 3:25,28) angel rescued three Hebrew children from the fiery furnace.
- g. Matt. 18:10 Little ones' "angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."
- h. archangel Michael disputed with devil over body of Moses (Jude 8,9)
- i. Angels assist nations (Isa. 37:36,37; 63:9; 2 Kings 18:13-19:37; Dan. 10:21; 12:1).

4. Ministering spirits:

- a. Heb. 1:14 "Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Cf. Ps. 103:21 where the heavenly hosts are regarded as servants or ministers.)
- b. Serving Jesus: Matt. 4:11; Mark 1:13 at Jesus' temptation; Luke 22:43 at Gethsemane
- c. Serving Peter: Acts 5:19 opened the doors of the jail; Acts 12:7 woke Peter up in prison and removed his chains
- d. Serving Paul: Acts 27:23 encouraging Paul during the storm
- e. Serving Lot and his daughters (Gen. 19:15-22)
- f. Angel secured Isaac a wife (Gen. 24:7)
- g. Angels met Jacob on his way to Esau (Gen. 32:1,2)
- h. Angel fed Elijah (1 Kings 19:3-7).
- i. Angel directed Philip to Eunuch (Acts 8:26)
- j. Angels rejoice when sinner repents (Luke 15:7,10; cf. Heb. 12:22)
- k. Confession and denial of Jesus will be done before the angels of God (Luke 12:8, 9)

5. Angels take away our souls to God at death (Luke 16:22-23)

6. Duties before God

- a. They praise God (Pss. 91:11; 103:20; 148:1,2).
- b. Members of the heavenly court (1 Kings 22:19-20; cf. Job 1:6f; 2:1f; Ps. 89:6-8).

Conclusion:

In his book, *These Things Speak*, Hugo McCord has written concerning angelic help: "From what we know by sight and feelings and experience, we cannot affirm that angels are real. But from what we know by faith, the faith that comes by God's word, we are positive that 'for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation' angels are 'ministering spirits sent forth to do service' (Heb. 1:14). Christians rejoice because the angel of the unchanging Jehovah 'encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them' (Mal. 3:6; Psalm 34:7). Specifically what the angels do is an untaught matter, but the reality of their help for Christians is a positive and encouraging doctrine of revealed religion." (p. 107)

Premillennialism

The views of Premillennialism include:

1. The kingdom is not now in the world, and will not be until Christ returns.
2. The purpose of the gospel age is not to convert the world to Christianity, but to preach the gospel as a witness to the nations.
3. Immediately prior to Christ's return there will be a period of general apostasy.
4. We are now living in the latter stages of the church age. Christ will probably come in our lifetime.
5. At Christ's coming the righteous dead of all ages will be raised in the "first resurrection."
6. The resurrected dead together with the transfigured living saints are caught up to meet the Lord in the air.
7. The judgment of all the righteous then takes place.
8. Before and during the tribulation period the Jews are to be restored to the land of Palestine.
9. At the mere sight of their Messiah, the Jews will turn to Him in a national conversion.
10. Christ, at His coming, will destroy the anti-Christ and all His forces in the battle of Armageddon.
11. After this battle Christ will establish a worldwide Kingdom with Jerusalem as its capital, in which He and the resurrected and transfigured saints will rule for a thousand years in peace.
12. During this Jerusalem reign the temple, feasts, fasts, priesthood, and sacrificial system are to be reinstated, though performed in a Christian spirit and by Christian worshippers.
13. During this golden age nature's curse will be removed. The desert will bloom as a rose; wild beasts are tamed and will lie down with lambs.
14. During this time great numbers of the Gentiles will turn to God and be in His kingdom.
15. During the Millennium Satan will be bound and cast into the abyss.
16. At the close of the Millennium Satan will be loosed for a short time.

17. The Millennium is to be followed by a short but violent outbreak of wickedness, headed by Satan, which all but overwhelms the Saints and Jerusalem.
18. Forces of wickedness are to be destroyed by fire, which is cast down from heaven.
19. The wicked dead of all ages are then to be raised in the "second resurrection," judged, and with the Devil and the wicked angels cast into hell.
20. Heaven and hell are then introduced in their fullness as the future homes eternally.

(Adapted from Lorraine Boettner, *The Millennium*, pp. 142-143.)

Premillennial Errors:

1. The kingdom is now in this world; the kingdom is the church (Col. 1:13-14; Rev. 1:4-6 NASB; 5:9-11; Acts 20:28).
2. The purpose of the gospel is to bring lost souls to a knowledge of the truth so men may be saved (1 Tim. 1:15; 2:3-4; Luke 19:10; Rom. 1:16).
3. No one knows when Jesus will return (Matt. 24:35-42; 1 Thess. 5:2; 2 Pet. 3:10).
4. All people will be raised up at the same hour (John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15).
5. The prophecy of the Jewish return to Palestine has already been fulfilled (Gen. 13:15; 17:9; Josh. 21:43-45; 23:14-16; Neh. 9:7-8). It is important to realize that the land promise God made to Israel was conditional (Josh. 23:16). By its disbelief fleshly Israel is no longer the covenant people (Heb. 8:6-13).

False Teachings

How Can I Know the Truth?

John 18:33-38

The question Pilate asked, "What is truth?" is still one people who are searching are asking today. It is a valid question, because there are so many things being said by so many people, that we also ask "How can I know what is true?" What distinguishes truth from error? What can I be assured of, what can I rest my soul on? With what can I say, "I know this is true and will never lie to me?"

Jesus said, "You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." (John 18:37). Truth is found in Jesus.

Where religious truth is not found:

It is not found in one's personal feelings, emotions, or thoughts. Prov. 14:12 says, "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Jeremiah said in Jer. 10:23, "O Lord, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps." It is not found in the religion of "do your own thing." This may appear to be appealing but is really very empty, because it is deceptive. In the end, doing your own thing does not work. Feelings, judgments can be deceptive as in the case of Jacob's grief over Joseph (Gen. 37:32-36). In Acts 26:9 Paul said, "I was convinced that I ought to do all that was possible to oppose the name of Jesus of Nazareth." It is man's own pride and belief in his own knowledge and ability than often leads him to be self-deceived. Jesus fought the temptations, which appeal to the senses and desires by looking to the Word of God (Matt. 4:1-10).

It is not found in what the majority of men believe. Matt. 7:13,14 reminds us the majority will be lost though they may think they are doing the right thing. Only Noah and his family survived the flood. Only Lot and his daughters survived Sodom and Gomorrah. Ex. 23:2 says, "You shall not follow a crowd to do evil." In Numbers 13 and 14, ten spies brought back a bad report and were wrong, while only two brought

back a good report. God does not take opinion polls to decide what his will is; nor does He change with the fickle ideas of the world. In John 12:42,43 some would not confess Jesus for fear of the Pharisees; they were condemned.

It is not found in the traditions that arise from men. The old is not necessarily right because it is old; the new is not necessarily right because it is new. In Matt. 15:1,2 the Pharisees accused Jesus of breaking a tradition. Jesus' replied in Matt. 15:8,9, "this people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me. But in vain do they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men." He further says of human traditions, "Every plant which My heavenly Father did not plant shall be rooted up" (15:13). Long, established practices are not on the same level as the teaching of God. No man has the right to bind a human tradition on any other man.

It is not found in false prophets. There are false prophets who deceive (2 Tim. 4:2-5). Dynamic personalities can blind people from the truth! (2 Cor. 11:14,15) Hearing what we want to believe can keep us from what is able to save our souls. John said in 1 John 4:1, "Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world." False prophets deceive themselves and speak from the imagination of their own heart and not from God (Jer. 23:16-39).

Truth is found in Jesus Christ and His Word

* John 8:31,32 To be "true disciples" we must abide in His word.

* John 17:17 Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth."

* John 18:38 "I came into the world to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me."

* Col. 1:5 the gospel is called "the word of truth"

* 2 Tim. 2:15-18 Faithful Christians need to study the word of truth. To leave the teaching of Christ as Hymenaeus and Philetus did is to wonder from the truth and to destroy the faith of some.

* Acts 17:11 says the noble Bereans "examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true."

* 1 Tim. 2:3,4 remind us that God wants all men to be saved and to know the truth.

* Psalm 19:7-11 God's Word is true and righteous altogether.

If you cannot read it in the Bible, God's holy Word, then don't believe it. "Everyone on the side of truth listens to me" said Jesus. The question of what the Bible says must always be first and foremost.

Prov. 23:23 "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding." In things so important as your soul, don't settle for anything less than what will bring you to God, the source of all truth. God is the only One on whom you can depend for now and for eternity; all else will fail.

Truth can never contradict itself or deny itself. Truth does not change, though it may have many facets. Truth cannot be right and wrong at the same time. Truth can be hidden for a time, but it can never be buried. Truth does not need the approval of the crowds or the applause of men; it need not be popular or pleasant. Ignoring the truth does not change its power; forgetting it does not make it any less true. One can pull the shades but cannot turn off the sun. One can tell a lie, but he is powerless to stop the truth.

God's Word is true because God cannot lie (Tit. 1:2). God loves us too much to deceive us. One can exchange the truth of our loving God for a lie, but one cannot change God himself or change God's mind once God has spoken (Rom. 1:18-32).

Contend for the Faith

Jude 3,4

Christianity was born in a crucible of controversy. For nearly three centuries Christianity was sometimes permitted and sometimes illegal. Jews despised and opposed them. Judaizing Christians wanted to bind the Old Testament law on them. Pagans secretly tried to bring their false teaching into the church. Christianity was new, and there were many immature who were drawn away into the errors of false teachers. It was in this kind of setting that Jude urges the disciples to defend the faith.

The Faith Was Delivered to Us

The Faith of Jesus Christ was revealed to us in past generations and handed down to us in the Word of God. We did not discover its great principles and truths all by ourselves. The disciples were promised the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 16:12,13), and the faith was given through the Holy Spirit. Heb. 2:3, 4 says that the truth was passed to the apostles and was confirmed by signs and wonders.

Paul realized what he was delivering to the churches was divine.

* 1 Cor. 14:37 "If anyone thinks he is a prophet or spiritual, let him recognize that the things which I write to you are the Lord's commandment."

* 1 Thess. 2:13 "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."

* 2 Thess. 2:15 "So then, brethren, stand firm and hold to the traditions which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us."

* 2 Thess. 3:14 "And if anyone does not obey our instruction in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame."

Our Faith Was Delivered Once and For All

Just as Jesus was offered only once for all on the cross, so the faith has been delivered once for all to the saints (Heb. 9:27,28). The teaching of the Scripture taught in the first century by the apostles and prophets is the "one faith" mentioned in Eph. 4:5. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." He is the only way to Heaven. Peter said in Acts 4:12, "And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved."

3. Illustrations of how this was meant to be:
- 1 Cor. 11:23-26 we observe supper till he comes
 - Matt. 28:18-20 preach the gospel till the end of the world
 - 1 Pet. 1:23-25 word of the Lord stands forever, what was preached to you
4. The faith of Jesus Christ is eternal and an unchangeable commodity.
- a. 2 John 9-11
 - b. Rev. 22:18-19

The Christian Faith Was Entrusted to God's Saints

1. Saints are members of the church (1 Cor. 1:1,2) They became members of the church when they were washed in the name of the Lord Jesus (6:11). We are washed when we are baptized (Acts 22:16)
2. God has given every saint the privilege and the responsibility to study the faith, to practice the faith, to preach it, and to defend it.
3. When the early brethren were scattered abroad, they went everywhere preaching the word (Acts 8:1,4).
4. There is no such thing in New Testament Christianity as a professional clergy, who alone possesses the truth of God's Word.

IV. The Faith of Christ Must Be Defended, Fought For.

1. Phil. 1:16 Paul said that he was "put here for the defense of the gospel."
2. Our faith is always under fire by believers, by false teachers, by people who place pleasure above all else.
 - a. Jude 4 "godless men, who change the grace of our God into a license for immorality and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."
 - b. Jude 11 way of Cain, Balaam's error, Korah's rebellion
 - c. Jude 16 grumblers, faultfinders, evil desires, boasters, flatterers
 - d. Jude 17-19 scoffers who want to divide the church
3. But you faithful ones--Jude 20-22

Conclusion:

The true faith today is under attack by men who believe

- * the grace of God will cover any error whether one repents or not;
- * that we can worship as we wish and still please God; (way of Cain)
- * by men who deny the authority of the Scripture (Korah's rebellion)
- * by people who sell out to worldly ways (error of Balaam)

We must realize that we are to contend for that faith which was handed down to us in the Scriptures and not vary from it to the left or to the right.

Characteristics of Cults

Christians need to be aware that there are false teachers in the world who will attempt to lead them astray.

- Matt. 7:15-23 Jesus warns us of wolves in sheep's clothing
- 2 Cor. 11:13-15 false apostles who appear as servants of light
- 2 Tim. 4:1-4 people will not endure sound doctrine
- 2 Pet. 2:1-3 false teachers who will exploit you

Some cults today wish to radically change Christians into another religion, in which they teach strange things and enslave their members.

Common Characteristics of Cults:

They teach the false idea that God has revealed some new truth especially to them. This implies that the Christianity of the New Testament is inadequate and that there are new revelations available today. However the Bible teaches:

- Col. 2:1-10 Christ is all-sufficient to make every man complete
- 2 Tim. 3:16-17 The Scriptures are able to equip us fully for every good work
- Jude 3 the faith was once for all time given to the saints

- John 16:12-13 Jesus revealed "all truth" to the apostles in the first century
They believe that the Bible must be supplemented with the new revelations that they give. Paul clearly teaches that the days of the gifts of prophecy were to cease (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

They use Non-Biblical Sources of Authority.

Cults use written sources of authority beyond the Bible and which they will hold as more authoritatively than the Bible:

- Mormons: Book of Mormon, Pearl of Great Price, Doctrines and Covenants
- Sun Myung Moon: Divine Principle
- 3. Jehovah's Witnesses: Watchtower Tracts and Magazines

Cults will often criticize the Bible and regard it as incomplete. For instance, Mormons say, "We believe the Bible to be the Word of God in so far as it is translated correctly" (Article 8, Articles of Faith). They believe the Bible to be full of errors. Wherever the Bible contradicts their teachings, the Bible is considered as inaccurate or incomplete. The Bible is never read without their book being read along with it to interpret the Bible. The cult book is regarded as infallible, while the Bible has mistakes.

They speak of Jesus differently than the teachings of the New Testament.

The "Jesus" of the cults is always someone less than the Bible's eternal God who became flesh, lived here on earth, died for our sins, and arose from the dead.

1. Jehovah's Witnesses say Jesus is a created being, Michael the Archangel, the head of all angels. He is "a god," not the Son of God.
2. Mormons say Jesus is the "first born spirit child," spiritually conceived by a sexual union between the heavenly Father and a heavenly mother.
3. Moon says, "Jesus Christ is not God Himself." "Christianity made Jesus into a God." For them Jesus is considered a man. Moonies believe they can excel Jesus.

The Bible teaches Jesus is Unique as the Son of God (Col. 1:13-20; 2:9). Jesus is God made flesh (John 1:1-4,14; Phil. 2:5-8).

A strong authority whose word is final usually leads them.

A man who is their absolute leader heads up cults.

- Mormons: Joseph Smith, succeeded by the President of their apostles.
- Unification Church: Sun Myung Moon
- Boston Movement or International Church of Christ: Kip McKean
- Roman Catholic Church: Pope

Jesus is the only head of the church. Eph. 1:20-23; 5:23-25; 1 Cor. 3:11; Acts 4:12. There is no other way to heaven. John 14:6

They often use brainwashing techniques to recruit and control their members.

Some specific brainwashing techniques:

1. *Control of life and environment:* This is the purposeful limitation of all forms of communication with the outside world (newspapers, radio, books, television), along with sleep deprivation, a change in diet and control over the people whom the person being controlled can see and talk to.

2. *Mystical Manipulation.* Here the potential convert is convinced of the higher purpose within the special group and is shown his individual responsibility in the attainment of that goal. He must be convinced that he is of those chosen by God, or the group leader, for this work for the greater glory of his cause. By means of this manipulation, cults try to control the thinking of their converts.

3. *Need for Purity.* Cults demand moral perfection from their followers. This perfection is determined by the group's view of goodness. Recruits can contribute to the well being of the world only by pursuit of their definition of morality. Along with this urge comes a sense of guilt and shame for the "impure" acts or thoughts performed before joining the group.

4. *Confession.* In all religious cults, public or semi-public confessional periods are used to get members to speak and discuss their innermost fears and anxieties. In some cases cults use this confessional material as emotional blackmail if the members should decide to leave or to control their behavior.

5. *The Aura of Sacred Science.* Because the core of the religious cult system is sacred, it is

beyond questioning. Cult leaders do not allow members to question their instructions or decisions. Leaders decisions are absolute and final.

6. *Loading the Language.* Religious cults invent a new vocabulary. They confuse well-known words with their own new meanings. When Moonies ask if one has "received the blessing," they are asking if one has been married by Moon.

7. *Doctrine over Persons.* Cults teach that their doctrine always takes precedence over everything a person has learned in life and it becomes the new reality in which to function. Some cults demand that people live according to the leaders strict standards, telling them when they can sleep or eat, and whom they can date or marry. The value of an individual member is insignificant compared to the value of the group, its work and its beliefs. (Doctrine here refers not to Biblical teaching but to cult teaching.)

8. *Dispensing of Existence.* Cults draw sharp lines between those who will be saved (the cult members), and those who are doomed to hell (everyone else). God does not judge men through the Bible, but their cult leaders judge men according to cult teaching and loyalty to their cause.

Cults desire to control and manipulate the lives of their members. The Scriptures are designed to bring freedom and an abundant life (John 10:10) to all who are willing to believe and serve the Lord.

- 1. Gal. 5:1-6 Paul condemns the Judaizers who add the Law to our obedience to the gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).
- 2. Col. 2:20-23 Paul warns that men's commandments are of no value against the flesh.

Cults have sometimes arisen because the established churches have failed to emphasize certain important aspects of religious life, or have neglected certain techniques. People often find in the cults emphases and practices which they miss in the established churches. (This does not mean that cults are always right.)

There are some things we can learn from the cults:

- The importance of having definite convictions about matters of faith.
- The importance of knowing the Scriptures.
- Zeal for soul winning.
- Use of the printed page.
- The strong sense of urgency.
- The large role they assign to each member.
- The sense of dedication.
- The definite techniques for soul winning.
- The willingness to endure ridicule.
- The Christian faith has a contribution to make to good health (spiritual and emotional.)

1 John 4:1 admonishes not to believe every spirit but to test the spirits to see if they are from God.

Astrology

"Astrology is the art--its devotees would call it the science--of divination by reference to the stars and planets." It was the astrologer's task to discover the relations of the planets to one another, to the zodiacal signs, and to the observer, and to make deductions therefrom. The first two are in a sense scientific, the latter is based upon ancient lore which has no scientific basis but rests largely upon observed parallelisms between given zodiacal positions and human events. (Charles S. Braden, *The New Schaff-Herzog Religious Encyclopedia* I:91).

What is wrong with Astrology?

1. Its origin is of idolatry (Deut. 17:2-4). God warned against serving other gods and worshipping them, including the sun, or the moon or any of the hosts of heaven, which he had not commanded. Such is an abomination. Under the Law of Moses such idolatry was punishable by death. See also Lev. 19:26,31; 20:27; Deut. 4:19; 18:9-14. Astrology leads people to look away from God and His Word to the stars and astrological calculations and horoscopes. God is in control of nature; nature is not in control of God.

2. It is worthless (Isa. 47:13,14). God issues the challenge: "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators, stand up, and save you from the things that shall come upon you. Behold, they shall be as stubble; the fire shall burn them; they shall not deliver themselves."

The astrologers and diviners among the Chaldeans were unable to interpret the dreams of Nebuchadnezzar, but Daniel was able (Dan. 2:1-11,26-28; 4:7).

3. Their predictions will be foolish (Isa. 44:24,25). "I am the Lord, . . .that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; . . .that frustrateth the signs of the liars, and maketh diviners mad; that turneth

wise men backward, and maketh their knowledge foolish."

4. It terrifies those who do not know God (Jer. 10:2). "This is what the Lord says: 'Do not learn the ways of the nations or be terrified by signs in the sky, though the nations are terrified by them.'"

5. We are not to seek forbidden knowledge (Deut. 29:29). The secret things belong to the Lord. It is not for us to know times or seasons, which the Father has set within His own authority (Acts 1:7). All spiritual knowledge is found in the Word (John 16:12,13; 2 Pet. 1:3).

6. Sorcery, as a work of the flesh, is condemned (Gal. 5:19-21).

7. When the Ephesians learned of Jesus Christ, they burned their books (Acts 19:18-20). spoken of here is like that of a governmental seal upon a legal document; once the confirmation has been made, further proof is never needed. Now since the preaching of the gospel "was confirmed" in the first century, it no longer needs confirming. There is no longer a need for miracles. It also needs to be said that Jesus promised that all truth would be revealed to the apostles (John 16:12,13; Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3; Jude 3). This revelation is complete and once for all; God is no longer inspiring men to reveal new truth. If this is the case, no miraculous signs are needed today.

Second, miraculous, spiritual gifts were given to the apostles directly by Christ Himself (Matt. 3:11; Acts 1:1-8). In Acts 2 the Holy Spirit was indeed poured out upon the apostles. Paul too received apostleship and power from Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 11:5; Gal. 2:11-17); Paul displayed the "signs" of an apostle (2 Cor. 12:12). The only persons "baptized with the Holy Spirit" other than the apostles were the household of Cornelius (Acts 10-11:16). But this happened to them before Peter began speaking to them and before they were believers in Christ (Acts 11:4,15). This baptism with the Holy Spirit took place to convince the Jews and Peter that the Gentiles were also granted repentance (Acts 11:15-18). No one else, however, is ever mentioned as being able to work miracles unless the apostles laid hands on them (Acts 2:43; 3:6; 5:12-15; 6:5-8; 8:5,6). A close reading of Acts 8 shows that while Philip had received power from the apostles, he could not pass it on to the Samaritans. Only the apostles could give these powers to others. (Note

Does Anyone Have Miraculous Gifts Today?

When people claim to speak from God and claim to work miracles to prove that their claim is true, Christians have a right and the duty to test those claims (1 John 4:1; Rev. 2:2). Many persons are arising today claiming to have miraculous gifts, saying that the miraculous gifts of the Bible are for people today. Citing such passages as Mark 16:17-20; John 14:12,13; and Hebrews 13:8, they think that there are no differences between the first century and the present. Our purpose is to ask why God gave miraculous gifts, how people got them, if they would cease, and what differences are there between modern faith healers and the healing one can read about in the New Testament.

First, the Lord gave men the power to work miraculous gifts in order to confirm the preaching of the gospel by the apostles and prophets (Mark 16:20; Heb. 2:3,4). These miraculous signs were proof or guarantees that they were speaking God's Word with God's blessing. God gave Moses a miraculous rod for this same purpose (Ex. 4:1-5), "that they may believe that the Lord God of their fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath appeared unto thee." The writer of the book of Hebrews, however, tells us that the preaching of Christ and His apostles "was confirmed" by such signs and wonders (Heb. 2:3,4). The confirmation

also Acts 19:6 and 2 Tim. 1:6.) If only the apostles could give these miraculous gifts, then after the apostles died and those on whom the apostles laid their hands died, the miraculous gifts would cease to be. This agrees with the purpose of the gifts coming to an end.

Third, Paul clearly states the miraculous will cease in 1 Cor. 13:8-13. Paul used three chapters in I Corinthians to discuss miraculous gifts. In the middle of this discussion he declares that love is more important than any miraculous gift (13:1-3), Then he describes love (13:4-7). In the final section of the chapter (13:8-13), he shows that love is greater because it will outlast the spiritual gifts. Paul said, "Prophecies will fail, tongues will cease, and (miraculous) knowledge will be done away." These gifts cause Paul to say that "we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (9,10). These miraculous gifts were to cease when "that which is perfect is come."

What is "that which is perfect"? Since "perfect" means complete, it stands in contrast with that which is in part." The "part" is miraculous knowledge and prophecy, which revealed the Word of God orally. It is most natural, then, to realize that the complete or "perfect" is the full revelation given to man in the written record of the New Testament. This complete revelation of God's will, "the faith once for all delivered to the saints" (Jude 3), came into general possession about the end of the first century. When the complete came, the partial was done away. Since the New Testament records the complete will of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17; 2 Pet. 1:3), there is no longer a need for miraculous gifts in the twentieth century to give us any more revelation.

Fourth, the last reason for denying miraculous gifts today comes from experience with those who claim these gifts. Just as there was a difference between Simon the sorcerer and Philip in Acts 8:5-13, so there is today a difference between so-called faith healers and the miracles Jesus and His apostles performed. Note these things about the biblical miracles:

(1) Jesus healed everyone who came to him without fail (Matt. 4:23,24; 8:16; 9:35; 12:15; 14:34-36; 15:29-31; Acts 5:16).

(2) Jesus healed everyone completely; no one came back in a few days still suffering. Crippled persons who had lost arms and legs and eyes were made whole, so that the crowd could see immediate physical changes (Matt. 15:29-31; Mark 7:31-37; John 7:23; Acts 3:7-11). (Maimed persons are crippled with arms or legs missing. (See Matt. 15:29-31; 18:8,9.) Who is putting on arms and legs today? I know no one!

(3) The enemies of Jesus admitted that he could work miracles (John 11:46,48; Acts 4:16), but today faith healers are regarded as frauds.

(4) Jesus and His apostles did not use their miraculous powers to become wealthy as Simon the sorcerer did and as some do today (Matt. 10:8-10; Acts 3:16). The apostles earned their living from their work, but they did not live lavishly. (See I Corinthians 9.)

(5) Jesus did not require a person to be present at a healing service to be healed. He could heal from afar (Matt. 8:5-13).

(6) Jesus did not require faith of everyone before He healed them; some did not believe and some could not believe, for they were dead (Luke 7:11,12; 8:54,55). Jesus worked miracles to cause people to believe (John 11:42; 20:30,31; Acts 13:11,12). Jesus never said that He could not work miracles because unbelievers were present. Jesus never made excuses, for He healed everyone. Some today claim to be able to heal but fail, and then they make excuses for their failures. The truth is that they never had the power to heal.

(7) Jesus did not require great stirrings of emotions or a special atmosphere to heal anyone, but modern, fake faith healers always have them.

(8) The apostles did not exalt themselves or use their powers to form a new denomination. Rather they pointed to Christ and to the one true church that Jesus died for. They taught against division (Acts 4:10-12; 1 Cor. 1:10-13).

The Holy Spirit's work was to guide the apostles into all the truth (John 16:12,13). The Holy Spirit does not lie; nor does the Holy Spirit say one thing to one person and another thing to another person. He does not cause confusion (1 Cor. 14:33). He does speak but one gospel (Gal. 1:6-9) and have but one faith (Eph. 4:5). Yet those who claim to be inspired and work miracles disagree among themselves as to what God says. They often contradict the plain, Bible teaching on baptism, on the plan of salvation, on Jesus Christ,

and on the nature of the church. They also break God's commandment by having women preachers (1 Cor. 14:34-37; 1 Tim. 2:8-11). Does the Holy Spirit lead men to disobey clear teachings of the Word of God? Is the Holy Spirit trying to confuse men? These things are not the Holy Spirit's work but the Devil's (Matt. 7:15-23; 2 Cor. 11:13-15; 2 Thess. 2:8-12). Sometimes false teachers have powers too. God gives them this power to test us to see if we will follow His Word (Deut. 13:1-5). If a man teaches a gospel that is different from the true gospel, he is to be accursed (Gal. 1:6-9). If a

man does not have the doctrine of Christ, he does not have God and is not to be followed or supported (2 John 9-11). Christians, beware!

Study the Word of God and prove all things (1 Thess. 5:21,22; 2 Tim. 2:15). Always follow the teachings of Jesus in the New Testament (John 12:48), for it truly has the whole counsel of God, all that pertains to life and godliness, and is able to completely furnish man unto every good work (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 2 Pet. 1:3). Since we have the Lord's Word, we do not have miraculous gifts today!

Buddhism

For centuries, Buddhism has been the dominant religion of the Eastern world. Today it remains the predominant religion in China, Japan, Korea, and much of southeast Asia. With the rise of the Asian population in the U.S., Buddhism has made a tremendous impact in the United States. Presently, there are over 300,000 Buddhists in the U.S. It remains the dominant religion in the state of Hawaii and many prominent Americans have accepted this religion, including the former governor of California, Jerry Brown.(1)

The Origin of Buddhism

Buddhism began as an offspring of Hinduism in the country of India. The founder was Siddhartha Gautama. It is not easy to give an accurate historical account of the life of Gautama, since no biography was recorded until hundreds of years after his death. Today, much of his life story is clouded in myths and legends which arose after his death. Even the best historians of our day have several different--and even contradictory--accounts of Gautama's life.

Siddhartha Gautama was born in approximately 560 B.C. in northern India. His father Suddhodana was the ruler over a district near the Himalayas, which is today the country of Nepal. Suddhodana sheltered his son from the outside world and confined him to the palace where he surrounded Gautama with pleasures and wealth. Despite his father's efforts, Gautama one day saw the darker side of life on a trip he took outside the palace walls.

He saw four things that forever changed his life: an old man, a sick man, a dead man, and a beggar. Deeply distressed by the suffering he saw, he decided to leave the luxury of palace life and begin a quest to find the answer to the problem of pain and human suffering.

Gautama left his family and traveled the country seeking wisdom. He studied the Hindu scriptures under Brahmin priests, but became disillusioned with the teachings of Hinduism. He then devoted himself to a life of extreme asceticism in the jungle. Legend has it that he eventually learned to exist on one grain of rice a day which reduced his body to a skeleton. He soon concluded, however, that asceticism did not lead to peace and self realization but merely weakened the mind and body.

Gautama eventually turned to a life of meditation. While deep in meditation under a fig tree known as the "Bohdi" tree (meaning, "tree of wisdom"), Gautama experienced the highest degree of God-consciousness called "Nirvana". Gautama then became known as "Buddha", the "enlightened one." He believed he had found the answers to the questions of pain and suffering. His message now needed to be proclaimed to the whole world. As he began his teaching ministry, he gained a quick audience with the people of India since many had become disillusioned with Hinduism. By the time of his death at age 80, Buddhism had become a major force in India. Three centuries later it had spread to all of Asia. Buddha never claimed to be deity but rather a "way-shower." However, seven hundred years

later, followers of Buddha began to worship him as deity.(2)

The Way of Salvation

The question Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, sought to answer was, Why is there pain and suffering? Also, he held to the Hindu belief of reincarnation: after death one returns to earthly life in a higher or lower form of life according to his good or bad deeds. This belief prompted a second question that needed to be answered, "How does one break this rebirth cycle?" The basic teachings of Buddhism, therefore, focus on what Gautama believed to be the answer to these questions. These basic tenants are found in the Four Noble Truths and the Eight-fold Path. Let us begin with the Four Noble Truths.

The First Noble Truth is that there is pain and suffering in the world. Gautama realized that pain and suffering are omnipresent in all of nature and human life. To exist means we will all encounter suffering. Birth is painful and so is death. Sickness and old age are painful. Throughout life, all living things encounter suffering.

The Second Noble Truth relates to the cause of suffering. Gautama believed the root cause of suffering is desire. It is the craving for wealth, happiness, and other forms of selfish enjoyment which cause suffering. These cravings can never be satisfied for they are rooted in ignorance.

The Third Noble Truth is the end of all suffering. Suffering will cease when a person can rid himself of all desires.

The Fourth Noble Truth is the extinguishing of all desire by following the eight-fold path. "The eight-fold path is a system of therapy designed to develop habits which will release people from the restrictions caused by ignorance and craving."(3)

Here are the eight steps in following the eight-fold path.

The first is the Right Views. One must accept the four noble truths.

Step two is the Right Resolve. One must renounce all desires and any thoughts like lust, bitterness, and cruelty. He must harm no living creature.

Step three is the Right Speech. One must speak only truth. There can be no lying, slander, or vain talk.

Step four is the Right Behavior. One must abstain from sexual immorality, stealing, and all killing.

Step five is the Right Occupation. One must work in an occupation that benefits others and harms no one.

Step six is the Right Effort. One must seek to eliminate any evil qualities within and prevent any new ones from arising. One should seek to attain good and moral qualities and develop those already possessed. Seek to grow in maturity and perfection until universal love is attained.

Step seven is the Right Contemplation. One must be observant, contemplative, and free of desire and sorrow.

The eighth is the Right Meditation. After freeing oneself of all desires and evil, a person must concentrate his efforts in meditation so that he can overcome any sensation of pleasure or pain and enter a state of transcending consciousness and attain a state of perfection. Buddhists believe that through self-effort one can attain the state of peace and eternal bliss called Nirvana.

Karma, Samsara, and Nirvana

Three important concepts in understanding Buddhism are "karma", "Samsara", and "Nirvana".

"Karma" refers to the law of cause and effect in a person's life, reaping what one has sown. Buddhists believe that every person must go through a process of birth and rebirth until he reaches the state of nirvana in which he breaks this cycle. According to the law of karma, "You are what you are and do what you do, as a result of what you were and did in a previous incarnation, which in turn was the inevitable outcome of what you were and did in still earlier incarnations."(4) For a Buddhist, what one will be in the next life depends on one's actions in this present life. Buddha believed, unlike Hinduism, that a person can break the rebirth cycle no matter what class he is born into.

The second key concept to understand is the law of "Samsara" or "Transmigration". This is one of the most perplexing and difficult concepts in Buddhism to understand. The law of Samsara holds that everything is in a birth and rebirth

cycle. Buddha taught that people do not have individual souls. The existence of an individual self or ego is an illusion. There is no eternal substance of a person, which goes through the rebirth cycle. What is it then that goes through the cycle if not the individual soul? What goes through the rebirth cycle is only a set of feelings, impressions, present moments, and the karma that is passed on. "In other words, as one process leads to another, ... so one's human personality in one existence is the direct cause of the type of individuality which appears in the next."(5) The new individual in the next life will not be exactly the same person, but there will be several similarities. Just how close in identity they will be, Buddha did not define.

The third key concept is "Nirvana". The term means "the blowing out" of existence. Nirvana is very different from the Christian concept of heaven. Nirvana is not a place like heaven but rather a state of being. What exactly it is, Buddha never really articulated.

Nirvana is an eternal state of being. It is the state in which the law of karma, and the rebirth cycle come to an end. It is the end of suffering, a state where there are no desires and the individual consciousness comes to an end. Although to our Western minds this may sound like annihilation, Buddhists would object to such a notion. Gautama never gave an exact description of Nirvana, but his closest reply was this. "There is disciples, a condition, where there is neither earth nor water, neither air nor light, neither limitless space, nor limitless time, neither any kind of being, neither ideation nor non-ideation, neither this world nor that world. There is neither arising nor passing-away, nor dying, neither cause nor effect, neither change nor standstill."(6) Although no Buddhist really understands the condition of Nirvana, it is their eternal hope.

God and Buddhism

It may have occurred to the reader that in our discussion thus far no mention has been made of God or an eternal deity. It is clear that Gautama, the founder of Buddhism, did not claim to be divine. He claimed to be the one to point the way to Nirvana, but it was up to each individual to find his own way there.

The concept of a personal God does not fit into the Buddhist system of religion. Today there

are many sects of Buddhism. Many differ in their concept of the divine and of Buddha. In general, Buddhists are pantheistic in their view of God. Many view God as an impersonal force which is made up of all living things and holds the universe together.

Here are what some of the most prominent of scholars say of the Buddhist view of God. Dr. John Noss states, "there is no sovereign Person in the heavens holding all together in unity, there is only the ultimate impersonal unity of being itself, whose peace enfolds the individual self when it ceases to call itself 'I' and dissolves in the featureless purity of Nirvana, as a drop of spray is merged in its mother sea."(7)

Here is what the late Dr. Suzuki, one of the greatest teachers of Zen Buddhism, says about his concept of God: "If God after making the world puts Himself outside it, He is no longer God. If He separates Himself from the world or wants to separate Himself, He is not God. The world is not the world when it is separated from God. God must be in the world and the world in God."(8)

Since Buddhism in general does not believe in a personal God or divine being, it does not have worship, praying, or praising of a divine being. It offers no form of redemption, forgiveness, heavenly hope, or final judgment. Buddhism is, therefore, more of a moral philosophy, an ethical way of life.

Professor Kraemer describes the Buddhist system as "a non-theistic ethical discipline, a system of self training, anthropocentric, stressing ethics and mind-culture to the exclusion of theology."(9)

Since Gautama's death, many sects have developed within Buddhism. Many of these sects differ in many fundamental ways and comparing them to one another is like comparing two separate religions. Many sects have developed their own unique concept of God. Some are pantheistic in their view of God. Others are atheistic. Still others have developed a polytheistic system of gods. Some have combined pantheism and polytheism. Several sects have elevated Gautama (or Buddha) to the level of a savior or divine being although it is clear he never claimed to be a deity. Other sects have combined some of the doctrines of God from other religions with Buddhism.

Since Buddha never emphasized his concept of the divine, Buddhism is left with some life's deepest questions unanswered, questions such as the origin of the universe and the purpose of man's existence.

A Comparative Study of Christianity and Buddhism

It is quite clear that Christianity and Buddhism differ from one another in fundamental ways. Some sects of Buddhism have tried to synchronize the two together. However, the two are so different, they cannot both be right at the same time, nor can the two be blended together. Here is a comparison of these two religions.

Much of the Buddhist scriptures and sayings attributed to Gautama were written about four hundred years after his death. By the time they were written, Buddhism had split into many sects. What do we have then? Not even the best scholars are not sure of the accuracy of the Buddhist scriptures. In Christianity, however, we have an accurate historical account written by eyewitnesses to Jesus and the events surrounding His life.

The two differ in their concept of God. For Buddhists in general, the Absolute does not play a vital role in daily living. Gautama said little about his concept of God. Buddha denied the existence of a personal God but was monistic in his view of the Absolute as an impersonal force made up of all living things. The Bible teaches of a God who rules the universe, and cares for man in a personal way. Psalm 46:10 states, "Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted among the earth."

It is clear that Buddha never claimed to be deity. Although several sects have elevated him to the status of a god, he clearly claimed to be only the way-shower to Nirvana. Jesus, however, claimed to be God and not simply a way-shower but instead the only way to eternal life. Jesus said in John 14:6, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 1:1 also states, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

Buddhism offers neither assurance of forgiveness or eternal life. Buddhists hope to enter into the state of Nirvana, but there is no clear, objective proof or teaching on what occurs

beyond the grave. Even Buddha himself was not certain what lay beyond death. He left no clear teaching on Nirvana or eternity. What he did leave are philosophical speculations. Today the body of Buddha lies in a grave in Kusinara, at the foot of the Himalaya Mountains. The facts of life after death still remain an unsolved mystery in Buddhism.

In Christianity we have One who amazed His audience because He taught eternal truths with authority. His authority came from the fact that He existed before creation, and He proved His claims by rising from the dead. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is a proven fact of history and clearly demonstrates Christ's authority over sin and death. When witnessing to a Buddhist, ask him this: "Do you have tangible proof of what occurs after death?" All the Buddhist has is hope in a teaching Buddha was not sure of. As Christians, we have a certain hope in a risen Savior. There is no guessing what happens beyond the grave because Christ alone has conquered the grave.

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2. Kenneth Boa, "Cults, World Religions, and the Occult" (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1977) p. 35.
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4. Davis Taylor and Clark Offner, *The World's Religions*, Norman Anderson, ed. (Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 1975), p. 174.
5. John Noss, *Man's Religions* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1968), p. 182.
6. Taylor & Offner, p. 177.
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8. D. T. Suzuki, *The Field of Zen* (London: The Buddhist Society, 1969), p. 16.
9. Taylor & Offner, p. 177.

HINDUISM

Though Hinduism may seem far removed from our everyday experience, it's becoming increasingly important that we as Christians understand this mysterious religion from India. This is so, if for no other reason than that Hinduism claims 1/6 of the world's population, with over 750 million followers worldwide. But it's also important because its influence is being felt more and more in our own country.

Most of us have had at least some exposure to what has become known as the New Age movement. If so, we have probably realized that Hinduism is the wellspring of a good deal of New Age thinking. Most of us are probably also aware that an increasing number of Asian Indians are residing in the U.S. We may be surprised, in fact, to learn that there are approximately 200 Hindu temples or Hindu centers in the U.S. Many believe that due to its eclectic nature, Hinduism has the potential to serve as a major vehicle for uniting much of the non-Christian religious world.

The appeal of Hinduism to Western culture is not difficult to comprehend. For one, Hinduism is comfortable with evolutionary thinking. As modern science emphasizes our physical evolution, so Hinduism emphasizes our spiritual evolution. As much of modern psychology emphasizes the basic goodness and unlimited potential of human nature, so Hinduism emphasizes man's essential divinity. As modern philosophy emphasizes the relativity of all truth claims, so Hinduism tolerates many seemingly contradictory religious beliefs. As a religion that also emphasizes the primacy of the spiritual over material reality, Hinduism appeals to many that are disillusioned with strictly material pursuits.

The word "Hindu" is of Persian origin, and simply means "Indian." The word was probably

first used in its modern sense by the Muslim invaders of India about A.D. 1200 to distinguish the religion of the Indians from their own. Though there are some core beliefs common to virtually all Hindus, there really is no "Hindu orthodoxy"--no hard and fast dogma that all Hindus must believe. It's actually a family of gradually developing beliefs and practices.

Hinduism has its roots in the interrelationship of two basic religious systems: that of the ancient civilization residing in the Indus River Valley from the third millennium B.C., and the religious beliefs brought to India by the Aryan people (possibly from the Baltic region) who began infiltrating the Indus Valley sometime after 2000 B.C.

The religion of the Aryans is described in the writings of "holy men" contained in the Vedas (meaning "knowledge" or "wisdom"). The Vedas are four collections of writings composed between about 1500 and 500 B.C., which form the basis for Hindu beliefs, and which reveal a gradual development of religious ideas. The later sections of the Vedas are known as the Upanishads. These Vedic writings are considered inspired. Later Hindu writings, including the renowned Bhagavad Gita, are of lesser authority, but widely popular.

Hindu Beliefs about God and the World

An understanding of the Hindu beliefs about God is important even if we don't know any Hindus or people from India because we are all in contact with the New Age movement, and it draws its ideas about God from Hinduism. What then do Hindus believe about God?

The early portions of the Hindu scriptures known as the Vedas describe a number of deities

who for the most part are personifications of natural phenomena, such as storms and fire. Prayers and sacrifices were offered to these gods. An extensive system of priestly rituals and sacrifices was eventually developed which served as means of obtaining the blessing of these gods.

The later portions of the Vedas, called the Upanishads, reflect a significant development in Hinduism's concept of the divine. Many of the Upanishads, instead of speaking of a multitude of gods, refer to an ultimate reality beyond our comprehension called Brahman. Though Brahman is impersonal in nature, it is sometimes referred to in personal terms by the name Isvara.

Along with this idea of a single divine reality, the Upanishads also teach that at the core of our being (referred to as "Atman") we are identical with this ultimate reality.

A popular saying in Hinduism is "Atman is Brahman!" In fact, all living things are Brahman at their innermost core! In addition, instead of ritual sacrifice, intuitive knowledge of the oneness of all things came to be endorsed as the way of contact with divine reality. Also found in the Upanishads is the teaching that the material world (including our conscious personalities) is less than fully real. The word "maya" is used to designate the power by which God, or ultimate reality, brought this less than real world into existence.

Though this monistic or pantheistic philosophy provided a comprehensive intellectual understanding of the divine reality for Hindus, it lacked a strong appeal to the heart. As a result, just before the dawn of the Christian era, a great transformation occurred in Hinduism, spurred particularly by the writing of the Bhagavad Gita, the "New Testament" of Hinduism. The Gita recounts the exploits of the god Krishna and emphasizes the importance of personal devotion to a god as the essence of true religion, rather than intuitive knowledge of the oneness of all things.

From this time forward, these two major streams of Hindu thought and practice grew and developed--the more intellectual and philosophical stream that emphasized the oneness of all things, and the stream that emphasized personal devotion to a god. The latter stream has predominated among the common people of India to this present day. Chief among the gods so venerated are Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the

preserver), and Shiva (the destroyer). In India there are many temples devoted to Shiva (or to one of his "wives," such as Kali), or to Vishnu (or to one of his ten incarnations known as avatars). All in all, it is often stated that Hinduism claims 330 million gods and goddesses!

One might wonder how such a multitude of beliefs about the divine could possibly co-exist in one religion. But they do. There is, however, a widespread recognition that none of the personal gods of Hinduism is in any way exclusive or unique. They are all simply different ways of conceiving of the one reality behind all things Brahman.

Foundational Hindu Beliefs

Next we must turn our attention to two core beliefs of Hindus: (a) what they believe about the source of evil and suffering and (b) what they believe about life after death.

The first of these core beliefs is the doctrine of karma. The word karma means "action." But the religious concept has more to do with the results or consequences of actions. The doctrine of karma states that every thought and action results in certain consequences born by the actor or thinker. If a person lies or steals, he will be wronged in some way in the future. Hindus believe that all suffering is due to one's own past actions, in this or in a previous life. Some believe that karma implies strict determinism or fatalism (that one must simply resign himself to living out his karma). Most, however, believe that though our present is determined by our past, nonetheless we can influence our future by conducting ourselves in a proper manner in the present.

Some have equated the doctrine of karma with the statement in Galatians 6:7 that "whatever a man sows, that he will also reap." It is certainly a biblical teaching that our actions have consequences--for good or ill. But this is not the same as believing that every experience in life is a consequence of one's own past actions. This is definitely not a biblical idea. The second core belief of Hinduism is the doctrine of reincarnation, or transmigration of souls, called "samsara." Since it is impossible that all of one's karma be experienced in one lifetime, the Hindu scriptures state that after death individual souls are "reborn" in this world, in another body--human or otherwise. The nature of one's rebirth is

determined by the karma resulting from past actions.

Closely associated with the doctrine of reincarnation is that of "ahimsa" or non-injury to living things. This is the core moral value of Hinduism, the protection of all life (which is ultimately divine), and is the main reason why some Hindus are vegetarian.

Also associated with reincarnation is the "caste system." According to Hindu teaching, there are four basic castes or social classes (and thousands of sub-groups within the castes). Each has its own rules and obligations pertaining to nearly every facet of life. At the top are the Brahmins or priests. Second in rank are the Kshatriyas or warriors and rulers. Third are the Vaisyas or merchants and farmers. Below these are the Shudras or laboring class. Salvation is possible only for the top three castes, who are called the "twice born." Outside the caste system are the untouchables or outcastes. Though outlawed in India in the late 1940s, many in the countryside are still considered outcastes.

One's caste is determined at birth by his or her own personal karma. Attempts, therefore, to bring about social change or to improve one's social position would appear to run contrary to the law of karma and the caste system.

It's little wonder that the chief aim of the Hindu is to experience release or liberation from this cycle of death and rebirth caused by karma. Hindus call this liberation "moksha."

Hindu Ways of Salvation

Why do New Agers practice yoga? Why are they so devoted to meditation? It may come as some surprise that these practices are central to the Hindu search for salvation!

We noted earlier that the chief aim in Hinduism is to gain release from the cycle of reincarnation caused by karma--the consequences of past actions, in this or in previous lives! Now we want to look at the primary ways in which followers of Hinduism seek to achieve this salvation--liberation from earthly existence.

Before discussing the three primary ways of salvation in Hinduism, we must mention the four goals of life permissible to Hindus. Hinduism recognizes that in the course of many lifetimes people may legitimately give themselves to any of these goals. The first is the goal of pleasure or

enjoyment, particularly through love and sexual desire. This is called "kama." The second legitimate aim in life is for wealth and success. This is called "artha." The third aim in life is moral duty or "dharma." One who gives himself to dharma renounces personal pleasure and power, to seek the common good. The final aim in life, however, is "moksha"--liberation from the cycle of lives in this material world, and entrance into Nirvana.

Hindus recognize three possible paths to moksha, or salvation. The first is the way of works or "karma yoga." This is a very popular way of salvation and lays emphasis on the idea that liberation may be obtained by fulfilling one's familial and social duties thereby overcoming the weight of bad karma one has accrued. The Code of Manu lists many of these rules. Most important among them are certain rituals conducted at various stages of life.

The second way of salvation is the way of knowledge or "jnana yoga." The basic premise of the way of knowledge is that the cause of our bondage to the cycle of rebirths in this world is ignorance or "avidya." According to the predominant view among those committed to this way, our ignorance consists of the mistaken belief that we are individual selves and not one with the ultimate divine reality called Brahman. It is this ignorance that gives rise to our bad actions which result in bad karma. Salvation is achieved through attaining a state of consciousness in which we realize our identity with Brahman. This is achieved through deep meditation, often as a part of the discipline of yoga.

The third and final way of salvation is the way of devotion or "bhakti yoga." This is the way most favored by the common people of India; it satisfies the longing for a more emotional and personal approach to religion. It is self-surrender to one of the many personal gods and goddesses of Hinduism. Such devotion is expressed through acts of worship "puja" at the temple, in the home, through participation in the many festivals in honor of such gods, and through pilgrimages to one of the numerous holy sites in India. In the way of devotion, the focus is one obtaining the mercy and help of a god in finding release from the cycle of reincarnation. Some Hindus conceive of ultimate salvation as absorption into the one divine reality, with all loss of individual

existence. Others conceive of it as heavenly existence in adoration of the personal God.

A Christian Response to Hinduism

The editor of the periodical *Hinduism Today* said not long ago that a "small army of yoga missionaries" has been trained to "set upon the Western world." And in his own words, "They may not call themselves Hindu, but Hindus know where yoga came from and where it goes."

What should be the appropriate Christian perspective on this religion of the East that is making such an impact in the West? At the outset we must say that as Christians we concur with Hindus on a couple of points. Hindus are correct in their recognition that all is not right with the world and with human existence in it. They are correct as well in suggesting that the ultimate remedy to the human dilemma is spiritual in nature. Beyond these two points, however, there's little common ground between Hinduism and Christianity. Let's note just a few of the more important areas of divergence.

First, Hinduism lacks any understanding that God created this world for a good purpose. It is common for Hindus to speak of God bringing the universe into existence simply as a "playful" exercise of His power. Also lacking is a conception of God as infinitely holy and righteous and as the One to whom we as His creatures are accountable for the way we conduct our lives.

The second major area of contrast between Hinduism and Christianity is the conception of human nature and of the source of our estrangement from God. According to Hindu

teaching, man is divine at the core of his being. He is one with God! The problem is that man is ignorant of this fact. He is deceived by his focus on this temporal and material world, and this ignorance gives rise to acts that result in bad karma and traps us in the cycle of reincarnation.

According to the biblical teaching, however, the source of our alienation from God (and ultimately of all that is imperfect in this world), is not ignorance of our divinity, but our sinful rebellion against God and His purpose for our lives.

This leads to the third and final point of contrast--the way of salvation. According to most Hindu teaching, salvation from the cycle of reincarnation is achieved by our own efforts--whether through good works, meditation, or devotion to a deity. According to the Bible, however, our spiritual need is for deliverance from God's judgment on our sin and for restoration to a life under His direction and care. This salvation can be provided only by God's gracious and undeserved action in our behalf.

It is true that in certain Hindu groups there is a similar emphasis on God's grace (probably as a result of past Christian influence). But even here, there is a major distinction. The Hindu teaching about grace sees no need for atonement for sin, but simply offers forgiveness without any satisfaction of the judgment on sin required by a holy God. In contrast, the Christian gospel is this: God the Son became a man, died a sacrificial death on the cross, making real forgiveness of real sins against the real God possible to those who place their trust and obedience in Christ.

The Religion of Islam

"Islam" means "submission". A follower of the religion of Islam is called a "muslim" which means "one who is in submission to the divine will."

Islam is the youngest of the 5 major religions of the world. According to the best estimates, there are 800,000,000 to 1 billion Muslims worldwide. At present, over 20 million Muslims reside in Europe. There are now over 2000 mosques in England! The former Soviet Union, the 4th largest Muslim nation in the world, has 53 million adherents representing 1/5 of the total

population. After ethnic Russians, Muslims are the largest population group but are growing 4 times as fast, and may out-number them in less than 20 years. Currently, there are 48 nations where adherents of Islam are in the majority.

The current resurgence of Islam began with the oil cartel following the Yom Kippur War of 1973. Millions of dollars from enormous foundations are being spend to fuel the worldwide expansion of Islam. There are now more adherents of Islam in the U.S. than Episcopalians!

The greatest threat to world peace and stability in the next decade or two, may be the result of the religion of Islam. Almost every controversy in the Middle East can be traced to this religion, either through intra-party squabbles, or Islam verses non-Islam.

Historical Background

The religion was founded by Muhammad who was born in 570 A.D. in a small village (Mecca) along a caravan route in what is today known as Saudi Arabia. The young Muhammad, an orphan at an early age, had an inquiring mind and an intense interest in religion. The prevailing religion at this time in Arabia was one of polytheism and animism. He inquired of both Judaism and Christianity. The Christianity that he came into contact was of a very heretical sort. Christianity at this time was losing its vitality and was about to enter the Dark Ages.

At about 25 years of age Muhammad married a wealthy widow 15 years his senior. Due to the ensuing economic security, Muhammad turned the more to religious contemplation often retiring to caves in the wilderness for long periods of time. He practiced fasting and was prone to dreams. He had a profound dissatisfaction with the polytheism and superstition of his day. He received his first of many "revelations" at 40 years of age, and thought at first he was possessed of a demon. Later he claims he was visited by the angel Gabriel who informed him to warn the people. This marked the beginning of his prophetic office.

The response in Mecca to his claims was small and limited mainly to family members. Soon he and his followers (around 200) were forced to flee. This flight to Medina occurred in 622 A.D. and is known as "The Hegira". In Medina, Muhammad became a leader and theocratic head of the town. Muslims reckon time from the Hegira. 622 A.D. = the year 1 A.H.

In less than a 100 years Islam spread from the Atlantic Ocean across central Asia deep into India. This empire lasted over a 1000 years. Only a handful of countries have ever reversed themselves after becoming an Islamic nation in 14 centuries of history!

The Belief System of Islam

Islam is a religion of rigid monotheism and an all-encompassing law. It is a belief system, i.e., a world and life view. Everything is seen from an Islamic perspective. Islam's five fundamental articles of faith:

1. *There is no God but God.* "Allah" is the Arabic word for "God". This god is the sovereign Lord of the universe. Everything that occurs is according to his will. He is also the source of both good and evil. The Koran assigns 99 names to Allah. The 100th name is secret and is known only to the camel!
2. God gave prophets (the Koran mentions 28) to every age from Adam to Muhammad. Muhammad, the last and greatest prophet, was sinless as were all the other prophets. Jesus was the prophet of the previous age. They affirm that Jesus was born of a virgin and performed many miracles, but they vehemently deny that he was God, was crucified, or rose from the dead.
3. Islam believes that each age was given a book through its prophet, but all have been lost except portions of the Old Testament and the Gospel of Jesus, which was corrupted by Christians. The Koran ("Quran") was given to Muhammad and supercedes all other revelations. The Koran is divided into 114 Suras (chapters) and was given directly to Muhammad. To the Muslim, every word of the Koran is the Word of God and is of an eternal nature. In otherwords, it existed in heaven prior to being dictated by the angel Gabriel. The Koran governs every area of the life of a Muslim, from how to prevent crime to the proper use of a toothpick! It is often the only constitution of some Muslim countries.
4. There are good and bad angels. The chief good angel is Gabriel. The chief fallen angel is Shaitan (Satan).
5. There will be a day of judgement in which all the dead will be resurrected. Allah will be the judge and each person will be sent either to heaven, a place of sensual pleasure, or hell, a place of torment. Hell is for those who opposed Allah and his prophet, Muhammad. Salvation is attained by the quality of a person's obedience to the law as determined by Allah. Muhammad is seen as a mediator who helps a person attain salvation. The

bridge to paradise is likened to a razor-sharp sword; Muhammad awaits to assist in crossing.

Each Muslim has Five Pillars of Faith or obligatory duties:

1. Reciting the creed. "There is no God but Allah". The word "quran" in Arabic means "to recite".
2. Pray five times a day facing Mecca.
3. Tithe to the poor and for the furtherance of Islam. It varies from 2 to 10 per cent.
4. Fast for one month each year during the 9th month, the lunar month of Ramadan. This month of fasting is during the day only. Feasting takes place after sundown.
5. Make a pilgrimage to Mecca a least once during a lifetime. A male who makes a pilgrimage to Mecca is called a "Haji" a title of honor similar to the English "Sir".

The concept of "Jihad" ("holy war") is sometimes referred to as a 6th pillar. Jihad is also a religious duty of all adult males who must commit to any summons of war against infidels. Any who die in such a war are assured paradise. Today there is controversy as to who in the Arab world can legally declare a Jihad. In the past, this has been a most successful form of "evangelism". Polytheistic cultures have been given the option of submission or death. Historically, Jews and Christians, since they were considered "people of the Book" were given a choice of submission or paying tribute (taxes).

Other Muslim beliefs

The unforgivable sin to a Muslim is to attribute deity to anything other than God himself. To claim that Jesus is God or the Son of God is blasphemy to a Muslim. They believe that God is unbegotten and begets not. Most Muslims believe

Jesus predicted the coming of Muhammad when He said that He would send "another Comforter" in John 14:16. Muslims even refer to Muhammad as the "Holy Spirit." Muslims are very anti-Trinitarian. The Koran teaches that Christians believe in a Trinity of God, the Father, Jesus, the Son, and Mary the Mother! Most Muslims believe Judas died on the cross, not Jesus. God caused Jesus to be ascended into heaven. Most Muslims do not separate church and state, i.e. politics and religion. There is no such thing as secular and sacred. This is a cause of some of their intra-mural conflicts. Occasionally a ruler attempts to secularize the state. For this Sadat was assassinated. Turkey gets away with it, but it is resented in much of the Muslim world. The Koran allows a man to have up to four wives if he believes he can treat them equally!

The Koran teaches that if a Muslim soldier kills another Muslim soldier in an unjust war he will go to hell! In the recent war, many Iraqi soldiers did not believe it was just war, hence they deserted in large numbers (and probably for other reasons as well!). Muslim soldiers can declare a victory in battle even though they were stomped by the enemy, because to a Muslim, win or lose, it is the will of Allah. So if you lose, you win, because it is the will of Allah. The Koran teaches that Muslims should take up arms against infidels. The following quote from the Koran should give insight into Saddam's behavior:

"When ye encounter unbelievers, strike off their heads until ye have made a great slaughter among them, and bind them in bonds; and either give them free demission afterwards or exact a ransom... Verily if God please he could take vengeance on them, without your assistance, but he commandeth you to fight his battles... And to those who fight in defense of God's true religion, God... will lead them into paradise..."

Roman Catholicism

Was Peter the First Pope?

by Phil Sanders

The media has constantly reported on the death John Paul II and the selection of a new pope. Roman Catholics regard Peter as the first pope. They believe Jesus gave the care of the

entire church to him and that he, as bishop of Rome, passed down that authority to the succeeding bishops of Rome.

If Roman Catholics can establish the primacy of Peter and apostolic succession through the bishop of Rome, they have a foundation for their beliefs. But if Scripture does not regard Peter as a

pope, then Roman Catholicism has no place to stand. Its authority is human and self-assumed, and one day it will be uprooted (Matt. 15:14).

What is the Pope?

The word pope literally means “papa.” This is just one of several titles for the bishop of Rome. He is also known as *Summus Pontifex*, *Pontifex Maximus*, *Servus servorum Dei*, Vicar of Christ, Vicar of God, prince of the apostles, and King of kings. A vicar is a person who is authorized to perform the functions of another, a substitute. Catholics believe the pope can perform the functions of Jesus Christ and is the supreme headship of the Church on earth. Pope Boniface VIII in 1302 AD decreed in the *Unam Sanctam* “that for salvation it is necessary that every human creature be subject to the authority of the Roman pontiff” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “*Unam Sanctam*”).

The Lord taught against religious titles, “But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers. And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ” (Matt. 23:8-10, NASB). If Jesus condemned religious titles, how much more will He condemn those who presume authority?

To claim that Peter and succeeding bishops of Rome become in turn the “head of the church” is to claim more than can be proved. Paul clearly said that God put Jesus “above all rule and authority and . . . gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:21-23).

Seven Reasons to Reject Peter as the First Pope

1. Peter was a married man.

The gospels speak of Peter’s mother-in-law (Matt. 8:14; Mark 1:30; Luke 4: 38). Paul asked in 1 Cor. 9:5, “Do we not have a right to take along a believing wife, even as the rest of the apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?” Paul said in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Tit. 1:6, 7 that an overseer [*episcopos* or bishop] must be “the husband of one wife.”

The Spanish Council of Elvira (295-302 AD), canon 33, imposed celibacy upon bishops, priests, and deacons. “If they continue to live with their wives and beget children after their ordination, they are to be deposed” (*Catholic Encyclopedia*, “*Celibacy of Clergy*”). The Council of Lateran imposed celibacy on all clergy was imposed in 1123 AD. Once more, men have forbidden precisely what God commands.

2. Peter did not regard himself as the Rock

Catholics point to Matthew 16 for proof that Jesus founded the church on Peter himself. Jesus said to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall have been loosed in heaven” (Matt. 16:17-19).

Catholics argue that Jesus in this passage said He would build his church upon Peter and gave the keys (authority) of the kingdom uniquely to him. The original Greek, however, distinguishes Peter from the rock. While Jesus gives Simon the name “Peter” (*petros*, masculine), He speaks of the rock (*petra*) with a feminine word. *Petros* refers to a stone that a man might carry, whereas *petra* refers to a huge rock, cliff or ledge. The distinctions between masculine and feminine and between large and small are obvious.

Catholic scholars say Jesus did not speak Greek here but Aramaic, and the word “Cephas” is the same whether masculine or feminine. The Scriptures we have, however, are only in Greek; and Matthew, an apostle and eyewitness to this event, made the distinction. Jesus had already noted that wise men build upon the rock (*petra*) of His word (Matt. 7:24-27). Jesus built His church on Peter’s revealed confession that He was the Christ, the Son of the living God, not on Peter.

If Peter himself were the rock upon which the church is founded, he did not know it. He pointed to Jesus as the chief corner stone; there is salvation in no one else (Acts 4:10-12). Peter said, “Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious, and whoever

believes in him will not be put to shame.” Jesus was “A stone of stumbling, and a rock (petra) of offense” (1 Pet. 2: 4-8).

Peter introduced himself as “an apostle of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 1:1) but never the “prince of the apostles” or the rock on which the church is built. In 1 Pet. 5:1 Peter says, “I exhort the elders among you, as *your* fellow elder.” In 5:4, he speaks of Jesus as the Chief Shepherd. Nowhere does he argue for supremacy, claim to be Christ’s vicar, or exalt himself above his fellow elders.

Paul points to Jesus as the foundation of the church. In Eph. 2:19-22, Paul says of God’s household is “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus Himself being the corner *stone*, in whom the whole building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together into a dwelling of God in the Spirit.”

3. Peter did not render the decision at the Jerusalem council.

While Peter helped introduce the problem at the Jerusalem council in Acts 15, James actually rendered the decision. James said, “Therefore it is my judgment...” (Acts 15:19-20) and attributed his authority to the Holy Spirit (15:28). If Peter were pope, he would have had the final word.

4. Paul rebuked Peter for hypocrisy.

“But when Cephas came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he stood condemned. For prior to the coming of certain men from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he *began* to withdraw and hold himself aloof, fearing the party of the circumcision” (Gal. 2:11-12). If the pope indeed stands as a substitute for Christ, how is it that he could be rebuked for his behavior?

Paul argued that he ranked equally with Peter. Never once does he indicate he is subject to Peter in any way. Paul never reported to Peter about his mission trips. Paul said those of “high reputation” (James, Cephas and John), “pillars” (not the foundation), contributed nothing to me (Gal. 2:6-9). The impartial God assigned Peter to be the apostle to the circumcised, while Paul would be the apostle to the Gentiles. The idea that

Peter was responsible for “all” churches is a myth.

Paul mentioned 26 people in his personal greetings to the Romans but not Peter. If Peter had been the bishop of Rome for 25 years prior to his death, as the tradition claims, why did Paul not even mention Peter in his epistle? If Peter is *Pontifex Maximus* and “prince of the apostles,” why does Paul neglect to greet him or acknowledge him?

5. There was to be equality among the apostles.

In Matthew 20:20-28, James and John with their mother requested, “Command that in Your kingdom these two sons of mine may sit one on Your right and one on Your left.” This is an odd request if Peter is supreme. If the Lord had given the chief place to Peter in Matthew 16:18-19, why would James and John ask this question in chapter 20? Upon hearing the brothers’ request, the other ten became indignant with the two brothers. Jesus did not want create “supreme pontiffs” but rather servants. Jesus said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and *their* great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matt. 20:25-28).

6. Peter did not accept worship

When Peter entered his house, Cornelius fell at his feet and worshiped him. But Peter raised him up, saying, “Stand up; I too am *just* a man” (Acts 10:25-26). Peter had no pretensions of divinity. Catholics require bowing before and displaying acts of worship to a man, the Pope. In presumption Popes have proclaimed themselves “God on earth” for all Catholics to adore. “The Pope is not only the representative of Jesus Christ, he is Jesus Christ himself” (*Catholic National* July, 1895). Leo XIII said, “We [popes] hold upon this earth the place of God Almighty.” The title “*Lord God the Pope*” is found within a gloss of *Extravagantes of Pope John XXII*, title 14, chapter 4. The difference between the Peter of

the Bible and the arrogance of popes is astonishing.

7. No apostle or inspired writer ever hinted that Peter was supreme.

If Peter were pope, the Scripture would have revealed it. Inspired men were obligated to reveal the truth—the whole truth and the whole counsel of God (John 16:13; Acts 20:27). One finds no evidence that Peter regarded himself as supreme or that others taught he was supreme. One finds no evidence of Peter being treated like a god or being the final answer to questions. In the absence of any Scriptural evidence, surely one must admit that Peter was never a pope.

If Peter were a pope, one would expect him to act like popes do. Peter never celebrated Mass; prayed to Mary or to “Saints”; used beads to pray; used “holy water”; practiced celibacy; or presented his ring or foot to be kissed. If he doesn’t look like a pope, walk like a pope, or talk like a pope, he isn’t a pope.

<p>Is the Pope Infallible? Phil Sanders</p>

In the days of Jeremiah, presumptuous men arose and claimed to speak for God. Jeremiah said, “Thus says the Lord of hosts, ‘Do not listen to the words of the prophets who are prophesying to you. They are leading you into futility; they speak a vision of their own imagination, not from the mouth of the Lord’” (Jeremiah 23:16, All quotations from the New American Standard Bible, unless otherwise noted).

The desire to speak for God is still tempting, and some men thinking they have this gift deceive themselves (23:26). The Lord said, “I did not send *these* prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they prophesied” (23:21). Tragically, they told the people what they wanted to hear and claimed, “The Lord declares.” Claiming to speak from God and truly speaking from God are two different things.

In 1870 the Vatican council proclaimed,

We teach and define that it is a dogma Divinely revealed that the Roman pontiff when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in

discharge of the office of pastor and doctor of all Christians, by virtue of his supreme Apostolic authority, he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church, by the Divine assistance promised to him in Blessed Peter, is possessed of that infallibility with which the Divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed in defining doctrine regarding faith or morals, and that therefore such definitions of the Roman pontiff are of themselves and not from the consent of the Church irreformable (Session IV, Const. de Ecclesiâ Christi, c. iv).

The belief is that God supernaturally protects popes from making errors. This infallibility applies to all Roman Catholic popes and church councils: past, present, and future (Catechism of the Catholic Church, paragraph 891). What this means is that the *ex cathedra* statements of all the church councils and all the popes must agree with one another. Further, the papacy depends upon a direct line of authority back to the apostle Peter, one bishop passing on the primacy to the next. If there is a break in the apostolic succession, then the papacy falls. If the popes are not infallible, the Roman Catholic Church has lost its unique leadership and apostolic authority.

Truth does not contradict truth. If indeed the *ex cathedra* pronouncements of popes and councils are infallible, they will never contradict other infallible pronouncements. If there is even one contradiction, then the doctrine of infallibility cannot be correct.

(Readers, I hesitate to give a title to any man which the Lord forbids. Since “pope” means “papa,” and since Matt. 23:8 forbids calling any man “father,” I will use their names with the understanding that Roman Catholics and others recognize them as popes.)

Zosimus (417-418) reversed the pronouncement of a previous pope and retracted a doctrinal pronouncement he had himself previously made. The Sixth Ecumenical Council (680-681) condemned Honorius as a heretic. Leo II also condemned Honorius. This means that “infallible” popes

condemned other “infallible” popes as heretics.

In 495 Gelasius issued a decree which regarded the Assumption of Mary as heresy and its proponents as heretics. In the sixth century, Hormisdas also condemned this doctrine as heresy. These infallible popes declared a doctrine to be heresy; yet, on November 1, 1950, Pius XII the Roman Catholic Church officially declared the Assumption of Mary to be a dogma of their faith and required people to believe it without question. Pope Pius XII's definition regarding the *Assumption of the Virgin Mary*, has these words: "Hence if anyone, which God forbid, should dare willfully to deny or to call into doubt that which we have defined, let him know that he has fallen away completely from the divine and Catholic Faith." One must wonder whether Gelasius and Hormisdas were infallible or whether Pius XII was infallible. Someone believes a heresy.

In 1864 Pius IX “infallibly” declared the idea of freedom of conscience and freedom of worship is “insanity,” “evil,” “depraved,” and “reprobate” (Syllabus of Errors, section 3). He also declared that non-Catholics living in Catholic countries should not be allowed to publicly practice their religion. In 1888 Leo XIII “infallibly” declared that freedom of thought and freedom of worship are wrong (“On the Nature of Human Liberty,” paragraph 42). In spite of this, the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) gave a “Declaration on Religious Liberty” that states all people have a right to freedom of religion.

Popes and councils through the ages have introduced many new teachings unknown to the Scriptures. Here are just a few:

- In 431 the Council of Ephesus taught the worship of Mary as the Mother of God.
- In 593 Gregory the Great declared the doctrine of purgatory, and in 1439 the Council of Florence declared it a dogma of the church.
- In 607 Boniface III declared himself the universal bishop and took the title Pope. (Gregory, who served as bishop of Rome before him was very much opposed to any universal bishop.)
- John XV decreed the canonization of dead saints, putting them into a special class. The Scriptures instead call all Christians saints (Rom. 1:7; I Cor. 1:2).
- In 1079 Hildebrand decreed priests and other clergymen were to be celibate. If Hildebrand is infallible in this decree, was Paul wrong when he said bishops *must* be husbands (I Tim. 3:2; Tit. 1:5-6)? Was Peter sinning when he traveled with his wife (I Cor. 9:5)?
- In 1184 the Council of Verona decreed the inquisition and death of heretics.
- In 1215 Innocent III. in the Lateran Council decreed Confession of sin to the priest at least once a year. The Bible commands us to confess our sins directly to God and to one another (James 5:16; I Jn. 1:8-9).
- Innocent III decreed the dogma of Transubstantiation in 1215. By this doctrine the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing a wafer into the body of Christ, and then he pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of his people during Mass.
- The Council of Trent in 1546 declared that the Apocryphal Books were to be included in the Bible, although neither Jesus nor the apostles recognized them as inspired.
- On March 5, 1616 a council of Cardinals called by Paul V warned Galileo against holding the heretical views of Nicholas Copernicus, who said the earth moves around the sun. If Paul V were inspired and infallible, he would know that what Galileo taught was true. Paul V was not alone in this; Urban (1633) and Alexander VII (1664) confirmed and republished Paul V's decree against Copernicus.

Popes against Popes

Not all Catholics have assented to the infallibility of the pope. Adrian VI in 1523 said, "It is beyond question that he [the pope] can err even in matters touching the faith. He does this when he teaches heresy by his own judgment or decretal. In truth, many Roman Pontiffs were heretics." In 1324 John XXII condemned as heresy both the Franciscan way of life and Nicholas III's commendation of it. The

Franciscans believed in papal infallibility and criticized John for his lavish lifestyle. To justify contradicting another pope, John produced his Bull *Qui quorundam*, a dogmatic assertion of doctrine made to the entire Church and thus infallible by today's rules. In it John XXII reviled the doctrine of papal infallibility as "the work of the devil."

Sergius III agreed with Stephen VII in pronouncing all ordinations by heretical popes invalid. In *Cum ex Apostolatus officio*, Paul VI declared "by the plenitude of papal power" that all of the acts of heretical popes were null and void. That infallible declaration leaves "apostolic succession" in ruins.

The Sixth Ecumenical council (678-87) condemned Honorius (625-38) as a heretic for believing in monothelism, *i.e.*, believing Jesus only had one will that was divine and not human. Leo II (682-683), publicly condemned Honorius I for undermining the faith of the Church. For centuries each new pope taking office was required to swear by an oath that Honorius had been a heretic and that the council had acted properly in condemning him.

Two people holding opposite opinions can't both be right. Yet popes have almost made a business of contradicting one another on key issues. Agapetus (535-536) burned the anathema which Boniface II (530-532) had solemnly issued against Dioscorus (530). The later is shown as an antipope, but Agapetus, who sided with him, is shown as a true pope.

Adrian II (867-872) said civil marriages were valid; Pius VII (1800-1823) declared them invalid. Both men are shown as legitimate popes.

Nicholas V (1447-1455) voided all of Eugenius IV's (1431-1447) "documents, processes, decrees, and censures against the Council [of Basle]... to be regarded as having never existed," yet both remain on the official list of popes today.

On July 21, 1773, Clement XIV issued a decree suppressing the Jesuits, only to have it reversed by a decree restoring them, issued by Pius VII on August 7, 1814.

Eugenius IV condemned Joan of Arc (1412-31) to be burned as a witch and heretic, but she was beatified by Pius X in 1909 and canonized by Benedict XV in 1920.

Bishop Joseph Georg Strossmayer gave a speech at the Vatican Council of 1870 opposing the doctrine of the infallibility of the pope. Among many other damaging things, Strossmayer said,

"Well, venerable brethren, here history raises its voice to assure us that some popes have erred. You may protest against it or deny it, as you please, but I will prove it. Pope Victor (192) first approved of Montanism, and then condemned it. Marcellinus (296-303) was an idolater. He entered into the temple of Vesta, and offered incense to the goddess. You will say that it was an act of weakness; but I answer, a vicar of Jesus Christ dies rather than become an apostate. Liberius (358) consented to the condemnation of Athanasius, and made a profession of Arianism, that he might be recalled from his exile and reinstated in his see. Honorius (625) adhered to Monothelism: Father Gratry has proved it to demonstration. Gregory I (590-604) calls any one Antichrist who takes the name of Universal Bishop, and contrariwise Boniface III, (607,8) made the parricide Emperor Phocas confer that title upon him. Paschal II (1099-1118) and Eugenius III (1145-53) authorized dueling; Julius II (1509) and Pius IV (1560) forbade it. Eugenius IV (1431-39) approved of the Council of Basle and the restitution of the chalice to the church of Bohemia; Pius II (1458) revoked the concession. Hadrian II (867-872) declared civil marriages to be valid; Pius VII (1800-23) condemned them. Sixtus V (1585-90) published an edition of the Bible, and by a bull recommended it to be read; Pius VII condemned the reading of it. Clement XIV (1769-74) abolished the order of the Jesuits, permitted by Paul III, and Pius VII reestablished it.

If the pope were infallible, most Catholics prior to 1870 did not know it. George Salmon tells of Keenan's Catechism, published with the imprimatur of Scotch Roman Catholic bishops, containing the following question and answer—"Q. Must not Catholics believe the Pope in himself to be infallible?" "A. This is a Protestant invention: it is no article of the Catholic faith: no decision of his can oblige, under pain of heresy, unless it be received and enforced by the teaching

body; that is, by the bishops of the Church” (Salmon, 26).

Why Christians Should Reject the Doctrine of Papal Infallibility:

First, the doctrine of papal infallibility imposes an additional source of truth that goes beyond the Bible. It demands subjection to the pope as the head of the universal church and condemns any who will not submit. It further demands that one treat the Apocrypha as if it were Scripture, since the Council of Trent in 1546 with papal authority proclaimed these books as inspired. Neither Jesus nor Peter ever recognized the inspiration or authority of the Apocrypha. This perversion of the gospel finds condemnation from the Scriptures themselves (Gal. 1:6-9). Paul condemns adding a source authority beyond the gospel that he as an apostle of Christ preached. Just as the Judaizers of Galatia were condemned for adding the Law to the Gospel, so Paul condemns anyone who adds church tradition and papal authority to his gospel.

There can only be one Lord and one head of the church, the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:20-23; 4:4; Col. 1:18, 23). He must have first place in everything (Col. 1:15). He alone will judge mankind on the last day (John 12:48; Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus is the only Chief Shepherd (I Pet. 5:4). Gregory the Great, bishop of Rome (590–604), argued vehemently against anyone assuming a place of universal authority. He said,

Whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly puts himself above all others. Nor is it by dissimilar pride that he is led into error; for, as that perverse one wishes to appear as God above all men, so whosoever this one is who covets being called sole priest, he extols

himself above all other priests (Gregory the Great, 226).

Second, this doctrine presumes that Peter was the first pope and that he passed that authority down to the bishop of Rome alone. It must also assume that each bishop in order received this infallible authority and passed it down. This apostolic succession must remain unbroken from bishop to bishop. If just one pope proves fallible, then the authority ends. One cannot pass on what one does not have. Surely history shows the truth: no pope was ever infallible.

Third, this doctrine denies the all-sufficient, eternal authority of the Bible. Catholics find their authority in tradition and in the latest *ex cathedra* statement coming from Rome. To them God’s message is never quite finalized; the standards change from pope to pope and council to council. That is the unquestionable history of Roman Catholicism. It ever evolves from the imaginations of those who claim to speak for God (Jer. 23:16-40). In contrast, New Testament Christians must “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all handed down to the saints” (Jude 3). They look back to the old paths, where the good way is, and walk in it (Jer. 6:16).

Endnotes:

Gregory the Great, “Letter to Emperor Mauricius Augustus” (against assumption of title “universal” by Patriarch of Constantinople) in his Epistles, bk. 7, letter 33, trans. in Post-Nicene Fathers, 2d series, Vol. 12, p. 226.

George Salmon, *The Infallibility of the Church* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1959 reprint).

Strossmayer, Georg Joseph, speech against Papal Infallibility at the Vatican Council, 1870, <http://www.john3-16.connectfree.co.uk/pope.html>.

**Roman Catholicism and the New Testament Church
Which is built on the Rock and which is built upon the sand?**

Matthew 7:24-27

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Roman Catholic	The New Testament Church
The Bishop of Rome is the universal bishop	Jesus is the Chief Shepherd and Head of the Church (1 Pet. 5:1-4; Eph. 1:22-23)
Religious Title of "Father" for Clergyman: priests, bishops, the pope	Matt. 23:7-10 And call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father, who is in heaven.
Compulsory celibacy for clergyman: priests, bishops, and deacons	1 Tim. 3:1; Tit. 1:6-7 Overseers, bishops must be the husband of one wife. 1 Tim. 3:12 let deacons each be the husband of one wife. 1 Tim. 4:1-3 false religions forbid marriage
The Bible is said to be an inadequate rule, because there are so many differences of opinion between those who profess to follow its guidance. The Creed of Pius IV requires all Catholics to promise: "I admit Holy Scripture according to that sense which has been and is held by Holy Mother Church, whose province it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Scripture"; and, further, to say: "Nor will I ever receive or interpret it except according to the unanimous consent of the Fathers."	In John 8:32 Jesus promised his disciples that they would know the truth and the truth would set them free. In John 12:48 Jesus said he would judge us by His words. How cruel it is to suggest that we will be judged by a Word that we cannot understand. 2 Tim. 3:16-17 says the word is adequate to equip us to every good work. Chrysostom: "All things are plain and simple in the Holy Scriptures; all things necessary are evident." (2 Thess., <i>Hom. III.</i> , vol. xi., 528). Despite her arguments on the differences of opinion and the difficulty of Scripture, the real reason Rome discouraged Bible reading is that she knew students of the Bible would soon note that the system of the NT is very unlike modern Romanism.
The doctrine of Purgatory was proclaimed as a dogma of faith by Council of Florence in 1439. "The purpose of purgatory is to cleanse one of imperfections, venial sins, and faults, and to remit or do away with the temporal punishment due to mortal sins that have been forgiven in the Sacrament of Penance" (Pocket Catholic Dictionary). If a person sins after baptism, even when these sins are forgiven (in terms of eternal punishment in hell) through the sacrament of penance, the temporal punishments remain. These punishments can be expiated (or compensated for) by penitential works in this life, or in the future (following death) in purgatory. Purgatory gives people the final cleansing (through torment) to make them prepared for heaven.	There is not one word in the Bible that supports the concept of a purgatory. The blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sins. (Read 1 John 1:7-9; 2:1-2; John 5:24; Rom. 8:1). The salvation of Jesus Christ is good news. It is a salvation of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast (Eph. 2:8-9). Through the blood of Jesus, believers are made "blameless" and have no need of an imagined purgatory (Jude 1:24). According to Paul, when a believer dies he goes directly to be "with the Lord" (2 Cor. 5:6-8; Phil. 1:21-23). Being at home "with" the Lord suggests a very close, face-to-face fellowship. The doctrine of purgatory denies this happens.
Indulgences. An indulgence is the extra-sacramental remission of the temporal punishment due, in God's justice, to sin that has been forgiven, which remission is granted by the Church in the exercise of the power of the keys, through the application of the superabundant merits of Christ and of the saints, and for some just and reasonable motive. Roman Catholicism teaches that the church is the steward of a vast reservoir of merit, called the	The idea that the blood of Jesus can remit sin but not the temporal punishment due is a human notion. For Catholics an indulgence "means a more complete payment of the debt which the sinner owes to God." This suggests the death of Jesus was not sufficient to remit the whole debt. To suggest a sin debt is forgiven but must still be paid is double-speak. In Christ, our sins are completely forgiven (1 John 1:7-2:2; Rom. 8:1). Romans 3:24 tells us that God's declaration of

<p>“Treasury of Merit.” This treasury was supposedly filled up by the works and prayers of Jesus Christ, His mother Mary, and the saints of all ages. The treasury of merit is so vast that it can never be depleted. Catholics teach that the church has the power to dispense from this reservoir “indulgences,” which are said to cancel the debt of temporal punishments.</p>	<p>righteousness is given to believers “freely by his grace.” Indulgences play no role whatsoever in gaining merit with God.</p> <p>Jesus is the Savior, and the church is the saved (Eph. 5:23-25). Catholics point to John 20:23, suggesting that the apostles were given the power to forgive sin, and this power was passed down to bishops by apostolic succession.</p> <p>Merrill Tenney in the Expositor’s Bible Commentary noted:</p> <p>The commission to forgive sins is phrased in an unusual construction. Literally, it is: "Those whose sins you forgive have already been forgiven; those whose sins you do not forgive have not been forgiven." The first verbs in the two clauses are aorists, which imply the action of an instant; the second verbs are perfects, which imply an abiding state that began before the action of the first verbs. God does not forgive men's sins because we decide to do so nor withhold forgiveness because we will not grant it. We announce it; we do not create it.</p> <p>This is the essence of salvation. And all who proclaim the gospel are in effect forgiving or not forgiving sins, depending on whether the hearer accepts or rejects the Lord Jesus as the Sin-Bearer.</p>
<p>The dogma of Transubstantiation was decreed by Pope Innocent III, in the year 1215.</p> <p>By this doctrine the priest pretends to perform a daily miracle by changing a wafer into the body of Christ, and then he pretends to eat Him alive in the presence of his people during Mass. The <i>Council of Trent</i> declared: "The sacrifice (in the Mass) is identical with the sacrifice of the Cross, inasmuch as Jesus Christ is a priest and victim both. The only difference lies in the manner of the offering, which is bloody upon the cross and bloodless on our altars"; and, in Canon I stated: "Whosoever shall deny that in the most holy sacrament of the Eucharist there are truly, really, and substantially contained the body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, together with his soul and divinity, and consequently Christ entire, but shall affirm that he is present therein only in a sign and figure, or by his power, let him be accursed." Catholics believe that during Mass the bread miraculously turn into the body and blood of Christ. This happens at the prayer of consecration of the priest. Even though the bread and wine still look and feel and taste like bread and wine, they supposedly change into Jesus in full deity and humanity.</p> <p>Once the bread and wine are transformed into the</p>	<p>The Bible condemns such absurdities; for the Lord's Supper is simply a memorial feast of the sacrifice of Christ. The spiritual presence of Christ is implied in the Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19-20; John 6:35; I Cor. 11:26).</p> <p>The Scripture forbids the drinking of blood to Christians (Gen. 9:4; Lev. 3:17; Acts 15:29). This doctrine of Transubstantiation would not have made much sense to the apostles who attended the Jerusalem Council, if first century Christians thought they had actually drunk the real blood of Jesus.</p> <p>The Hebrew writer makes it clear that the sacrifice of Jesus Christ was once for all time (Heb. 10:12; cf. 9:28). The Hebrew writer makes a clear contrast between the once-for-all-time sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the repetition of offerings made by the old covenant Levitical priests (Heb. 10:3). Instead of believers having assurance their sins are forgiven, the Mass gives a constant reminder of sins and the remaining guilt to be atoned for week after week. The death of Jesus on the cross was the final and sufficient sacrifice for our sins. When Jesus said, “It is finished,” He paid for our sins in full. No further sacrifice is needed.</p> <p>Hebrews 9:12 says, “not through the blood of goats</p>

<p>body and blood of Jesus by this prayer, the Lord his upon the altar as a sacrificial victim. The priest prays: “We offer to you, God of glory and majesty, this holy and perfect sacrifice, the bread of life and the cup of eternal salvation.” This sacrifice of Mass is said to soothe God’s wrath and cover people’s sins. Catholics sometimes appeal to Hebrews 9:12 in support of this doctrine.</p> <p>Catholics regard the refusal to attend Mass as a mortal sin. Deliberately missing mass is a damning sin.</p>	<p>and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.” John Paul II said, “The Church is the instrument of man’s salvation. It both contains and continually draws upon the mystery of Christ’s redemptive sacrifice. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ constantly enters into God’s sanctuary thus obtaining eternal redemption (cf. Hebrews 9:12)” (<i>Crossing the Threshold of Hope</i>). Hebrews 9:12 says that Jesus “entered” the holy place, an aorist verb indicating a one-time past action. John Paul says “constantly enters” and leaves out “once for all.” John Paul ignores the phrase “having obtained eternal redemption” and substitutes “thus obtaining eternal redemption.” John Paul had to change the meaning of this verse in order to support the ongoing sacrifice of Mass.</p> <p>No man has a right to change Scripture.</p>
<p>Catholicism discourages Bible reading by the laity</p>	<p>2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 17:11; 1 Thess. 5:21-22</p>
<p>Confession of sin to the priest at least once a year was instituted by Pope Innocent III., in the Lateran Council of 1215.</p>	<p>James 5:16 says that we should confess our sins one to another and pray for one another. 1 John 1:9 urges us to confess our sins directly to the Father.</p>
<p>The Council of Trent, held in the year 1545, declared that Tradition is of equal authority with the Bible. Catholics argue that the Bible cannot be correctly interpreted without the tradition of the early church fathers. For them, the Bible alone (without their tradition) “is not a safe guide as to what we are to believe.” Catholics argue that the Bible does not argue for the Bible alone but teaches the authority of tradition.</p>	<p>Catholics argue for tradition based on what they have learned from tradition. This is arguing in a circle. That the Bible alone is inspired is clear (2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:21-22; 1 Cor. 2:11-12). While we may have respect for the traditions of church councils, the Scriptures do not regard such traditions as “apostolic.” They are not God’s revelation and do not have authority equal to that of the Scripture.</p> <p>Jesus rebuked the Pharisees for neglecting the commandment of God in order to hold to the traditions of men (Mark 7:8). Colossians 2:8 warns against being taken captive by the traditions of men. Any tradition that conflicts with Scripture is surely to be rejected.</p> <p>Catholics argue that the Church gave us the Bible, and so the church has authority even over the Bible.</p> <p>This simply is not true. As we have seen, the Roman Catholic Church as we know it today was nothing like the church of the first century. Yet in the first century, Paul recognized Luke’s writings as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18; cf. Luke 10:7). Peter recognized Paul’s writings as Scripture (2 Pet. 3:16; cf. 1 Cor. 14:37; 1 Thess. 2:13). It is God who determines the canon; men merely discover the canon. F. F. Bruce said the NT canon was not demarcated by the arbitrary decree of a council. He realized this: “When at last a Church Council—the synod of Carthage in 397 AD—listed the 27 books</p>

	<p>of the New Testament, it did not confer upon them any authority which they did not already possess, but simply recorded their previously established canonicity.” (<i>The Books and the Parchments</i>, p. 111).</p> <p>Church history reveals there are contradictions in the many traditions of Rome. Abelard (1079-1142) recognized hundreds of such contradictions. For instance, some church authorities accepted the Immaculate Conception of Mary, while others did not. This means that tradition is not infallible, nor is it authoritative.</p>
The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary was proclaimed by Pope Pius IX in 1834.	The Bible states that all men, with the sole exception of Christ, are sinners. Mary herself had need of a Savior. (Read Rom. 3:23; 5:12; Luke 1:30, 46, 47).
The apocryphal books were added to the Bible also by the Council of Trent in 1546.	Neither Jesus nor any writer of the NT ever recognized any book of the Apocrypha as Scripture. The early church fathers rejected the Apocrypha and did not count it as part of the canon. (See the next section on the Apocrypha.)
In the year 1870 after Christ, Pope Pius IX proclaimed the dogma of Papal Infallibility .	See the previous section, “Is the Pope Infallible?”
In the year 1931 the same pope Pius XI, reaffirmed the doctrine that Mary is " the Mother of God. " This doctrine was first invented by the Council of Ephesus in the year 431. Catholics hold that Mary participates as a mediatrix in our salvation – another redeemer. Mary is more merciful than Christ or God, as mothers are more merciful than fathers. Mary is called Queen of Heaven, Queen of the Apostles, Queen of the Angels, Mother of God, Door of Paradise, Our Life, Gate of Heaven, Mother of Grace, and Second Eve.	<p>Scripture condemns such nonsense (John 14:6; Acts 4:12; Rom 8:34; I Tim 2:5; I John 2:1). It is obvious to anyone who knows God that Mary is not His mother: He is her Creator.</p> <p>Mary did not give rise to the divinity of Jesus but was only the human instrument through whom the incarnation took place. Jesus has always been in the form of God (John 1:1; Phil. 2:5-8).</p>
Cardinal Newman, in his book, "The Development of the Christian Religion," admits that ... "Temples, incense, oil lamps, votive offerings, holy water, holidays and season of devotions, processions, blessing of fields, sacerdotal vestments, the tonsure (of priests and monks and nuns), images ... are all of pagan origin..." (Page 359).	Col. 2:20-23. Human traditions are condemned as vain (Matt. 15:1-14).
Perpetual virginity of Mary	Jesus was Mary's firstborn Son, not her only Son (Matt 1:25; Luke 2:7). Joseph did not know Mary "till" she had Jesus (Mat 1:25); being a just man, he then did (I Co 7:3-5). If Mary did not have sex with Joseph after the birth of Jesus, she was a wicked woman (I Cor 7:3-5). Jesus had at least four brothers and three sisters by Mary (Matthew 13:53-

	<p>56; Acts 1:14). When Scripture intends cousin, it says cousin, not brother or sister or nephew (Luke 1:36, 58). Jesus literally fulfilled an OT messianic prophecy: “I have become estranged from my brothers, and an alien to my mother’s sons” (Psalm 69:8). Since verse 8 is a messianic reference to Christ’s alienation from “my mother’s sons,” it’s clear that Mary had other children besides Jesus.</p>
<p>Pope Pius XII’s encyclical in 1943 said, “She is the mother of our head.” Catholicism claims Mary is full of grace, therefore free of original sin and kept from all <i>actual</i> sin. The pope’s encyclical agreed, claiming Mary is free from any personal or inherited sin.</p>	<p>The Scriptures do not teach that Mary never sinned. Only one is good, that is God. Scripture also says Stephen, Elizabeth, Barnabas and others were “full of grace.” Yet no one claims they were sinless.</p>
<p><i>Mary’s role as co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces.</i> This doctrine holds that the obedience and sufferings of Mary were essential to secure the full redemption bought by Christ. <i>Mary’s right to veneration and/or worship.</i> This teaching argues that because of her unparalleled role in the economy of salvation, Mary is worthy of special adoration.</p> <p>Mariology is defined as the study of that theology “which treats the life, role and virtues of the Blessed Mother of God” and which “demonstrates... her position as Co-Redemptrix and Mediatrix of all graces.” Thus, Catholic popes have always glorified Mary. Although the Catholic Church would reject the designation, Mary <i>does</i> function as a kind of secondary Savior in Catholic teaching and practice. Pope Leo XIII (1878-1903) stated in his Rosary encyclical, “<i>Octobri mense</i>” (1891): “From that great treasure of all graces which the Lord has brought, <i>nothing according to the will of God comes to us except through Mary</i>, so that, as nobody can approach the Supreme Father except through the Son, similarly <i>nobody can approach Christ except through the mother.</i>”</p>	<p>1 Tim. 2:5, “For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus.”</p> <p>Mary cannot assume any role as co-redeemer because Mary is a mere human. As a human Mary is defiled by sin (Rom. 3:10-12, 23; 5:12). Mary herself is in need of a Redeemer (Luke 1:47). There is salvation in no one but Jesus Christ (John 14:6; Acts 4:12).</p>

The Apocrypha: Inspired of God?

by Wayne Jackson

Christian Courier: Archives

The qualified teacher needs to be able to give a reasonable explanation to his Catholic friends for the absence of those seven books in the versions we use.

The disputed books

The “Apocrypha” is a collection of documents, generally produced between the 2nd century B.C. and the 1st century A.D., which were not a part of the original Old Testament canon. The names of these books are: I Esdras, II Esdras, The Rest of Esther, Song of the Three Holy Children, History

of Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasses, Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Ecclesiasticus, Baruch, I Maccabees, and II Maccabees. The last seven of these are incorporated into Roman Catholic editions of the Bible. The Catholic Council of Trent (1546) affirmed the canonicity of these books, as found in the Latin Vulgate, and condemned those who reject them.

The title, “Apocrypha,” is a transliterated form of the term *apokruphos*, meaning “hidden.” A plural form of the word is used in Colossians 2:3, where Paul declares that all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are “hidden” in Christ. The adjective “apocryphal” has come to be applied to those books that do not bear the marks of divine inspiration. There are several reasons why the Apocrypha is to be rejected as part of the Bible.

General Principles

1. There is abundant evidence that none of these books was ever received into the canon (that which conforms to “rule”) of the Hebrew Old Testament. Though they appear in the Septuagint (Greek Old Testament - known as LXX), that is not necessarily a reliable criterion. Professor G.T. Manley notes: “[These books] do not appear to have been included at first in the LXX [3rd/2nd centuries B.C.], but they found their way gradually into later copies, being inserted in places that seemed appropriate...” (**The New Bible Handbook**, Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1962, p. 39).
2. The apocryphal books are not in those most ancient works which allude to the Old Testament Scriptures. For example:
 - (a) Philo, the Jewish philosopher of Alexandria (20 B.C. - A.D. 50), wrote prolifically and frequently quoted the Old Testament, yet he never cited the Apocrypha, nor did he even mention these documents.

(b) Josephus (A.D. 37-95) rejected them. He wrote: “We have not an innumerable multitude of books among us, disagreeing from and contradicting one another, but only twenty-two books, which contain the records

of all the past times; which are justly believed to be divine...” (*Against Apion* 1.8). By combining several Old Testament narratives into a “book,” the thirty-nine of our current editions become the twenty-two alluded to by Josephus.

(c) The most ancient list of Old Testament books is that which was made by Melito of Sardis (cf. A.D. 170); none of the apocryphal books is included (cf. Eusebius, **Ecclesiastical History** 4.26.14).

(d) In the early 3rd century A.D., neither Origin nor his contemporary, Tertullian, recognized the books of the Apocrypha as being canonical.

(e) Though some of the apocryphal books were being used in the church services by the 5th century A.D., they were read only by those who held inferior offices in the church (see: T.H. Horne, **Critical Introduction to the Holy Scriptures**, Philadelphia: Whetham & Son, 1841, Vol. I, p. 436).

3. The apocryphal books were produced in an era when no inspired documents were been given by God. Malachi concludes his narrative in the Old Testament by urging Israel: “Remember ye the law of Moses my servant, which I commanded unto him in Horeb for all Israel, even statutes and ordinances.” He then projects four centuries into the future and prophesied: “Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and terrible day of Jehovah come...” (Mal. 4:4-5). This text pictured the coming of John the Baptist (cf. Mt. 11:14; Lk. 1:17). The implication of Malachi’s prophecy is that no prophet would arise from God until the coming of John. This excludes the apocryphal writings.

Josephus confirms this when he declares:

“It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an

exact succession of prophets since that time.”

He further says that no one “has been so bold as either to add any thing to them, to take any thing from them, or to make any change in them . . .” (*Against Apion* 1.8).

F.F. Bruce contended that there “is no evidence that these books were ever regarded as canonical by any Jews, whether inside or outside Palestine, whether they read the Bible in Hebrew or in Greek” (**The Books and the Parchments**, London: Pickering & Inglis, 1950, p. 157).

4. Jesus Christ and His inspired New Testament penmen quoted from, or alluded to, the writings and events of the Old Testament profusely. In fact, some 1,000 quotations or allusions from thirty-five of the thirty-nine Old Testament books are found in the New Testament record. And yet, significantly, not once is any of these apocryphal books quoted or even explicitly referred to by the Lord, or by any New Testament writer. Noted scholar Emile Schurer argued that this is really remarkable since most of the New Testament habitually quoted from the LXX (**Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge**, New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1894, Vol. I, 99).

“Despite the fact that New Testament writers quote largely from the Septuagint rather than from the Hebrew Old Testament, there is not a single clear-cut case of a citation from any of the fourteen apocryphal books . . . The most that can be said is that the New Testament writers show acquaintance with these fourteen books and perhaps allude to them indirectly, but in no case do they quote them as inspired Scripture or cite them as authority” (Merrill F. Unger, **Introductory Guide to the Old Testament**, Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1951, p. 101).

5. Finally, it must be observed that the apocryphal books, unlike the canonical books of the Old Testament, make no direct claims

of being inspired of God. Not once is there a, “thus says the Lord,” or language like, “the word of the Lord came unto me, saying.” In fact, some of the documents actually confess non-inspiration! In the Prologue of Ecclesiasticus, the writer states:

“Ye are intreated therefore to read with favour and attention, and to pardon us, if in any parts of what we have laboured to interpret, we may seem to fail in some of the phrases” (**The Apocrypha**, New York: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1894).

6. Too, there is the matter of literary style. Dr. Raymond Surburg has written:

“When a comparison is instituted of the style of the Apocrypha with the style of the Biblical Hebrew Old Testament writings, there is a considerable inferiority, shown by the stiffness, lack of originality and artificiality of expression characterizing the apocryphal books” (**The Christian News**, November 24, 1980, p. 7).

Evidence negating inspiration

The Apocrypha contains a great variety of historical, geographical, chronological, and moral errors. Professor William Green of Princeton wrote: “The books of Tobit and Judith abound in geographical, chronological, and historical mistakes...” (**General Introduction to the Old Testament**, New York: Scribner’s & Sons, 1899, p. 195). A critical study of the Apocrypha’s contents clearly reveals that it could not be the product of the Spirit of God. The following examples are ample evidence of this:

1. Rather than the creation being spoken into existence from nothing by the word of Almighty God, as affirmed in the Scriptures (Gen. 1:1; Psa. 33:6-9; Heb. 11:3), the Apocrypha has God creating the world out of “formless matter” (Wisdom of Solomon 11:17).
2. According to the prophet Jeremiah, Nebuchadnezzar burned Jerusalem on the tenth day, fifth month, or the nineteenth year of his reign (Jer. 52:12-13). Subsequent to this, both the prophet and his scribe, Baruch, were taken into Egypt (Jer. 43:6-7).

According to the Apocrypha, however, at this very time Baruch was in Babylon (Baruch 1:1-2).

3. There are two contradictory accounts of the death of Antiochus Epiphanes, that dreaded enemy of the Jews. One narrative records that Antiochus and his company were “cut to pieces in the temple of Nanaea by the treachery of Nanaea’s priests” (II Maccabees 1:13-16), while another version in the same book states that Antiochus was “taken with a noisome sickness” and so “ended his life among the mountains by a most piteous fate in a strange land” (II Maccabees 9:19-29).
4. Tobit is said to have lived 158 years (14:11), yet, supposedly, he was alive back when Jeroboam revolted against Jerusalem (931 B.C.), and then still around when the Assyrians invaded Israel (722/21 B.C.)—a span of some 210 years (Tobit 1:3-5)!
5. The Apocrypha teaches the erroneous doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, suggesting that the kind of body one now has is determined by the character of his soul in a previous life. “Now I was a goodly child, and a good soul fell to my lot; Nay rather, being good, I came into a body undefiled” (Wisdom of Solomon 8:19-20). The foregoing was a common belief among heathen peoples, but certainly it is contrary to the biblical view that the soul of man is formed with him at conception (Psa. 139:13-16; Zech. 12:1).
6. The Apocrypha teaches that prayer may be made for the dead. “Wherefore he made the propitiation for them that had died, that they might be released from their sins” (II Maccabees 12:45). Roman Catholics cite this passage to find support for their dogma of praying for the dead to be released from purgatory (obviously there’s no New Testament passage to buttress the notion), but the effort is vain.
7. The Apocrypha suggests that one may atone for his sins by the giving of alms. “It is better to give alms than to lay up gold: alms doth deliver from death, and it shall purge away all sin” (Tobit 3:9).

8. The moral tone of the Apocrypha is far below that of the Bible. Note some examples:

(a) It applauds suicide as a noble and manful act. II Maccabees tells of one Razis who, being surrounded by the enemy, fell upon his sword, choosing “rather to die nobly” than to fall into the hands of his enemy. He was not mortally wounded, however, and so threw himself down from a wall and “manfully” died among the crowds (14:41-43).

(b) It describes magical potions which are alleged to drive demons away (Tobit 6:1-17).

(c) The murder of the men of Shechem (Gen. 34), an act of violence which is condemned in the Scriptures (cf. Gen. 49:6-7), is commended and is described as an act of God (Judith 9:2-9).

These, along with various other considerations, lead only to the conclusion that the Apocrypha cannot be included in the volume of sacred Scripture.

Reasons For Rejecting The Apocrypha From The Canon

(Copied, with minor variations, from the fact sheet distributed by Clyde Woods in a session of Critical Introduction to the Old Testament in the fall of 1986).

- The books were never included in the Hebrew canon.
- Josephus expressly excludes them.
- Philo, the Jewish philosopher in Alexandria (ca. 20 BC – AD 40) quoted the O.T. Scriptures very frequently, yet never quoted the Apocrypha nor even mentioned these books.
- Targums (Aramaic paraphrases) were provided for the canonical books but were not provided for the Apocrypha.
- These books are never quoted in the New Testament
- Most of the Apocrypha material existed and was likely incorporated in Septuagint editions in the New Testament period, yet it is never cited by Jesus or the apostles. The oldest copies of the Septuagint now in existence date

from the fourth century AD, plenty of time for them to have been incorporated in later editions.

- NT references rather allude to the commonly accepted Hebrew canon.
- Christian tradition offers no real support for accepting the Apocrypha as canonical.
- These books are not included in the canonical lists of the early centuries.
- Jerome expressly supported the strict Hebrew canon and emphatically rejected the Apocrypha as secondary.
- Books of the Apocrypha were considered suitable for reading and instruction but they were not considered authoritative in the early centuries.
- The Apocrypha bears no internal marks of inspiration.
- No Apocrypha writer actually claims inspiration; indeed, some disclaim it.
- These books contain historical, geographical, and chronological errors.
- Doctrinally, the books at times contradict the canonical Scriptures.
- Stylistically, the books are inferior to the canonical Scriptures.
- Stories in the Apocrypha contain some legendary and fantastic materials.
- The moral and spiritual level is beneath that of the canonical Scriptures.
- Proper dating of the Apocrypha shows its non-canonical character.
- These books were written later than those of the Old Testament.
- Portions of these books even date from the Christian era.

The Apocrypha was first declared canonical by the reactionary Roman Catholic Council of Trent (1546). This conciliar decision was transparently dogmatic. This action was passed by a narrow majority.

The Apocrypha is rejected from the canon of Scripture for numerous reasons.

Besides the fact that Jesus and the apostles never once quoted from it; and aside from its obvious lack of inspiration (it "just doesn't sound like" scripture; "My sheep hear My voice," John 10; etc.) – there are many solid reasons for

rejecting its contents from being included with the canonical scriptures. [Much of the following material comes from Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999), 125.]

A. The Apocrypha contains chronological errors and statements contrary to history.

- Baruch 1:2 (comp. Jeremiah 43:6-7)
- Bel and the Dragon 22 (Xerxes did it); Bel and the Dragon 33
- Tobit 1:4 (Tobit is said to live in Nineveh in 722 BC, and yet he also saw the division of the united kingdom in 931 BC. [1 Kings 12:19-20])
- Esther 11:2-4 (the dates of Mordecai's captivity [597 BC] and dream [485/484 BC] would make him 112 years old)
- 1 Esdras 5:56 has the second year of Cyrus rather than the second year of Darius; in 5:73 Cyrus (c. 530 BC) died more than two years before the reign of Darius (c. 522/521-486 BC.)
- Tobit 1:15 "But when Shalmaneser died, and his son Sennacherib reigned in his place," Shalmaneser died before the fall of Samaria, and Sennacherib was Sargon's son.
- Tobit 14:15 " Before he died he heard of the destruction of Nineveh, and he saw its prisoners being led into Media, those whom King Cyaxares of Media had taken captive." Nineveh's conquerors were Nabopolassar and Cyaxares (612 B.C.).
- Judith 1:1 Nebuchadnezzar (605-562 BC) ruled over Babylon after Nineveh was destroyed in 612 BC.
- Judith 2:1 Nebuchadnezzar was king of the Babylonians, and Holofernes [v.4] may be from a much later time.
- Judith 4:3-4 and 5:19 Nebuchadnezzar sent the Jews into exile, and they returned under Cyrus (538 BC).
- Bel and the Dragon 33 Habakkuk wrote before 612 BC [Hab. 1:6], making unlikely a visit to Daniel almost 75 years later (539 BC).

B. It contains geographical errors.

- Tobit 1:4; 6:1; 9:2 (This was an 11 day journey from Ecbatana to Rages but made to

seem shorter.) The Tigris River is west of Nineveh; Persia is east.

- Judith 1:6 Hydaspes, a river in India, is erroneously placed in Mesopotamia.
- Judith 2:21 The 300 miles separating Nineveh and Bectileth makes a 3-day march impossible.
- Judith 2:24 The normal route is south from Cilicia to Damascus, not following the Euphrates River.
- 1 Maccabees 9:2 says "Gilgal" when it should have said "Galilee" (cf. Josephus, Ant. 12:11.1, sections 420-421)

C. Mistakes

- Baruch 6:1-3 (Epistle of Jeremiah) 70 years called seven generations
- 2 Esdras 6:42 says that God in creation gathered the waters to a seventh part of the earth, whereas in fact water covers 70% of the earth's surface.
- 2 Esdras 3:1 has Ezra in Babylon 30 years after the fall of Jerusalem, whereas Ezra lived a century later.
- 2 Maccabees 1:19 Persia should be Babylon (2 Kings 24:14)

D. Many false teachings are represented, and evil practices that the inspired Word of God condemns are condoned.

1. Prayers for the dead. 2 Maccabees 12:40-45. A post-death visit by Jeremiah in 15:14.
2. Salvation by good works (almsgiving, etc.).
Sirach 3:3, 14-15 (kindness to parents atones for sin)
Sirach 3:30 (almsgiving atones for sins)
30:11-12 2; Esdras 7:7; 8:33, 36; Tobit 12:9, 8a; 14:11
3. The use of magic.
 - a. In demon exorcism. Tobit 6-8
 - b. In healing. Tobit 11
 - c. "Good luck" (fortune). Sirach 8:19
4. The intercession of angels. Tobit 12:15 (Raphael)
5. Suicide. 2 Maccabees 14:41-46
6. Mourning for the dead. Sirach 38:16-23 (especially verses 20-21)
7. Sinless lives of Old Testament personalities.
Prayer of Manasseh 8

8. 2 Esdras 6:55 The Bible never says the world was created for Israel

9. 2 Esdras 8:4-5 possibly suggests the pre-existence of souls

E. Contradictions

1. 1 Maccabees 4:26-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 10:37-11:12, which puts Lysia's defeat after the death of Timothy.
2. 1 Maccabees 4:30-35 contradicts 2 Macc. 11:6-15, which says it was a negotiated peace.
3. 1 Maccabees 6:8-9 contradicts 2 Macc. 9:5-12, which says that the king was struck with a repulsive physical disease.
4. 2 Maccabees 8:9 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:38-4:25, which says that Gorgias, not Nicanor, was leader.
5. 2 Maccabees 8:13 contradicts 1 Macc. 3:56, which cites other reasons for the troop reduction.
6. 2 Maccabees 10:3 contradicts 1:19-2:1 on how altar fire was restarted and contradicts 1:54 and 4:52, which say 3 years instead of 2.
7. 2 Maccabees 10:37 contradicts 12:2, 18-25, where Timothy reappears (cf. 1 Macc. 5:11-40).
8. 2 Maccabees 11:13-15 contradicts 1 Macc. 4:35, which says that no peace was made.
9. 2 Maccabees 13:16 contradicts 1 Macc. 6:47, which says the Jews fled.

F. Some of the miracles and events described are simply fabulous and silly.

Tobit 6:2-7, 16-17, etc. (placing incense smoke on the organs of a man eating fish to ward off evil spirits; the demon was in love with the woman and had killed her last seven husbands on their wedding night)

G. Only three divisions of the Old Testament are described in Luke 24:44. Matthew 23:35

and Luke 11:51 also witness the arrangement and compass of the Old Testament – not allowing for any books outside the time from Genesis to 2 Chronicles. The books of the Apocrypha form no part of the canon, but rather serve as witnesses to life and thought in the inter-testamental period.

The Book of Mormon and the Bible
Gilbert W. Holt

Book of Mormon Teaches	The Bible Teaches
"He did not confound the language of Jared" (Ether 1:35)	"The Lord did there confound the language of all the earth" (Gen. 11:9)
"And behold, He shall be born to Mary at Jerusalem" (Alma 7:10)	"Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea" (Matt. 2:1)
"There was darkness for a space of three days following the crucifixion of Christ" (Helaman 14:20)	"Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour" (Matt. 27:45).
"For behold, blood cometh from every pore" (Mosiah 3:7)	"And his sweat was as it were great drops of blood" (Luke 22:14)
That believers were called Christians in 73 B.C. (Alma 46:14-15)	"Disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26 c. 42 A.D.)
The church of Christ was built in 73 B.C. (Mosiah 18:17)	"Upon this rock, I will build my church" (Matt. 16:18 c. 30 A.D.)
Salvation was in and through the blood of Christ in 124 B.C. (Mosiah 3:18)	"And without the shedding of blood there is no remission" (Heb. 9:22)
The Nephites received the Holy Spirit in 29 B.C. before Christ was born (Helaman 5:45)	The Holy Spirit was not given until Pentecost (John 7:39; Acts 1:8; 2)
Adam and Eve could have borne no children if they had not sinned (Nephi 2:22-23)	"and God said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth" (Gen. 1:28)
That Christ was on the North American continent after His ascension, showing His body, and ministering (3 Nephi 10:18-19)	That He will remain in heaven at God's right hand until God makes His enemies the footstool of His feet" (Acts 2:34,35)

Mormons and Archaeology

Mormon scholars can be frustrated and embarrassed understandably when they realize that after all the years of research by Mormons and other archaeologists:

- No city cited in the Book of Mormon has been located.
- No names cited in the *Book of Mormon* have been found in the New World.
- No genuine Hebrew inscriptions have been found in America.
- No genuine Egyptian inscriptions have been found in America. Nor has anything similar to Egyptian, which could correspond to Joseph Smith's "reformed Egyptian."
- No ancient inscriptions of any kind have been discovered in America, which indicate the ancient inhabitants had Hebrew or Christian beliefs.
- No *Mormon* persons, nations, or places have been found.

- No artifact of any kind, which demonstrates the *Book of Mormon* is true, has been found.
- Rather than finding supportive evidence, Mormon scholars have been forced to retreat from traditional interpretations of *Book of Mormon* statements. (Hal Houghey, *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, p. 12.)



Information from the

MORMON ARCHAEOLOGY

National Museum of Natural History

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION WASHINGTON, D.C. 20560

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1. The Smithsonian Institution has never used the Book of Mormon in any way as a scientific guide. Smithsonian archeologists see no direct connection between the archeology of the New World and the subject matter of the book.
2. The physical type of the American Indian is basically Mongoloid, being most closely related to that of the peoples of eastern, central, and northeastern Asia. Archeological evidence indicates that the ancestors of the present Indians came into the New World--probably over a land bridge known to have existed in the Bering Strait region during the last Ice Age--in a continuing series of small migrations beginning from about 25,000 to 30,000 years ago.
3. Present evidence indicates that the first people to reach this continent from the East were the Norsemen who briefly visited the northeastern part of North America around A.D. 1000 and then settled in Greenland. There is nothing to show that they reached Mexico or Central America.
4. One of the main lines of evidence supporting the scientific finding that contacts with Old World civilizations, if indeed they occurred at all, were of very little significance for the development of American Indian civilizations, is the fact that none of the principal Old World domesticated food plants or animals (except the dog) occurred in the New World in pre-Columbian times. American Indians had no wheat, barley, oats, millet, rice, cattle, pigs, chickens, horses, donkeys, camels before 1492. (Camels and horses were in the Americas, along with the bison, mammoth, and mastodon, but all these animals became extinct around 10,000 B.C. at the time when the early big game hunters spread across the Americas.)
5. Iron, steel, glass, and silk were not used in the New World before 1492 (except for occasional use of unsmelted meteoric iron). Native copper was worked in various locations in pre-Columbian times, but true metallurgy was limited to southern Mexico and the Andean region, where its occurrence in late prehistoric times involved gold, silver, copper, and their alloys, but not iron.
6. There is a possibility that the spread of cultural traits across the Pacific to Mesoamerica and the northwestern coast of South America began several hundred years before the Christian era. However, any such inter-hemispheric contacts appear to have been the results of accidental voyages originating in eastern and southern Asia. It is by no means certain that even such contacts occurred; certainly there were no contacts with the ancient Egyptians, Hebrews, or other peoples of Western Asian and the Near East.
7. No reputable Egyptologist or other specialist on Old World archeology, and no expert on New World prehistory, has discovered or confirmed any relationship between archeological remains in Mexico and archeological remains in Egypt.
8. Reports of findings of ancient Egyptian, Hebrew, and other Old World writings in the New World in pre-Columbian contexts have frequently appeared in newspapers, magazines, and sensational books. None of these claims has stood up to examination by reputable scholars. No inscriptions using Old World forms of writing have been shown to have occurred in any part of the Americas before 1492 except for a few Norse rune stones which have been found in Greenland.

Glossary

Abba In Aramaic, it means "dear father," or "daddy." Jesus used this phrase in prayer.

Adoption Christians are adopted as sons and daughters in the family of God.

Agnostic One who believes that the limits of human knowledge will not allow man to settle the question of God's existence or other spiritual truths.

Allegory Speech or writing where the literal meaning takes second place to the symbolic meaning. Some in the early church interpreted too much allegory in the Bible.

Almighty Describes God's ability to do anything which is not against his character and laws.

Altar Place where sacrifices are made.

Amen Used at the close of prayers, it means "let it be so."

Analogy The method of description which compares two things that are alike. When we say that God is Father, we mean that God's relationship to us is like that of our own father.

Anathema (lit., "devoted to destruction") Accursed, morally worthless and thereby to be destroyed (cf. Gal. 1:8,9; 1 Cor. 12:3; 16:22).

Angel It literally means "messenger." Spiritual beings used by God to speak to man, to minister to man, or to perform a task for God.

Apocalyptic A literature form found among the Jews which uses images and symbols to convey its message to its intended audience, while hiding its message from the enemies. The book of Revelation is written in apocalyptic style.

Apocrypha The fourteen books written between the time of the Old and New Testaments, which were not considered as inspired, authoritative books of the Bible by either the Jews or early Christians. The Catholic church designated them as a part of the canon in 1546 at the Council of Trent. Churches of Christ do not regard them as inspired.

Apostle (lit., "one who is sent with a message") One of the twelve men appointed by Jesus and sent out to preach. Paul is also regarded as an apostle.

Aramaic The Near Eastern language spoken by the people of Palestine during the time of Jesus.

Ascend (lit. "to go up") Jesus' return to the Father which took place forty days after the resurrection in the presence of the disciples. (ascension)

Atheist One who believes there is no god.

Atonement (lit., "at-one-ment") The bringing of people back into a right relationship with God, accomplished through the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Authority That which rightfully demands our

acceptance and obedience. Christ possesses all authority for the Christian and reigns over them through His Word.

Baptism The necessary dipping or immersing of a believing penitent person in water in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. Baptism is the means by which one unites with Christ in His death, burial and resurrection. Baptism in water is the means by which one is born again.

Baptism in the Holy Spirit The promise Jesus made to the apostles of the spiritual, miraculous power they were to receive on the day of Pentecost.

Bible (the Scriptures, the Word of God, the oracles of God). A collection of the 66 books written between 1500 B.C. and 100 A.D., which are recognized as inspired and authoritative. The Bible contains all spiritual truth, everything Christians need to know for life and godliness.

Bishop (lit., "overseer") In the New Testament is used interchangeably with elder (presbyter) and shepherd. In the second century individual bishops began to be in sole charge of congregations, a move away from New Testament pattern of a plurality of elders in each congregation. (The idea of an "archbishop" is wholly human.)

Blessing The giving of spiritual benefits, especially through the gospel or by prayer.

Body of Christ A phrase Paul used to describe the church. The picture conveys that each member of the body has a role or function to benefit the others.

Calling An invitation or summons God issues to people to follow him. Christians are "called" through the gospel (2 Thess. 2:14). Not everyone who receives God's calling obeys that call.

Calvary The hill upon which Jesus was crucified. It is often used as a reference to the death of Jesus.

Canon, The. The list of books regarded as rightly belonging to the Bible, because they are inspired and possess God's authority.

Charismatic Gifts These were miraculous, spiritual gifts as listed in 1 Cor. 12:4-11. These gifts were to pass away when the perfect comes (13:8-13; Eph. 4:11-16).

Christ The Greek word for the Hebrew term Messiah, so that Jesus Christ means "Jesus the Messiah." The Messiah for the Jews was the coming servant king, who would establish an eternal kingdom for the Jews. The Jews did not at first realize that this kingdom was the church (Matt. 16:15-19).

Christ, In A phrase frequently used in the writings of Paul to describe those who are in the body of

Christ, the church. To be "in Christ" is to be united with Him in His death, burial and resurrection. One who has done this receives the forgiveness of sins (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13,14) and undergoes the new birth. One is baptized into Christ (Rom. 6:3-7; Gal. 3:26,27; John 3:3-5).

Christian One who belongs to Christ and thus follows Him. The word was first used in Antioch a few years after Jesus' resurrection and the beginning of the church (Acts 11:26). Surprisingly, the word Christian is only used two other times in the NT (Acts 26:28; 1 Pet. 4:16). One becomes a Christian when one obeys the gospel through faith, repentance and baptism.

Christmas This word is not found in the NT. It is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, variously dated Dec. 25 or Jan. 7. This celebration, a human innovation, began when Christians took over existing pagan festivals a few centuries after the time of Christ. No one knows the actual day of the year when Christ was born. (See Rom. 14:1-8.)

Christology The study of the nature of Jesus Christ, and in particular the relation between the divine and human in him.

Church The word church is used in three different ways. It is most often used to refer to the world-wide body or kingdom of Christ, comprised of all who have obeyed the gospel and were added by the Lord. Baptism is the point when one is added to the church (Acts 2:41,47). Used in its universal sense, church is always used in the singular; there is one body or one church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23). A second use of the term "church" refers to the local congregation, so that the Scripture refers to the "church of God in Corinth" (1 Cor. 1:2), "the churches in Galatia" (Gal. 1:2), or the "seven churches in the province of Asia" (Rev. 1:4). One should not assume that these are different kinds of churches (as denominations, which have different names, creeds and practices). The NT knows nothing of the denominational concept. The NT knows of only one universal church identifiable in local congregations, so that Paul speaks of the "churches of Christ" (Rom. 16:16). A third use of the term "church" is a reference to the assembly of the local congregation as in 1 Cor. 11:18 or 14:34. In the NT "church" never referred to a physical building, though it is used today to refer to a meeting place. The church is made up of people, living stones. Other terms that are synonymous with the "church" include: temple, vineyard, kingdom, body, family of God.

Circumcision The removal of the male foreskin as a sign of membership in the covenant Israel maintained with God. This act was done on the eighth day after the birth of all the descendents of Abraham. Gentile converts to Judaism were also circumcised. There was a dispute in the NT as to whether Gentile

converts to Christianity should be circumcised. The Scriptures emphatically say no (see Acts 15; Gal. 5:1-6).

Clean, Unclean The Hebrew terms chiefly describe states that qualify or contaminate the Israelites or their possessions so that they can or cannot be involved in the worship of the tabernacle or temple. The terms also refer to types of foods which Israelites may or may not eat. Israel was to maintain itself as a "holy" people.

Clergy A term used to refer to preachers and priests. Some use the term to describe priests and pastors whom they regard as a special group within their denomination.

Communion Another term referring to the Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 10:16 KJV). It is also a term that refers to the fellowship of all Christians.

Conscience The faculty in man by which he distinguishes the morally right from wrong, which urges him to do that which he recognizes to be right and restrains him from doing that which he recognizes to be wrong, which passes judgment on his acts and executes that judgment within his soul. (See Rom. 2:14,15; 14:23; 1 Tim 4:2; Tit. 1:15). The conscience can be deceived when it is not educated in accordance with truth (Acts 23:1; 1 Tim. 1:16).

Confession of Christ This is the acknowledgement that one believes that Jesus Christ is the Lord, the Son of the living God. Peter made this acknowledgement at Caesarea Philippi (Matt. 16:16); the Eunuch made this acknowledgement at his baptism (Acts 8:37); and the Lord expects all men to confess publicly with their mouths their allegiance to Him (Matt. 10:32,33; Rom. 10:9,10).

Confession of Sin The admission that one has sinned, whether one does it privately or publicly. The Christian confesses his sin and prays that God will forgive him (James 5:15,16; 1 John 1:9). Along with repentance and prayer (Acts 8:20-24), this is what the Christian (who has received his initial forgiveness in baptism) does in order to maintain his relationship with the Lord.

Congregation The local body of Christians who come together regularly for worship and join together in Christian service and evangelism.

Conversion The turning away from the world or worldly religions and sin to Christianity. The term is sometimes used interchangeably with "repentance." Conversion to Christianity is not complete, however, until one is baptized into Christ, in which he is born again and is redeemed from all sin.

Covenant A solemn agreement made by God with His people, with the aim of securing a lasting relationship with them. The "old covenant" (or Old Testament) refers to the legal relationship God instituted with Israel at Sinai. This relationship was

based upon the giving of the Law, including the Ten Commandments (Ex. 34:27,28). God through Jeremiah prophesied a "new covenant," which was made through the blood of Jesus Christ (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13). By establishing the new covenant, the old covenant was to make the first one obsolete.

Covetousness A strong desire for things that one has no right to possess. Coveting is regarded in the NT as a form of idolatry (Eph. 5:5; Col. 3:5).

Creation God's action in bringing into being the universe and everything in it. Man and woman, made in God's own image, is the crown of His creation. Belief in God as the Creator brings with it the conviction that this world and life were made with purpose, and that mankind was not the product of evolution or chance.

Creed A formal statement of belief. The only NT creed was a simple confession of faith in Jesus as Lord and Christ, the Son of the living God. This simple, public confession was made at baptism, which was performed in the name of Jesus Christ. In later centuries men drew up more detailed formal statements; the best known creeds are the Nicene Creed and the Apostles' Creed. Since these later creeds are not Biblical requirements, they can never be considered as an authoritative criteria for NT Christianity.

Cross The wooden instrument of death upon which Jesus was nailed to die (crucified). It is generally regarded as two pieces of wood joined together in the shape of a lower case letter "t." "Cross" is sometimes used to refer to the death of Jesus. The cross has become the central emblem of Christianity.

Cults Groups that deviate from Christianity, often characterized by heresy and a dominant leader, who maintains control over his followers. Their members are often marked by single-minded commitment. Cults often concentrate on some aspect of faith to such an extent that they become unbalanced in their approach to other matters.

Deacon (literally "servant"). The term is used with general and specific meanings. Generally, it refers to one who serves the Lord without regard to the type of service. Specifically, it refers to men who hold an office and are delegated with specific tasks in their service to the church (Acts 6:1-6). Paul gives the qualifications of a deacon in 1 Tim. 3:12,13. It is unlikely that a woman held the office of a deacon (1 Tim. 2:10-15).

Death of Jesus The NT views Jesus crucifixion as the atoning sacrifice for man's salvation. Jesus died in our stead, even though we deserved the penalty of death for our sins. Jesus died as our substitute so that we might be forgiven and be reconciled (brought back into a loving relationship with God). The death

of Jesus was the means by which God demonstrated to us the depth of His love and the full extent of His grace.

Deism The belief that God exists but reveals Himself through nature rather than directly through the coming of Jesus or through the Bible.

Demon Evil spirit working for the Devil against God and against righteousness. Jesus saw demons invading people's bodies and personalities; He frequently cast them out.

Denomination The organized grouping of congregations with similar names, creeds, beliefs, structures and practices. This concept is foreign to the NT, since Jesus Christ only built one church. The belief that there can be many churches with many names, creeds, organizations, and practices and that these denominations can co-exist with the approval of God is clearly denied by the Scriptures. Jesus prayed that His people be one (John 17:20-23); division is condemned (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Rom. 16:17-19); and Jesus identifies the true disciples as those who abide in his teaching (John 8:31,32; Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11). Only those who obey the will of the Father in heaven will enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 7:21-27). Every plant which the Father has not planted will be rooted up (Matt. 15:8-14).

Devil, The (also called "Satan") The leader of the spiritual forces opposing God. His authority is strictly subordinate to God. The Devil is thought to be a fallen angel; he was not created evil but became evil through sin against God. Jesus overcame the Devil and his works by his death upon the cross.

Disciple (literally, a student follower of a teacher) One who follows Jesus in order to learn from him and grow to spiritual maturity. One becomes a disciple when one is baptized into Christ (Matt. 28:19). It is God's plan that his disciples be taught to obey everything that Jesus commanded and so please Him in every respect (Matt. 28:20).

Discipline The application of certain rules of life to keep Christians, individually and corporately, within a spiritually and morally healthy way of life. Congregations through its leaders must exercise discipline against those who impenitently do evil (Matt. 18:15-18; 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Rom. 16:17-19; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Tit. 3:10).

Disfellowship The act of shunning or excluding a disorderly or impenitent church member from the fellowship of the church. The purpose of this action is to cleanse the church from sinful influence and to persuade the sinning member to repent. The loss of fellowship means that faithful church members show such disapproval of the sinning brother's activities that they will not associate or eat with him until he repents. A disfellowshipped brother is considered given to Satan and lost. (See 1 Cor. 5:1-13; Matt.

18:15-18; 2 Thess. 3:6-15; Tit. 3:10; Rom. 16:17,18).

Divinity The being of God. Christians believe that Jesus existed in the form of God and shares the divine nature with His Father and the Holy Spirit (Phil. 2:5-11).

Divorce The legal breaking and ending of a marriage covenant between a husband and wife. What God permits in the ending of a marriage often disagrees with the laws of the state. One who is divorced in the eyes of the laws of the state but not according to God's teaching commits adultery when one remarries (Matt. 5:31,32; 19:3-9). The exception to this teaching is in the case of fornication causing the breaking of the marriage. Some scholars see the desertion of an unbelieving mate from a believer as permission for divorce and remarriage (1 Cor. 7:10-15).

Doctrine (lit., "teaching") A belief or teaching that has been carefully formulated. The term "doctrine of Christ" can refer to the whole body of belief. The Scriptures always use the word "doctrine" in the singular when referring to the doctrine of God, and use it in the plural when speaking of the doctrines of men. There is "one faith," i.e., one system of beliefs or doctrines (Eph. 4:5), which was once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3). God expects men to agree with one another in their teaching (1 Cor. 1:10-13). There is only one gospel (Gal. 1:6-9).

Dogma Close to "doctrine," but can carry the idea of a fixed and inflexible system of belief. Dogmatics is the study of Christian doctrine, often in a way which centers on its philosophical implications.

Dualism The belief that there are equal and opposite forces of good and evil at work in the universe. This is an old heresy into which it is all too easy to fall when speaking of the devil and the presence of evil.

Early Church The church in the first few centuries, after the days of the primitive church.

Easter Not found in the NT. A holiday on a Sunday shortly after the beginning of spring when some Christians remember the death and resurrection of Jesus. Like Christmas, this tradition began some centuries after the time of Christ. Many of the activities associated with Easter were borrowed from pagan rituals. (See Rom. 14:1-8.)

Elder An officer in the local congregation, whose responsibility it is to lead, shepherd, and oversee the members. The term may be used interchangeably with bishop, pastor, overseer, shepherd, or presbyter. In the NT a plurality of elders were always appointed over a local congregation. The concept of one bishop over a church is a later development.

Elect, The Those who are "chosen" by their positive response to the calling of the gospel (Eph. 1:3-14; 1 Pet. 2:9; 2 Thess. 2:13-15). The term is synonymous with all who are "in Christ," the church.

Epistemology The philosophy of knowledge, particularly inquiring as to how we know and what are the sources of our knowledge.

Epistle A formal letter written with authority. In the NT usually written by an apostle to a church, a group of churches, or to an individual.

Eschatology The study of "last things," i.e., what will happen at the end of the age, and in particular at the second coming of Jesus Christ.

Essenes A sect of Jews, who lived in a separate community based at Qumran on the Dead Sea. Their characteristic beliefs were kept secret, but some are now known from the Dead Sea Scrolls.

Eternity The state of being beyond and unlimited by time. God is eternal and grants eternal life to those who believe and obey Him (John 3:36). The Christian hope is that though he may die in this life, he will live on through eternity (John 11:25,26).

Ethics The study of morality and moral choices.

Christian ethics seek to relate the moral teaching of the Bible to its application in everyday life.

Evangelism ("evangel" means gospel) Telling other people the good news about the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ with the aim that they might believe, repent and obey the gospel in baptism, so that they might find forgiveness and life through the blood of Jesus Christ. Evangelism is the primary work of the church (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 15:15,16).

Evil Harm which comes to human beings, turning us away from God and from goodness. Moral evil is harm which comes through sinful, human choice and action. Natural evil is harm which comes through events in nature such as disease or earthquakes. The origin of natural evil is usually associated with the moral evil in the fall of Adam and Eve (Gen. 3:14-24).

Evolution The theory (not established fact) that the development of all forms of life takes place through a series of modifications, the direction of which is governed by environmental factors. This theory, put forward by Charles Darwin in the mid-nineteenth century, has come under strong attack but is still accepted by many scientists. Some of its proponents use it as a philosophy, explaining many aspects of life and society in a way which excludes God. Christians hold that creation and evolution are mutually exclusive concepts.

Existentialist One who rejects externally imposed values or codes, in the belief that a person has to make his or her own choices in terms that make sense of his or her own existence. It is a modern philosophy, sometimes leading to despair, though sometimes to courage. Many existentialists are atheists; others have tried to integrate existentialism with Christianity (such as Soren Kierkegaard).

Exodus, The The escape of the Israelites from

slavery in Egypt by the power of God through His servant Moses. This escape led to their establishment of their own land in Palestine. The OT and Judaism look back to it as God's greatest deliverance, when Israel became a nation. NT teaching of Jesus and salvation through His blood sometimes uses the imagery of the exodus.

Exorcism Casting demons out of people in Jesus' name. The ability to cast out demons ceased with the other miraculous gifts available to the apostles and those on whom the apostles laid their hands. There is no evidence that anyone today possesses demons in the same way the NT describes.

Expiation Making an offering or taking action that atones for sin. Jesus offered His body on the cross to atone for our sins (Heb. 10:5-14; 1 Pet. 2:24; 2 Cor. 5:17-21).

Faith Personal belief and trust in a person or an idea, such that loss will be inevitable if the object of faith proves untrustworthy. Christian faith in Jesus is therefore more than intellectual assent to beliefs; it is personal commitment to Jesus and to His teaching. Faith is regularly linked to repentance and to obedience to the commandments (cf. John 3:36; Rom. 1:5; 16:26). Unwillingness to obey the commandments or neglect of duty may truly be considered as unfaithfulness. A tree may be judged by its fruit (see James 2:14-26).

Faith, The Used in the objective sense, this is the content of what is believed. Jude encouraged Christians to contend for "the faith," which was once for all time delivered to the saints (Jude 3; cf. Eph. 4:5). This refers to the embodiment of all that Jesus taught, the system of doctrine, in which the Christian must put his trust as the Truth.

Fall, The Adam's and Eve's choice to disobey God's will by eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. This sin had consequences for all humanity in the separation from the tree of life and in the curses God placed on the devil, the woman, and the ground (Gen. 3:14-24). Because of their sin, spiritual death passed to Adam and Eve, and physical death passed not only to them but to all humanity thereafter (Rom. 5:12-19). This event set the stage for all that follows in the Bible, which is the story of God's scheme of redemption. This redemption finds its ultimate goal in the death of Jesus upon the cross, through which man could be forgiven of his sin and reconciled to God. Those who are redeemed by the blood have a right to eat of the tree of life in heaven (Rev. 22:1-5,14).

Fasting Going without food or other things so as to focus concentration and devotion on God. Fasting usually includes extended time in prayer.

Fatalism The belief that an individual's destiny is

shaped by impersonal spiritual forces that do not take personal welfare or choice into consideration. Often this belief leads one to an attitude of helpless resignation. It cannot co-exist with faith in a personal, loving God.

Father, God as The quality in God which relates to humanity in a parental way, so that God is caring, guiding and disciplining His children. "Father" was the characteristic way that Jesus referred to God. Christians commonly speak of "God the Father" to distinguish Him from "God the Son" and "God the Holy Spirit."

Fellowship Doing things together and having things in common within the Christian community. The emphasis is on shared participation in the Christian life rather than simply meeting together. Christians are not to live isolated lives but to find mutual encouragement and support in each other. One who has "fellowship" with Christ and other Christians walks in the light. Those who cease to walk in the light (i.e., follow the way of Christ) lose fellowship with the church and a right relationship with God (1 John 1:6-10).

Flesh In the spiritual sense it reflects our lives and personalities when they are directed in a way that leaves God out and acts as if there were no spiritual dimension. The mind set on the "flesh" is hostile to God and is not able to please God (Rom. 8:5-8). Paul notes that the flesh opposes the Spirit in our lives (Gal. 5:13-21). The works of the flesh keep one out of the kingdom of God. The NIV translates "flesh" (sarx) as "sinful nature" in several passages. While the flesh is weak to sin (Matt. 26:41), one should not equate the word "flesh" with inherent sinfulness. Jesus "became flesh" (John 1:14), yet He was sinless (Heb. 4:14-15).

Forgiveness The merciful act of no longer holding a person's sins against him; forgetting against. Because of the death of Jesus, people who obey the gospel can know that God no longer holds their sins against them; but they are free of the guilt that would otherwise separate them from God (Isa. 59:1,2). Forgiveness opens the door for reconciliation, the reuniting of two estranged people. Because Christians are forgiven, they ought also to forgive others (Matt. 6:14,15; 18:21-35; Eph. 4:32).

Free Moral Agent The human quality that describes his ability to make moral choices freely and not be governed by any outside factors. This quality is what holds him responsible for those choices. God could not justly judge humans if they were not able to make choices in whether or not to follow His will. Free moral agency denies that individuals are predestined to heaven or hell and beyond change.

Fruit of the Spirit Characteristics in the Christian life which are products of the Holy Spirit. They are

love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Gal. 5:22,23)

Gentile Term used by Jews referring to one who is not a Jew.

Gifts of the Spirit (spiritual gifts) Miraculous abilities given to believers by the Holy Spirit, to be used for the good of the whole body (1 Cor. 12:4-11). These gifts are directly from the Holy Spirit and not natural talents.

Gnostic Member of one of the group of movements holding that salvation is attained through a secret knowledge (gnosis). The early roots of Gnosticism can be seen in the NT and was opposed by Paul and John. Some Gnostics believed that Jesus was merely human and that the Christ did not come in the flesh (1 John 4:1-3).

God Christians believe specifically in a Person, God, whom Jesus called Father. This Person is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent, all-loving, just, holy and perfect. While God is transcendent (beyond our ability to fully understand), He is also close to us in our everyday lives and relates to us as a Father.

He is the creator of the universe and the sustainer of our lives. He sent Jesus His Son to die for our sins on the cross, that we might live eternally with Him.

Gospel (lit., "good news") The good news message of what God has lovingly and graciously done for man through Jesus Christ, who has died for the forgiveness of our sins and rose again for our justification, that we might live eternally with Him (1 Cor. 15:1-3). It is through hearing and obeying this gospel that man is able to receive the blessing that Jesus came to give (Rom. 6:16-18; 10:14-17). There is but one gospel message (Gal. 1:6-9); all other messages are accursed.

Gospels The four accounts of the life, ministry, teachings, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ found in the NT: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. The Gospels are more than just biographies; they are tracts written to persuade men to believe (Luke 1:1-4; John 20:30,31).

Grace The quality in God that gives freely; its root meaning is "favor or pleasing." Grace is always given; it is not earned (Eph. 2:4-10; Rom. 4:4,5). It is a relationship word which means that one stands in the favor and blessing of God. To "fall from grace" is to lose that favor and blessing (Gal. 5:1-4), which includes forgiveness and other blessings which come to us through the blood of Jesus Christ.

Healing An important part of Jesus ministry was miraculous healing. This healing was a sign that confirmed His message as Divine (Heb. 2:3,4). Christians are today involved in healing, believing that medical means and prayer do bring health. (See

"Does Anyone Have Miraculous Gifts Today?")

Heaven The place where God's presence is now may truly be called "heaven." There is also that permanent place that Jesus has gone to prepare for us, a place that Christians will enter after the final judgment. Heaven is a perfect place without sin, death, mourning, or any kind of corruption or disease.

Hell (gehenna) The place of eternal torment, characterized by fire and darkness. Hell is totally removed from the presence of God and any comfort or blessing He provides. Hell was originally prepared for the devil and his angels; but men who reject God and His way, whose names are not written in the Lamb's book of life will enter this lake that burns with fire and brimstone, the second death (Rev. 20:11-15).

Hellenism The predominantly Greek culture that began with Alexander the Great (300 years before Christ) and continued for centuries together with Roman culture. The Greek influence made such an impact that the New Testament was originally written, not in Hebrew but in Greek.

Heresy A false teaching that causes the church to divide. It is a teaching in contrast to the truth that was received from Jesus Christ in the New Testament. Heresy causes division, which is a work of the flesh that keeps one from the kingdom of heaven (Gal. 5:19-21).

Hermeneutics The science of interpretation, the study of how one is to interpret the Scriptures. Good hermeneutics seeks to understand the message the original author intended in its Scriptural, historical and cultural context. It also seeks to properly apply to today the intended message of the text.

Hierarchy A system of government in some denominations which employs officials of graded status. By extension it has come to refer to the top church leaders, such as archbishops, cardinals and the pope. The concept of a hierarchy among men is wholly foreign to the word of God. In the NT there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ.

High Priest In the OT he was the priest specially appointed for certain duties connected with the sacrifices, especially those on the Day of Atonement. In the NT Jesus is regarded as our high priest, who offered his own body to atone for our sins.

Holy A quality of purity that initially comes from God and refers to a separation from anything defiled or sinful. Saints are "holy" people, who have been sanctified by the blood of Christ. Christians are commanded to live holy or morally pure lives, so that they reflect the nature of God in their behavior.

Holy Spirit The third person of the Godhead, who dwells in Christians today. He is not a force or an influence but a Divine Person. He is regarded as the author of the Scriptures (2 Pet. 1:20,21) and the

source of miracles (Heb. 2:3,4). In the OT the Holy Spirit was given to particular individuals for special tasks. Since the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit has been given to all who repent and are baptized (Acts 2:38,39).

Hope Confident expectation. The conviction that what God has promised, He is also able to perform, and that one will enjoy those promises. Hope is often placed in company with faith and love as supreme qualities of Christianity. Hope is regarded as the sustaining force Christians possess during great trials.

Humanist One who holds a high view of the capacity of human nature, such that man is his own god and there is nothing higher in the universe. A Christian humanist believes in God but holds that man by his aesthetic and moral senses and by his education is able to save himself.

Icon An image in the form of art or sculpture, usually of Jesus or the Virgin Mary, used in the worship of Orthodox churches. These are not mere decorations but are seen as windows into the spiritual world.

Idol Something physical or natural that people take for God and so worship. Many cultures have used idols made of gold, wood or stone; but men also make idols out of things such as money, sex, the state or science. (See Acts 17:24ff.)

Image of God The characteristics in human beings which reflect the nature of God, such as a moral sense, a conscience, freedom of choice, reason, memory, aesthetic abilities, and love. Man's moral sense of right and wrong especially comes from man's creation "in the image of God" (Gen. 1:26,27).

Immaculate Conception In Catholic belief, the idea that the Virgin Mary was from the time of her conception free from original sin. This is not a NT teaching but was made an article of faith for Roman Catholics in the nineteenth century.

Immanence The quality in God which causes him to be involved in the life of humanity and the world and not stay remote from it. God is near. That Jesus as the Son of God became flesh is the supreme example of God's association with man. God is both immanent (near) and yet transcendent (holy and beyond our full understanding).

Incarnation (lit., "taking flesh") The action by which Jesus as God took on human flesh and became subject to space, time and the problems of this world (John 1:1,14; Phil. 2:5-11). What made Jesus unique as a human was his freedom from sin (Heb. 4:14-16). His life as both God and man gave mankind an opportunity to understand the character of God

Indulgence In Catholic belief, remission of the debt owed to God for sin after the guilt has been forgiven. Catholics could buy indulgences from the church in order to be released from purgatory more quickly.

This is thought possible due to the "treasury of merit" believed to have been built up by Jesus, the Virgin Mary and the saints. It was the sale of indulgences for money which provoked Martin Luther to issue the Ninety-Five Theses, which launched the Reformation.

Inerrant The quality of being without any mistakes of fact or interpretation. Things divine are regarded as inerrant. Jesus was inerrant. The Scriptures are inerrant in so far as the Holy Spirit originally delivered them.

Infallible A term very close in meaning to inerrant and may be used of the Scriptures. Catholics incorrectly apply this term to the pope when he is pronouncing a matter of doctrine.

Inspiration (lit., "God-breathed" from 2 Tim. 3:16) The means by which God through the Holy Spirit moved man to write the sacred Scriptures so that they can be fully trusted as the Word of God (2 Pet. 1:20,21). The Holy Spirit so moved the writers that their books contain the meaning God intended, yet not lessening the individuality of the writers.

Intercession The aspect of prayer in which believers make petitions to God on behalf of themselves or others. Jesus is now in heaven and makes intercession for us (Heb. 7:25). Because we do not know how to pray as we ought the Holy Spirit also intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express (Rom. 8:26,27).

Intermediate State The condition all men will be in between the time of their physical death and the resurrection at the second coming of Christ. It is characterized by two realms, one of comfort in Abraham's bosom or Paradise and one of anguish in Hades (Luke 16:19-31). In the intermediate state the souls of men will be "unclothed," that is, without a body. Resurrection is the reuniting of the soul to a glorified body (1 Cor. 15:33ff.). In Paradise (Luke 23:43) one will be in the presence of God.

Interpretation Understanding the Bible in a way true to its original meaning and intent. Interpretation must be duly considered in any application of Scripture to modern day life.

Jesus (lit., "one who saves" from Matt. 1:21) The God-man born in Bethlehem and brought up in Nazareth who became an itinerant teacher and healer, was crucified and rose again. He was indeed the fulfillment of the promised Messiah, the Christ, and is the Son of God.

Jubilee Year In Israel every fiftieth year all land reverted to its original owner from whoever had bought it. The intention was to keep land in family units and prevent vast estates being built up. (See Leviticus 25)

Judgment Day The day God calls all men of all

time to account for the deeds in their lives and will assign them either to Heaven or Hell for eternity. Those who have believed and obeyed Christ will find Him the source of their salvation. Unbelievers and the disobedient will find it a day of weeping and gnashing of teeth. Judgment takes place to some extent at the time of death (Heb. 9:27; Luke 16:19-31); but the judgment day, the day of sentencing, will take place the day of the Second Coming (2 Thess. 1:7-9).

Justification God's reckoning of a person to be righteous in His sight. A person is justified by faith when his sins are washed away by the blood of Christ at baptism (Col. 2:12,13). The term is taken from the law court and means that one is acquitted.

Kenosis (lit., "he emptied himself" from Phil. 2:7) The belief that when Jesus took on flesh and became a man that he emptied himself of all distinctively divine attributes and revealed himself as God simply and solely through his humanity.

Kingdom of God (or kingdom of heaven) The rule and authority of God and every person and community of believers in whom that rule is accepted. The Jews looked for Jesus to restore the kingdom of Israel as in David's time, but Jesus established an eternal kingdom filled with both Jews and Gentiles. The kingdom of God on earth today is the church that Jesus died to purchase (Matt. 16:18,19). Paul and John regarded the church as synonymous with the kingdom of God (Col. 1:13,14; Rev. 1:4-6 NASB or NIV).

Laity (meaning "people"). Some people use this term as a means to distinguish the ordinary "people" from the professional "clergy." Such distinctions are foreign to the NT.

Lamb of God A description of Jesus used by John the Baptist and by John in the book of Revelation (John 1:29,35; Rev. 5:6). This title highlights the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins and the victory he won in his death.

Law, The (or the Torah) The set of God-given commandments found in the first five books of the OT and highlighted by the Ten Commandments. The Law is God's fatherly instructions to Israel for their good; it outlined the pattern of behavior through which they were to demonstrate their love for Him and for their neighbors. Though the Law was a blessing to the Jews, Christians are not under the Law of the old covenant (Rom. 7:4-6; Gal. 3:19--25; Heb. 8:6-13). They are citizens of the kingdom under the law of Christ in the new covenant (1 Cor. 9:19-21; 2 Cor. 3:2-6). Those who attempted to bind circumcision and the Law on NT Christians were fallen from grace (Gal. 5:1-6).

Laying on of Hands The identification of a person before God as the object of a special prayer by placing hands on him or her. This was done in the Bible for healing, for ordination and for receiving the miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit (Acts 8:14-17).

Legalism The approach to religion which sees its center in keeping rules and laws rather than in a covenant relationship characterized by faith and love. The Pharisee characterized an approach to religion whereby they sought to establish their own righteousness by keeping the Law and their traditions. Instead of establishing their own righteousness they lapsed into a system of hypocrisy that forgot the important matters (Matthew 23).

Lent A term unknown to the NT. A period of forty days leading up to Easter, during which Catholics are encouraged to exercise special self-discipline to prepare to celebrate Easter. The forty days are associated with the time of Jesus' temptation in the wilderness.

Liberal Theology A type of theology which asserts the freedom to question authority and to avoid Biblical restraints. It is usually characterized by doubt in the resurrection, doubt in the inspiration of the Scriptures, or doubt in an afterlife. It is often critical of Biblical Christianity.

Liturgy A set form of worship (in prayers, Scripture lessons, and hymns), usually published in a book. Liturgy is followed word for word, and sometimes provide a framework within which there is some freedom of expression. It developed several centuries after the NT was written and is characteristic of Catholic, Orthodox and Anglican worship.

Lord, The A title for God in both the OT and the NT. It is generally written in the Bible in small capital letters. The "Lord" translates the Hebrew term "Yahweh" or "Jehovah," and is used to describe the self-existent nature of God, who says of Himself, "I am that I am" (Ex. 3:14; cf. 6:3). Later Jews regarded the name too holy to be spoken. The title is used in the NT to refer to Jesus Christ and reflects His Deity and His absolute authority.

Lord's Day the first day of the week, so named because the Lord arose on the first day of the week. This is the day that early churches met to observe the Lord's Supper, the first day of the week, so named because the Lord arose on the first day of the week. This is the day that early churches met to observe the Lord's Supper. The term is used only in Rev. 1:10.

Lord's Supper A term referring to the memorial Christians observe each Lord's Day, consisting of unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. The bread calls to memory the body of Jesus, which was given for us. The fruit of the vine calls to memory the blood of Jesus which was shed for the forgiveness of

our sins. (See Matt. 26:26-29; 1 Cor. 11:23-32). To partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner is to be guilty of the body and the blood of Jesus.

Love An active caring for others, such that one puts another's interests first, regardless of the cost and whether or not the other person deserves it. God demonstrated His love for man in the giving of His Son Jesus (John 3:16; Rom. 5:6-9). The greatest commandment is to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind and strength and to love one's neighbor as himself (Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:36-40). Jesus gave a new commandment, that we love one another, even as He has loved us (John 13:34). Loving one another is a mark of a disciple (John 13:35). The apostle Paul describes the greatness of love in 1 Corinthians 13.

Marriage A covenant made publicly between one man and one woman that they will form a lifelong union of love and sexual exclusiveness. Marriage is the beginning of a new family; a husband and a wife are to leave father and mother and become one flesh. It is God's desire that what He has joined, people are not to separate (Matt. 19:6).

Martyr One who dies for his faith, refusing to turn from his confession in spite of persecution. Christians were martyred when the Roman government took to itself god-like powers and demanded that Christians deny their faith. The word martyr originally meant witness.

Materialist One who gives highest value to the physical and observable in life, and does not accept the reality of anything that cannot be seen, touched or measured.

Mediator One who stands between parties who are at variance and works toward their reconciliation. Jesus is uniquely qualified to mediate between God and man (1 Tim. 2:3-6), since He is both Divine and human (John 1:1,14; Phil. 2:5-11).

Medieval Pertaining to the time of the Middle Ages. In Christian thought this period was characterized by an appeal to natural theology and an attempt to harmonize Bible teaching with the philosophy of Aristotle.

Meditation A spiritual concentration used in Bible study, in which one considers the context, meaning and applications of a particular passage of Scripture.

Messiah (lit., "anointed one") The one whose coming was prophesied in the Old Testament, who was to be prophet, priest and king. He was to set his people free (Matt. 1:21) and establish a kingdom that would never end (Daniel 2; Luke 1:33). Jesus said that faith in Him as the Messiah was necessary (John 8:12-24). The Greek term for Messiah is the word "Christ." Calling Jesus the Christ is to acknowledge that He is the Messiah.

Millenium, The A thousand-year period prophesied

in Revelation 20 when the righteous will rule with Christ. The view of this reign has been interpreted three ways:

**Premillennialism* maintains that Jesus will return before the millenium and that he will reign with his people on the earth in the kingdom. This view wrongly holds that the church was a "stop-gap" measure, and not the kingdom of Christ. It also holds without Scriptural foundation that the reign will be on earth.

**Postmillennialism* argues that Jesus will come again after the millenium, which will be a period of spiritual prosperity. This view is rarely held today.

**Amillennialism* holds that the thousand-year period is symbolic and that Jesus' Second Coming will bring, not a reign on the earth, but the eternal age. This view correctly acknowledges that the church is the kingdom of God (Rev. 1:4-6). It also recognizes that those who were to reign were beheaded saints in heaven (Revelation 20).

Ministry (lit., "service") The whole range of service all members of the church offer to one another and to non-Christians as well. Those involved in the preaching ministry are sometimes referred to as the "minister." It should not be thought, however, that his is the only ministry in the work of the church. All members of the body are to serve (Eph. 4:11-16).

Miracle A mighty work, beyond the normal functioning of nature and beyond the ability of man. Miracles evoke awe and amazement. Their purpose is twofold: to evoke faith in those who acknowledge them and to confirm the truth of the message preached (John 20:30,31; Heb. 2:3,4).

Mission (from a root word meaning "sent") The primary mission or directive of the church is to preach the gospel to every person in every nation (Matt. 28:19,20; Mark 16:15,16). While evangelism is central to the work of a mission, Christians are also involved in benevolence and service to those who are needy (Matt. 25:31-46).

Missionary At one level this means anyone who works to fulfil the church's mission. But usually it refers to an individual who crosses national or cultural boundaries to spread the gospel to people of no faith, corrupted faith or other faiths.

Monism The belief that all things, material and immaterial, personal and impersonal, are essentially one stuff. It is the underlying philosophy of Hinduism.

Monotheist One who believes that there is only one God, as opposed to the polytheists. This belief is basic to both the OT and NT. Belief in the Trinity is not an affirmation that there are three gods; rather it is affirming one god in three persons.

Mystery In the NT something that was formerly hidden but now revealed (Eph. 3:2-6; Col. 1:26;

2:2,3). There are some things that God keeps hidden and does not disclose (Deut. 29:29).

Mystic One who pursues the inner life of the spirit, using any of a vast number of spiritual methods in the effort to know and experience God at the deepest possible level.

Myth A story through which people seek to encapsulate a religious idea. When Biblical scholars speak of myths in the Bible, they are usually using the technical term that does not regard whether the story is historical or not. When the NT uses the term, it is used in contrast to historical reality and truth (2 Pet. 1:16; 2 Tim. 4:4; Tit. 1:14).

Natural Theology The belief that a knowledge of God may be reached through experience of the world and reason alone without the need for special revelation. It is often considered as complementary to revealed religion.

Neo-orthodoxy The type of twentieth-century theology associated with Karl Barth and which provided a critical reaction to liberal theology. It stresses the importance of God's revelation through the Word of God.

New Birth (also called regeneration) Jesus said, "Unless a person is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3-7). The new birth describes a birth comprised of both water and Spirit, a reference to baptism (Tit. 3:5-7). It is at the time of the new birth that one's sins are forgiven and that he becomes a child of God (Gal. 3:26,27; Rom. 6:3-7; 2 Cor. 5:17). All NT Christians have been born again.

Nonconformist (in some places called "free churchman") One who does not accept the established church of his nation (such as Anglican in England or Lutheran in Germany) but joins instead a denomination or congregation that is free of ties with the state.

Occultism Involvement with secret supernatural forces, often including magic and astrology. Occult practices are strongly condemned in the Bible.

Omnipotent Almighty, able to do all things (except things which are logically impossible).

Omnipresent Present everywhere, not confined to any locality.

Omniscient Knowing everything, unlimited in knowledge.

Once Saved, Always Saved The unscriptural, Calvinist doctrine that once a predestined child of God has been saved, he cannot for any reason thereafter be lost.

Ontological Pertaining to the essential nature of things. The "ontological argument" for the existence of God maintains that, in the nature of things, a Being must exist who is greater than everything else or

there would not be a supreme being.

Original Sin Some believe that man has a totally depraved predisposition toward sin, which he inherited from Adam as a result of the fall in the Garden of Eden. This view holds that man is incapable of doing good without a miraculous change of personality, which they regard as a work of grace in the new birth. They seem to forget that Adam and Eve ate of the Tree of Knowledge of both good and evil, not evil and evil.

Pacifist One who believes that war or violence is never justified and so refuses to bear arms.

Pagan One who is thought to be unenlightened as to the truth, an alien (Eph. 2:12). It is often used of primitive religions but may be used of those who have no faith.

Panentheist One who holds that everything exists in God and emphasizes that God is immanent. Should not be confused with pantheism.

Pantheist One who holds that everything is divine, so that many pantheists worship nature. A tendency of pantheism is to be morally neutral, since everything is an aspect of the divine being.

Parable (lit., "to cast alongside") At its simplest, it is an extended metaphor or simile drawn from nature or common life used to illustrate a spiritual truth. Its value is in its ability to rouse the mind to active thought by appealing to the familiar. This figure is characteristic of Jesus' method of teaching.

Paraclete (lit., "one who is called alongside") A term used to describe the Holy Spirit (John 14:26; 15:26), who was given to the apostles to be a "Comforter" or "Helper." Jesus is described as our "advocate" when we sin (1 John 2:1,2).

Paradise A term used in the bible referring to the "blessed state hereafter." Paradise is where Jesus and the thief on the cross were to go after death. The phrase is used in Rabbinic literature as synonymous with "Abraham's bosom." It is a place of comfort.

Passion The Passion of Jesus is his suffering as his death approached, including his temptation in Gethsemane, his humiliation by the Roman soldiers, and his suffering on the cross.

Passover In preparation for the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites families were spared the death of their firstborn, when God "passed over" their houses while destroying the firstborn of the Egyptians (Exodus 12). In consequence, God established a feast of the Passover, which remembers the incident. Of special importance is the Passover meal, during which Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper.

Pastor (lit., "shepherd") One who cares for a congregation's spiritual, physical and emotion needs. It is used synonymously with the role of an elder or overseer (Acts 20:28; Eph. 4:11; 1 Pet. 5:1,2).

Penance In Catholic and Orthodox belief, the

performance of an assigned duty in restitution for sin. It is held to be a sacrament, and absolution of guilt may be made dependent on it. While repentance is necessary to salvation, the concept of penance is foreign to the Scriptures, making grace an earned blessing (Eph. 2:8-10).

Pentecost The Jewish festival during which the Holy Spirit miraculously came upon the apostles, the gospel was first preached, and the church was established (Acts 2). Pentecost came fifty days after the Passover and always fell on the first day of the week. Pentecost as a Jewish feast commemorating the barley harvest, when the sickle was first put to the grain. Pentecost was regarded as a day of rest, and all Israelite males were required to attend the festival in Jerusalem.

Perseverance of the Saints The Calvinist and unscriptural belief that once a Christian has been saved, he cannot for any reason thereafter be lost.

Pharisee Member of a sect of Judaism, strict in their observance of the Law and believing that could establish their own righteousness through the Law and their traditions, which they regarded as an "oral law." (See. Matt. 15:1-14). Unlike the Sadducees they taught the importance of the whole law, not only the worship of the Temple.

Philosophy (lit., "love of wisdom") The age-old study of the reality of things, trying to make sense of the world and life through clear thinking and observation. It involves the accurate use of language and logic. Philosophy also addresses the important question of ethics, how a person should live.

Pietist Member of a movement in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries that sought to bring back devotion and holy living into Protestantism, which had become rigid and theoretical.

Pluralism The existence of many religions side by side in the same community with the belief that each is equally valid and approved by God. The obvious consequence of such a view is that there is no such thing as heresy or false doctrine. Pluralism stands in bold contrast to Jesus' prayer for unity (John 17:20-23) or Paul's exhortation that there be no divisions in the church but that they "may be perfectly united in mind and thought" (1 Cor. 1:10). There is but one body, one church (Eph. 4:4; 1:22,23).

Polygamy One man having more than one wife. This is in bold contrast to the clear principle of one man, one woman, for life.

Polytheist One who believes in more than one god. Polytheism was the popular religion in the Near Eastern, Greek and Roman societies in Biblical times. Pope (not found in Scripture) The bishop of Rome and leader of Roman Catholicism. Roman Catholics see him as the successor of Peter and the vicar (representative) of Christ on earth.

Prayer In its simplest form, prayer is communicating to God one's praise, thanksgiving, and petitions. Prayer and Bible study are central to the Christian life. This communication may be uttered in words or may be transferred by thoughts to God, who knows the hearts of all men.

Predestination The Calvinist belief that God decides a person's eternal destiny in advance and that man has no free will to change that destiny.

Pre-existent Being in existence before the universe was created. This is true of God in all three persons (Father, Son and Holy Spirit).

Presbyter (lit., "elder") A man appointed to lead a congregation in coordination with other men who serve as elders. A plurality of elders (presbyters) were appointed in NT churches to lead, to "oversee," and to "shepherd" the church.

Priest One who represents God to people and people to God. The term is also used of one who offers sacrifices. The OT priests were of the Levite tribe and were central to Israel's worship in the tabernacle and temple. In the NT Jesus is our high priest and every Christian is a priest (1 Pet. 2:5-11; Rev. 1:4-6; 5:10). The Catholic idea that there are special priests is unscriptural.

Primitive church A term sometimes used of the church in the time of the apostles.

Principalities and powers Authorities in the world that possess something of the devil or the demonic, so that the apostle Paul writes of them as "forces" against which the Christian must struggle. Christians have the panoply or full armor of God to help them in this struggle (See Eph. 6:10-20).

Prophet One who "speaks forth" the word of God by inspiration. His message may be to a particular nation, city, or person. Prophecy contains elements of prediction but is not confined to future events. Prophets were considered in the OT as "servants" of the Lord, bringing His revealed will to the people. NT prophets were inspired preachers and teachers who spoke forth the gospel or the faith. The gift of prophecy was to cease in the first century when the NT was completed (1 Cor. 13:8-13).

Propitiation An atoning sacrifice, an offering that brings a person back into a right relation with the One who has been offended. Christ Himself "is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only but also for the whole world" (1 John 2:1,2).

Proselyte A non-Jew who is converted to Judaism and allowed to worship in the synagogue and temple (court of the Gentiles). Proselytes often became impressed with the message of Christ and obeyed Christ.

Protestant Member of one of three Christian traditions, besides the Catholic and Orthodox denominations. It is a general name given to the

successors of those who separated from the Church of Rome at the Reformation. Protestantism is featured by its rejection (or protest) of the Pope, church tradition, and the order of priests and its reliance solely on the authority of the Scriptures. Protestantism has divided into many different denominations.

Providence The care God takes of all existing things. Whether through His acts of salvation or His giving man and animals their daily food, God provides for His own. God is able to provide for everything because of His wisdom and power. (See Gen. 22:13,14).

Purgatory (not found in Scriptures) In Catholic belief, this is where the spirit goes after death to be "purged" of sin and so prepared for heaven. Such a belief is a mockery of the blood of Christ as sufficient for our eternal salvation. The blood of Christ makes one really free from sin (John 8:34-36).

Rabbi A teacher of the Jewish faith, who in Jesus' time would gather around him a group of disciples (students). Jesus was often called "Rabbi." Jesus taught his disciples not to be called "Rabbi"; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren (Matt. 23:1-12). Religious titles for men are condemned in Scripture.

Ransom Payment offered to secure someone else's release from slavery or prison. It is therefore used to describe what was achieved by the death of Jesus, being close in meaning to redemption. (cf. Matt. 20:28; 1 Tim. 2:6)

Rationalist One who believes that everything can be judged by unaided reason, and that reason is superior (or equivalent) to revelation. Rationalism was an important school of philosophy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and its influence is still felt today.

Reconciliation The restoring of the relationship of two estranged parties, so that they are in close fellowship with one another. Jesus died to take away our sins so that we could be reconciled to the Father. Once reconciled we are obligated to bring reconciliation to others throughout the world. (See 2 Cor. 5:12-21; 1 John 1:7-9).

Redemption The buying back of someone from slavery so as to secure their freedom. It is a concept used frequently in the OT to describe what God did for Israel in the exodus from Egypt. In the NT it describes what Christ has done for us in releasing us from the bondage of sin through his death. (See Col. 1:13,14).

Reformation, The The sixteenth century movement to reform the Roman church, which led to separation from Catholicism to form the Protestant movement. It was not the intention of the reformers so much to

divide the church as it was to reform it according to the Scriptures. Martin Luther, Huldreich Zwingli, and John Calvin are considered important leaders in the Reformation.

Reformed churches A world-wide fellowship of denominational churches, which are in line of descent from John Calvin and more or less hold to his teachings: Total Hereditary Depravity, Unconditional Election, Limited Atonement, Irresistible Grace, and Perseverance of the Saints.

Reincarnation The belief that we live a series of succeeding lives, sometimes at different levels of being. This concept is wholly foreign to the Scriptures, which teaches that after death comes judgment (Heb. 9:27). The idea is important in Hinduism and New Age thinking.

Renaissance, The (lit., "rebirth") A group of movements in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which marked the transition from the medieval period. It was marked by great interest in the works and arts of classical times. One important feature was its deep humanism, which may have influenced the Reformation.

Renewal The return to a deeper Christian faith and life on the part of a person or a community. Renewal is found in prayer and Bible study, so that a person may become more and more like Jesus Christ (Cf. Rom. 12:1,2; Col. 3:5-11).

Repentance (lit., "a change of mind") A complete turning away of mind and heart from any evil and a complete turning to the way of Jesus Christ.

Repentance is prompted by godly sorrow and the love of God and leads to a change of life.

Repentance is necessary to conversion and salvation. Repentance is a change of character.

Representative A term used to describe the position Jesus held in his death. Being fully human and yet without sin, he became the representative person, who as high priest, died for us, representing the whole of humanity in its guilt for sin.

Restoration The belief in the need for doctrinal repentance and a return to New Testament teaching. Belief in restoration comes from the belief that God wishes men to return to His once-for-all delivered Word to please Him in all respects. We ought to restore our beliefs and practices to agree with the teachings of the New Testament.

Resurrection God's restoring the life of Jesus after his death and raising him up from the grave. Resurrection is the reuniting of the spirit to the body, so that one comes back to life. As the risen Lord, Jesus lives eternally at the right hand of God in a glorified state. In His victory over death, Jesus has given us assurance that there is life after death.

Resurrection, general At the second coming of Christ, all who are dead will be raised up to new life

(John 5:28,29). This means that they will receive new, glorified, imperishable bodies (1 Cor. 15:35-55; Phil. 3:20,21). The resurrection is a source of great comfort to the Christian who sorrows over the loss of a loved one (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

Revelation God's action of making Himself, His will, and His way known to man. Specifically, this revealing has been made in history through particular acts of revelation, such as prophecy, visions, dreams, miraculous events, and theophanies. The record and correct understanding of these historical acts are in the Bible, which Christians believe that God has so inspired as to ensure that his revelation is fully accurate and accessible to us. The greatest act of revelation of the character, love and righteousness of God is in the sending of His Son Jesus to live on the earth. There is a sense in which the character and power of God can be seen in the physical universe and nature (Rom. 1:18-20; Psalm 8). A complete and true understanding of God's nature cannot be realized without the written revelation found in the Bible (1 Cor. 1:21).

Reverend (lit., "terrible, awesome") The term is used only once in the King James Version of the Bible (Psa. 111:9) and is a reference to God. Men who wear the term as a religious title do so presumptuously (Psa. 19:13) and in disobedience to the clear teaching of Jesus against such (Matt. 23:1-12).

Ritual A symbolic action, usually in the context of worship, that points to a spiritual truth.

Roman Catholic A member of the catholic church of Rom, acknowledging allegiance to the Pope. The Roman Catholic church is the most populous denomination. Its headquarters is the Vatican in Rome, where the Pope lives.

Sabbath The seventh day of the week, when people are called to cease or rest from their labors and reflect on God. The observance of the Sabbath was demanded of the Israelites as part of the Ten Commandments. Christians are not under the first covenant and so are not obligated to keep the Sabbath (Col. 2:16). Some people mistake the first day of the week (Sunday) for a Christian Sabbath. The only Sabbath rest for Christians is in heaven after the judgment (Heb. 4:1-13).

Sacrament (Not found in Scripture) Augustine called this "an outward and visible sign of an inward spiritual grace." It is regarded by some as a sign or dramatization, giving an effect more powerful than words. Many regard baptism and the Lord's Supper as sacraments, even though the Lord's Supper is a commemorative feast not a vehicle to dispense the grace of God. Catholics also regard as sacraments: confirmation, marriage, ordination, penance, and

extreme unction. Such notions are human in origin.

Sacrifice From the earliest times God demanded that men offer sacrificial gifts as a form of worship. In the OT, animal sacrifice provided the means by which sin might be atoned for and relationship with God preserved. The sacrifice, giving up, of Jesus in his death on the cross was the full and final means of atonement for all time.

Sadducee Member of a Jewish sect, powerful at the time of Jesus, who set great store by regular worship at the temple. Sadducees believed only in the Torah (first five books of Moses, also called "Pentateuch") and did not believe in the resurrection.

Saint (lit., "holy person") In NT usage, anyone who is sanctified or "in Christ" is regarded as a saint (1 Cor. 1:2). Catholics reserve the term for people of special holiness who are canonized or authorized to be called saints. In Catholic belief, the saints can be called on to intercede with God for us. The Catholic use of this term is foreign to the Scriptures and unwarranted. The Scriptures teach that Christ and the Holy Spirit intercede for us (Rom. 8:26,27; Heb. 7:25). The concept of intercession of the saints is not from God but in the imagination of man. Of course, all Christians have the right to pray for each other (James 5:16).

Salvation The rescuing of someone from danger. In the Bible it means bringing someone from captivity to sin into the fullness of freedom in Christ. Jesus means "Savior." Salvation has a past reference: a believer has been saved through the death of Jesus, who died once for all (Heb. 9:26). Salvation has a present application: one is saved when he obeys the gospel through faith, repentance and baptism (Acts 2:38-47). Salvation also has a future hope for those who remain faithful: believers will be rescued from eternal destruction at the second coming. Christians are saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8-10).

Sanctification (lit., "being made holy,") The setting apart of one for a holy purpose. In one's obedience to the gospel (by faith, repentance and baptism), the Holy Spirit makes one holy (Tit. 3:3-7) by freeing one from sin. The Christian is expected to live his life by continuing to sanctify or set himself apart in holiness. In this sense sanctification is a process whereby one progressively conforms his life and character to that of Jesus (2 Cor. 6:14-18) and keeps himself unspotted from the world (James 1:27).

Satan (lit., "adversary") the Devil, the chief opponent of God and the church, who is pictured as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet. 5:8). Satan was a created being (probably an angel) who, being lifted up with pride, rebelled against God. Hell is the place God prepared to punish the Devil and his angels (2 Pet. 2:4-11; Matt. 25:41-46).

Savior One who brings deliverance or rescues. The

name "Jesus" means Savior.

Schism A separation or division between groups, usually based on personalities or heresies.

Scholasticism An approach to theology in medieval times, of those who worked outside the monasteries, often in universities. The approach was detached and objective, using logic, debate and speculation.

Scribe A Jewish teacher of the Law. Scribes often opposed Jesus' teaching. Though most men could read in first century Palestine, not all could write.

Scripture The holy writings found in the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testament. While Catholics proclaimed the Apocrypha to be Scripture in the Council of Trent (1548 A.D.), Christians throughout the centuries have not regarded them so. The Scriptures differ from other writings in that they are inspired of God (2 Tim. 3:15-17).

Second Coming The promise that Jesus will come again publicly as Lord of all (John 14:1-3; Acts 1:9-11). He will bring this world to an end, judge all people of all time, and usher in the eternal age. Jesus will come as a thief in the night (Matt. 24:35-36; 2 Pet. 3:10; 1 Thess. 5:1-10).

Sect Can refer to a cult, but is also used of Christian groups that tend to become exclusive through overvaluing secondary beliefs.

Secular Concerned exclusively with this world, taking no account of a spiritual dimension. Secularism is the most characteristic feature of the modern Western world.

Self-existent Looking to no one or nothing else as the source of existence. This describes the nature of God, since everything else has come into being through him (John 1:1-3).

Separatist One who is ready to divide off from others on religious grounds.

Septuagint A translation of the Hebrew OT into Greek, variously dated from 250 to 150 B.C. It draws its name from the 70 Hebrew scholars who translated it.

Servant of the Lord A character who appears in four poems in the prophecy of Isaiah. His chief characteristic is that he is a suffering servant. In the NT, this concept of a suffering servant is applied to Jesus.

Shalom (lit., "peace" from the Hebrew) The state of being in harmony with the Lord, with the world, with others and within oneself. It is the richest of blessings and close to the NT idea of reconciliation. Used often in greetings.

Sin Carries a range of meanings, including breaking God's law and falling short of God's will for our lives. Sin includes both specific wrong actions and failure to do what is right. Sin is what breaks the relationship between God and man (Isa. 59:1,2). It is because of sin that man deserves God's punishment

of death (Rom.6:23). Jesus died so that men might be free from the guilt and punishment of sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

Situation ethics An approach to ethics which gives greater importance to the situation in which an ethical decision has to be made than to any moral system, including the authority of God's Word. It is founded on the belief that the only intrinsically good thing is love. This approach inadequately understands that God's law teaches one how to love. Obedience to Jesus Christ is how we love God (John 14:15).

Son of God A title given to Jesus Christ, designating him as one who is pre-existent and shares the nature and essence of God. It is as the Son of God that Jesus is spoken of as being the second person of the Godhead.

Son of Man A title given to Jesus, designating both his divinity and his humanity. Jesus uses this title most frequently when he refers to himself. The phrase coming from Daniel refers to a divine figure who would come from heaven; the "son of man" was widely expected in Jesus' time.

Soul In the Bible, this term variously refers to the whole person (1 Pet. 3:20), the life force within a person (Matt. 16:25), or the eternal essence of a person which survives death (Rev. 6:9; 20:4; Jam. 1:21; 5:20). "Soul" and "spirit" are not entirely synonymous terms (1 Thess. 5:23; Heb. 4:12); yet they do sometimes refer to the non-material seat of a person's consciousness, mind, heart, and volition.

Sovereignty A quality of God denoting his freedom from any kind of outward restraint. He is free to act as He wills, without limitation. In spite of this, God will only act in accordance with His character, which means that His actions are reliable, not arbitrary, and always for the good of His people.

Speaking in Tongues (also called "glossolalia") A gift from God so that one is miraculously able to talk in human languages that were unknown to the speaker. The gift is given so that the speaker may either praise God in a tongue (1 Cor. 14:15) or deliver a teaching message (Acts 2:5-13). Tongue speaking was only to be practiced publicly when someone who could interpret was present (1 Cor. 14:26-28).

Spirit (pneuma) That aspect of a person which is given directly to us from God (Heb. 12:9); which is able to think, reason, feel, and choose; which is able to have a relationship with God; and which survives death (James 2:26; Eccl. 12:7). This is the same term, which is used to describe the Holy Spirit. Paul often contrasts the spirit with the flesh.

Spiritism or Spiritualism The practice of seeking dealings with the spirits of people who have died. It is clearly condemned in Scripture as "necromancy" or "witchcraft" (cf. 1 Samuel 28; Gal. 5:20; Isa. 8:19;

Rev. 22:15).

Stewardship The relationship in which people stand both to God's creation and to their own abilities and possessions. We do not own these things; they belong to God. He permits us to use and holds us accountable for managing them to the best of our ability (cf. Matt. 25:14-30; 1 Cor. 4:1,2).

Substance A technical term used in defining the doctrine of the trinity. It means "being," so that one may say that God is one in "being" or "substance" with the Father. The trinity is three persons and one substance.

Substitute A way of describing the role Jesus fulfilled in his death. He died instead of us, who deserved to be separated from God as a result of our sin. Because He died, believers can be free from sin and guilt.

Sustainer God as the one who source of our continued or sustained lives and being (Acts 17:23-28; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:3). He causes all the conditions necessary for life to carry on. This Biblical concept denies the view that God started the universe and has left it to run down on its own.

Syncretism The combining of different faiths in such a way as to blur their distinctiveness. This destroys true faith in the one true and living God. It is compromise that leads to condemnation (cf. 1 Kings 11:1-13; 2 Kings 17).

Tabernacle The portable tent of meeting God instructed Moses to build as the center for worship (Exodus 26). The tabernacle contained the 'Holy Place' and the "Holy of Holies," where the high priest entered only once a year. The tabernacle went with Israel in the wanderings through the wilderness. The most sacred items of worship were kept in the tabernacle, which could be moved only by the priests. Eventually, the tabernacle was replaced when Solomon built the temple in Jerusalem.

Temple The building in Jerusalem which was set apart as the center of Israel's worship and sacrifices. First built by Solomon but destroyed when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, it was replaced after the Jews returned from exile. In Jesus' time Herod's Temple had been completed (after forty-six years of work), but this temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. No temple has been built since that time.

Temptation The pull towards sin which all humanity, including Jesus, experiences through the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life (1 John 2:15-17). To be tempted is not in itself sinful. Sin only comes when a temptation is welcomed and yielded to (James 1:13-15).

Testament (lit., "covenant") The two testaments together form the Bible. The Old Testament or "old covenant" covers the period from the creation and the

first covenant made with Abraham and renewed with Moses to the struggling of Israel throughout its history. The New Testament or "new covenant" was established by Jesus in his death on the cross (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 8:6-13; 9:11-15). Christians today have a relationship to God by means of the new covenant; consequently, they are subject to the teachings of the new covenant and not the old (Rom. 7:4-7; Gal. 3:19-27).

Theism Belief in God. Christianity starts with theism and builds from there, giving specific content to theism through God's revelation and particularly thought the character and teaching of Jesus.

Theodicy The justification of the ways of God, especially dealing with the problem of suffering and injustice. Theodicy seeks to defend belief in an omnipotent and all-loving God in spite of the existence of the suffering of innocent people. The book of Job may be considered a theodicy, as well as many passages in the writings of Paul and Peter.

Theology The study of God. Christian theology is not based on speculation about him but studies Him through understanding the revelation he has made for himself through Jesus and through the Scriptures.

Total Hereditary Depravity A Calvinist belief arguing that humanity since the fall is from birth totally incapable of himself to believe the gospel or to choose good over evil in the spiritual realm. His heart is deceitful and desperately corrupt, and his will is not free but in bondage to his evil nature.

Calvinists reject that the preaching of the gospel is able to bring a man to faith and repentance (Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Acts 2:37). They believe that regeneration precedes faith and repentance; faith is not something man contributes to salvation but is itself a part of God's gift of salvation--it is God's gift to the sinner, not the sinner's gift to God. This doctrine denies man's free moral agency or his free will to choose to believe and repent (John 3:16; Mark 16:16; Rom. 6:16-18; Rev. 22:17; Josh. 24:15). This doctrine also suggests that infants are born in sin and will be lost if they should die in infancy. (See Rom. 7:7-11; Matt. 18:1-3; 19:13-15).

Tradition The religious teachings and practices passed on from generation to generation. While there are inspired, authoritative traditions that have been delivered (1 Cor. 11:2,23; 2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6), human traditions make void the Word of God and are condemned (Matt. 15:1-14; Mark 7: 1-13; Col. 2:8). The term "tradition" carries with it the idea that one "ought" to believe or practice a certain thing. Traditions of men are wrong because they presumptuously claim an authority that only belongs to God. Modern people often use the word tradition to refer to habitual or routine practices that are meaningful but not sinful if left undone. In the strict,

Biblical sense, these are not traditions. The Pharisees accused Jesus of sin when he did not follow the tradition of the elders. A practice of men becomes a "tradition" when men regard it as sinful not to observe it. Men have no right to establish binding traditions (Matt. 15:13) or to judge others for not observing them (Matt. 7:1-5).

Transcendent Extending beyond human and earthly limitations and knowledge. God is transcendent and always stretches beyond our comprehension. But He is also immanent, so that his "otherness" does not make him remote.

Transfiguration The occasion on the mountain when the appearance of Jesus changed to a glorified state in the presence of Peter, James and John. (See Matt. 17:1-8; Luke 9:28-36).

Transubstantiation In Catholic belief, the view that the bread and the wine in mass miraculously become the actual body and blood of Jesus. In Lutheran belief, consubstantiation means that the actual body and blood of Christ exist "in, with or under" the elements of bread and wine. In the NT, the bread and fruit of the vine are eaten as a symbolic memorial to the body and blood of the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23-26).

Trinity Within the one essence of the Godhead we have to distinguish three persons who are neither three gods on the one side, not three parts or modes of God on the other, but coequally and co-eternally God. "The Lord our God is one Lord" (Deut. 6:4); yet the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all three in essence that one Lord (Matt. 28:19).

Unitarian One who believes that only the Father is God, and that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are not divine. Such a belief is foreign to the Scriptures.

Universalist One who believes that all humanity will eventually receive salvation, even if many have no faith in Jesus Christ. This view is mistakenly based on NT teaching that all things will finally be summed up in Jesus Christ, and it ignores the teaching on the final judgment (John 5:28,29; Rev. 20:11-15).

Virgin Birth The teaching that Mary conceived and gave birth to Jesus while still a virgin, through the miraculous intervention of the Holy Spirit. (See Isa. 7:14; Matt. 1:18-25).

Virgin Mary The mother of Jesus and a woman worthy of honor. In Catholic belief she is regarded as the "mother of God" and has been elevated beyond human status. She is called upon to intercede with God for believers.

Virtue Moral excellence (Phil. 4:8; 2 Pet. 1:3).

Western church The church in the western half of the Mediterranean, based on Rome, Latin-speaking. It developed its own form of life under the Pope, and

its successors are those in the Catholic tradition and the churches of the reformation.

Wicked, Wickedness Pertaining to a moral state, which involves sin and the misfortunes and distresses resulting from that sin. Wickedness is in bold contrast to righteousness (Prov. 12:5; 13:5; 29:2).

Word of God (with a capital "W") A title given to Jesus which points to him as the revelation of God in the flesh (John 1:1-3). This idea has an extensive background both in Jewish and in Greek thought. Its Greek form is logos.

Word of God (with a small "w") The revelation of God found in the Bible, the holy Scriptures. The Bible is the inspired word of God (2 Tim. 3:16,17; John 17:17).

Worship The heartfelt offering up of praise, adoration and thanksgiving to God through singing, prayer, giving, partaking of the Lord's Supper, and Bible study. Worship is primarily vertical but may also be horizontal in that worship is meant to edify others (Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16; 1 Cor. 14:26). God desires worshippers who will worship in spirit and in truth (John 4:23,24).

Yahweh (rendered "Jehovah" or "Lord") The Hebrew name for God, thought to be too holy to be spoken in OT times. No one today knows how to pronounce it. It originates from the phrase "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3:14). This name was first known to Moses (Ex. 6:2,3).

Zealot Member of a Jewish sect in Jesus' time, which tried to overthrow the occupying Romans by force. One of the apostles, Simon (not Peter), was a Zealot (Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13).

Zion Geographically, Zion refers to the lower eastern hill of Jerusalem. Historically, Zion began when David captured the Jebusite fortress and made it into the "city of David," the capitol of his kingdom (2 Sam. 5:6-10). In the Psalms and the prophets, Zion becomes the spiritual capitol of Israel. Isaiah's prophecy that "the law would go forth from Zion" and "the mountain of the house of the Lord would be established" is fulfilled in Acts 2, when the gospel of the kingdom is first preached b