

SAVING SOULS
IN THE
21st CENTURY

FOURTH EDITION

James E. Sanderson III

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I have held several evangelism workshops all over the nation, If your congregation is interested, please contact me at "saginawpreacher@yahoo.com" or call the Center Road church of Christ, Saginaw, Michigan, 989-790-2707.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my daughters
Jessica, Jill and granddaughters Roxy Mae & Riley Grace,
"Whom I Love Very Much"
that you may pass the message of *God's* saving grace on to the next generation!

To my beloved wife and best friend
Patty,
who keeps me well balanced in the Lord!

To all Christians everywhere,
that "we" overcome our fears
and trust that *God* is with us
as we reach our families, friends and neighbors for *Jesus*!

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INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THIS WORKBOOK

The purpose of this workbook is to help better equip Christians in reaching people for Jesus. My hope is to make this workbook easy enough for any Christian to answer what I believe, are the most asked questions by people who are truly seeking after God in our world today. **This book is in no way to become a substitute for the Bible!** Only use this workbook as an aide to help people better understand God's plan **from the Bible** for the salvation of their souls!

This workbook contains over seven hundred printed verses of the Bible to show our students God's word and how it applies to these important subjects. I have chosen four translations of the Bible (English Standard version, New King James version, New American Standard Updated version and New International version), trying to use the best version that conveys the meaning of the text and at the same time making it understandable to the reader. There is also over eight hundred references to scriptures, all in the hopes of showing our friends that this is not us coming up with these idea's, but that it comes from God's word.

Above all, please remember that when you became a Christian, there was someone who taught you about the love of Jesus. Therefore, God needs you to be that someone in others` lives! Find people who need what you know and teach them. We may be their only chance!

Acts 8:30-31

30 Then Philip ran up to the chariot and heard the man reading Isaiah the prophet. **"Do you understand what you are reading?"** Philip asked.

31 **"How can I,"** he said, **"unless someone explains it to me?"** So he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

NIV



INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

STEP ONE

Read this workbook! Try to have a good understanding of these important subjects that effect peoples' knowledge of God and His word today!

STEP TWO

Pray for the people that you are personally involved with and trying to reach for Jesus. Make sure you pray for these people everyday! **See Chapter One, Page 11**

STEP THREE

Get to know the person you want to study with. Form a good friendship with them and show them that you truly care about them and their needs. Then find out where they are in relation with God and their knowledge of God's word.

STEP FOUR

Let me give some words of advice from my years of studying with people. Teach the truth, but make sure you **teach it in love!** Please do not come across to your student as knowing it all. Show humility and let the person you are studying with know that you are just as much in need of the saving blood of Jesus as anyone else! People will respect you more if they understand that you are not above them.

STEP FIVE

Once you know your student well, take them to the place or places of this workbook that **apply to their needs the most.** Don't over teach. You could lead someone to Christ and then confuse them with too much information on a subject, possibly losing them. Understand that our United States has a lot of people in it. Thus you have a

wide spectrum of people with differing beliefs and backgrounds. There should be something within this workbook for just about everyone you meet. That is the reason for so much material! Remember the goal of your study: salvation, salvation, salvation!

If you are wondering where to take someone, let me give some suggestions that I believe are vital for salvation. You should be able to do this in four, one hour studies.

STUDY NUMBER ONE: Take them to chapter three, 'What Caused Us All of Our Problems - Sin?' A person must understand that sin is a killer and it separates us from God. Get your student to admit to at least one sin they have committed in their lifetime. This will help them understand that sin has personally affected them. In your second half of this study, take them to chapter four, 'Grace Working Through Faith,' This study will help a person understand the solution to the sin problem. The only way that one can get a hold of God's saving grace, is through faith. Biblical faith is always an obedient faith.

STUDY NUMBER TWO: Take them to chapter five, 'Covenant - Understanding The Importance of It' and 'Covenant - Why The Need For a Change'. This is important in realizing that both God and man are obligated to keep their promises. It will also help them to have a basic understanding of how the Bible works and what covenant we today are under.

STUDY NUMBER THREE: Both of these studies are found in chapter six. The first half of your study should start with, 'One Must Decide To Follow First'. Please do not fail to study this section with your student! People must make the decision within themselves to follow Jesus above everyone else. In the second half of your study take your student to, 'Becoming a Saved Child of God'. This is where a person becomes a Christian. Show your student the first conversion account into Christ under the New Covenant. Faith is an action word and it demands that we respond towards God with obedience. If at this point they ask to be baptized into Jesus, make sure that they understand that they are making a lifelong commitment to follow our Lord Jesus.

STUDY NUMBER FOUR: If your friend responded in study three and was baptized, you may be so overjoyed that you stop studying with them. Please do not make that mistake! Have a fourth study with your new brother or sister in Christ and take them to chapter nine, 'The Church' & 'The Structure of the Church'. Make sure your student knows what they have become a part of and how Jesus wants His church to function. Look for a black star at the top of the page of these eight important studies.



Understand that some people will need more than these seven studies depending on where they are in their beliefs. Pray that God will lead you and your friend to the sections that they need most for the salvation of their souls! Here are some further suggestions for specific people that you may encounter in our world today.

Our Non-Believing Friends

Study all of chapter two with them, How Can I Trust My Bible?, pages 15-42.

Our Friends That Believe That A Person Is Born With The Sin Of Adam

Look at chapter three on the discussion on 'How Does Sin Work', pages 47-52.
Also take them to chapter seven, 'Should Babies Be Baptized?', pages 123-126.

Our Friends That Believe That We Are Still Under The Old Law

Cover all of chapter five with them on the subject of 'Covenant', pages 61-76.

Our Friends That Have Questions About The Sinner's Prayer

Read both studies in chapter seven on the 'Sinners Prayer', pages 93-105.

Our Friends That Are Questioning Baptism And It's Connection To Salvation

Go to chapter seven and cover all the sections on 'Baptism' that would apply to their specific questions, pages 111-140.

Our Friends That Believe That Only Certain People Are Chosen By God

Take them to chapter seven on 'How Did God Predestine Us?', page 141.

Our Friends Still Waiting For God's Earthly Kingdom To Come

Take them to chapter seven on, 'The Kingdom Of God - When, Where And How Can I Become A Part Of It?', pages 143-148.

Our Friends That Believe That Once They Are Saved, They Are Always Saved

Go to chapter eight, 'Salvation - Can A Christian Lose It?', pages 151-154.

Our Friends That Struggle With The Subject Of Suffering

Cover the section on 'Suffering - Can Anything Good Come From It?' in chapter eight, pages 163-168.

Our Friends That Believe That They Do Not Need To Be A Part Of The Church

Go to chapter nine, 'The Church - A Vital Part Of Every Christian's Life', pages 171-176.

Our Friends That Want To Know More About How The Lord Structured His Church

Take them to chapter nine on, 'The Structure Of The Church?', **Pages 177-180.**

Our Friends That Have Questions About The Role Of Women In The Church

Take them to chapter nine on, 'What About Women?', **Pages 185-190.**

Our Friends That Wonder About Using Instruments In Worship

Go to chapter nine on, 'Worship And Instruments', **Pages 191-201.**

Our Friends That Question How Jesus Could Be God

Cover chapter ten, 'Is Jesus Really God?', **Pages 205-210.**

**Our Friends That Have Questions About The Holy Spirit And
Modern Day Miracles**

Go to Chapter ten on the section on 'The Holy Spirit', **Pages 211-220.**

For Christians That Have Fallen Away From The Lord

Cover all of chapter four. **Pages 53-60** Then over to chapter eight, (Cover what you think might help). **Pages 149-168** Last of all chapter nine, 'The Church', **Pages 171-176.**

One last point, **always have your Bible with you!**

ABOUT THE WRITER

My name is James Sanderson. There is nothing really special about me except the fact that I have a great desire for people to be brought into a right standing with God before they leave this earth. I also take very serious the responsibility that has been laid at Christians' feet to lead people to that right standing (**Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:15-16, I Peter 2:9**). That is the purpose in writing this workbook! It's to help Christians be better equipped in the 21st century to reach the lost for Jesus.

My mother and grandmother brought me up in and around the church. At age twelve, I committed my life to God, was baptized into Christ and became a Christian. Five years later, I took a leave of absence from God for almost thirteen years! It was a miserable place to be, but because of God's mercy He put me in the "pig pen" of life (**Daniel 4 & Luke 15**). I sure am glad that God makes sin hurt!!!

After the pain of being away from my Father for so long, I decided to return to the Lord. I was so overwhelmed with gratitude that the Lord would take me back, that I decided I wanted to teach others about God's wonderful love. To help me in that direction, I took two years of Bible at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas. While in Lubbock I had the privilege of being the associate minister at the Northside church of Christ. After my training, my family and I returned to Michigan where I was a full time minister for the Beulah church of Christ in Beulah, Michigan for just over ten years. Patty and myself have since relocated and I am now working with the Center Road church of Christ in Saginaw Michigan as their fulltime minister. Combined with this, I believe that what best qualifies me to write this workbook on saving souls, is the time spent with everyday people. It was when I was sitting down with my family, discussions within the local businesses, talking with people on the street corners, in the local jail or studies held with almost every denominational preacher in my area. I believe that these valuable experiences help me better understand where people are and makes me familiar with what people are asking today about God and His word.

I have been wonderfully married for over 23 years now to my closest friend, Patty. We have two beautiful children, Jessica & Jill and two granddaughters Roxy Mae (Miss Mae Mae) and Riley Grace.

SPECIAL THANKS

I want to thank Jesus Christ my Savior for sending someone to me with the saving gospel message. I also want to thank God for giving me the privilege of passing that saving message on to someone else who does not have it! May He bless this work, to Him be all the glory!

Many thanks to my mother and grandmother for teaching me the gospel. My father for teaching me morals and how to live a respectable life. My wife & children who have taught me how to love. The Beulah & Center Road church of Christ's for giving me the time to write this workbook. Sunset International Bible Institute for showing me how to take the gospel to all the world. Cline Paden, Richard Rogers, Ed Wharton, Gerald Paden, Truitt Adair, Virgil Yocham, Richard Cravy, Jerry Pruitt, Charles Speer, Victor Ellison, Mr. Terry, Bob Jackson, Ron Bontrager, Charles Cook, Stewart Jones, Ted Stewart, and Tim Brumfield for their dedication in showing me the King! The Northside & Parkway Drive church of Christ and their elders in Lubbock, Texas. The Western Hills church of Christ and their elders in Fort Worth, Texas. The Crosstown church of Christ and their elders in Tulsa, Oklahoma. The Walled Lake church of Christ and their elders in Walled Lake, Michigan. The Horton Road church of Christ in Jackson, Michigan. The Traverse City church of Christ and their elders in Traverse City, Michigan. Harold Reddick, Jerry Tallman, Brent & Ann Watkins, Linda Mendez, Amy Bidigare, Starla Stewart, Linda Turok, Patty Sanderson and Lindsey Findley. "Gear It Up" of Benzonia, Michigan. Lightning Source publishing. And all the people that have spiritually guided me over the years.

Last of all **for you**, for having the commitment to want to reach souls for Jesus!

CHAPTER ONE

THE FIRST STEP IN EVANGELISM 'PRAYER'

Evangelism Starts Here 11

'Your Daily Prayer List' 11 - 14

EVANGELISM STARTS HERE

1 Tim. 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be **made for all people**, [2] for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. [3] This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, [4] **who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.** ESV

The very first and most important thing that must be done in evangelism is prayer! I can not stress this point enough! Prayer shows commitment, seriousness, and concern for the people that we are trying to reach for Jesus. Make a commitment to the lost people around you. Do your very best to pray everyday for the people of your world. Set a time during the day and get into a routine to pray for the people you put on your daily prayer list.

Here are some things that I pray for... 1) That I make myself available to these people and that I become personally involved in their lives. 2) That God opens up a door for conversation and that I be given the wisdom and courage to take advantage of these opportunities. 3) For their hearts to be opened to God and His saving message. 4) That God help me to be confident in Jesus and that He is with me. 5) Finally, for myself, to do a good job in studying His word so that I may be properly prepared in what to say. Here is what the apostle Paul asked the church at Colossi to pray for ...

Col 4:2-6

2 **Devote yourselves to prayer**, being watchful and thankful. 3 And pray for us, too, **that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ**, for which I am in chains. 4 **Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.** 5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; **make the most of every opportunity.** 6 **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.** NIV

Put the names of the people you are trying to reach for Jesus on this list. . .

DAILY PRAYER LIST

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CHAPTER TWO

CAN WE TRUST OUR BIBLE?

Proving The Resurrection Of Christ

'The Tomb Was Empty' 17

The Amazing Proof Of Prophecy 23

How Can I Trust My Version Of The Bible? 27

With Two Charts

'The History Of The Writing Of The New Testament' 31 & 32

Uncovering The Bible In Archeology 33

With Three Maps

'The True Exodus Journey' 35, 37 & 39

PROVING THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST

‘THE TOMB WAS EMPTY’

The goal of this chapter is to help people trust the reliability of the Bible. There are several ways that God has given that to us, but I know of no better way than to prove beyond a doubt the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Here is what makes this so important. If we can prove that Jesus rose from the grave, then that makes the whole Bible trustworthy. Here is why. Because Jesus makes reference to many people and events of the Bible during His life here on earth. If Jesus rose from the dead, which would prove that He is truly the Son of God, then that confirms that all of the people and events of the Bible must also be true, which proves that the Bible is not some made up story, but a book of real stories and real people.

Let's imagine that we are sitting in a courtroom. You are the jury and must decide if the evidence presented today is believable and trustworthy enough to make a sound judgment in favor that Jesus really rose from the dead, even though you did not witness these things. Let's bring the first person to the stand, Jesus the Christ.

I) JESUS CLAIMS (Luke 9:22,44, 13:33 & 18:31-34)

Jesus claimed at least three times prior to His death that He would die and then be raised on the third day (**Luke 9:22,44, 13:33 & 18:31-34**). Anyone could make the claim that they would die. Everyone eventually dies sometime. But to say that you would rise from the dead, and then to give a specific day on which it would happen (the third day) is quite a statement to have been made in such a very public way.

Fact -
**JESUS CLAIMS THAT HE WILL RISE
FROM THE GRAVE ON THE THIRD DAY!**

II) THE PASSOVER FEAST — (JOHN 19:14)

Before we look at the death of Jesus, it is important to understand the setting of where and what was happening. It is close to the year 29 A.D., in the town of Jerusalem. The town's normal population is about 40,000 people. It is also the Passover feast. According to history, this could bring as many as 2,000,000 Jews to town to celebrate this feast. This shows that the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus was done in a very public place. **There were lots of witnesses!**

Fact -
JESUS' DEATH, BURIAL AND RESURRECTION WAS DONE
IN A VERY PUBLIC PLACE WITH LOTS OF WITNESSES.

III) THE DEATH OF JESUS — (JOHN 19:1-37)

For the story of the resurrection to have any validity, you must first prove that Jesus was 100% dead.

John 19:1 Pilate had **Jesus** flogged!

The Bible does not give us detail on what flogging was, so we have to go to history for our information. When the Romans flogged people, they used what was called a cat of nine tails. This was a stick about two feet long with nine leather straps extending off the end of it, with bone, metal or barbwire tied to the ends. They would then lay the victim on a stump on either their chest or backside. Then they would flog the victim several times. Many people would die of shock to the body and never get up.

John 19:3 **Jesus** was beaten!

John 19:18, 20:27 They crucified **Jesus**!

Again, the Bible does not give us detail on what crucifixion was, so we have to go to history for our information. A Roman crucifixion was done in several different ways, but by using some of the information given in the Bible, I think we can get a pretty clear picture. Both Jesus' hands and feet were nailed to the cross. The reason that a crucifixion was so agonizing was due to the fact that you were slumped over in a way that it caused your diaphragm to be pushed up into your lungs, making the victim unable to breathe properly. So at least every two minutes you would have to push up with your feet, take a breath and repeat the process until you finally give up and die. Sometimes they would put a board under the feet so you could push up with your toes or they would nail your ankles with spikes to the side or your feet on the front of the cross and you would push up off the spikes. Not a pleasant thought, is it?!

John 19:34 They pierced **Jesus** with a spear!

If you understand Jewish custom, it was unlawful to do any work on the Sabbath. During each week the Passover was held, there is always a Sabbath during that week. Tradition holds that Jesus died on a Friday. Starting at 6:00 P.M. on Friday, the Sabbath would start. That gives the Jews that cared for Jesus three hours to get Him into the grave, so that they will not violate Jewish law and do work on the Sabbath. So they ask Pilate for the body (**John 19:31**). Well, the Roman's are certainly not going to let an alive person off the cross. That would defeat the whole purpose of crucifixion. So what they did to assure the person was dead, was to have their legs broken.

You may be asking at this point, why break the legs? By breaking the legs of those on the crosses that day, they are no longer able to push themselves up to breathe. Thus, they slump over in a matter of minutes, suffocate and die. Well, the text tells us that when they came to Jesus He was already dead, so they did not break His legs as they did with the two thieves next to Him (**John 19:33**). So they did something else instead. A Roman soldier pierced Jesus` side with a spear bringing a sudden flow of blood and water (**John 19:34**). That gives us some detail on what this soldier did. He must have thrust his spear up under Jesus` rib cage and pierced His lungs and heart. How do we know that? Because that is the only place you can get a visible amount of both blood and water to come out of the body at the same time. This soldier was making sure that Jesus was dead by piercing Jesus`!

**Fact -
JESUS IS GRAVEYARD DEAD!**

IV) THE BURIAL OF JESUS — (JOHN 19:38-42)

John 19:39 They put 75 pounds of myrrh and aloe on **Jesus`** body!

This would create a tar like substance, in which they would cover the body, which included the nose and mouth, making it impossible to breathe!

John 19:40 They wrapped **Jesus`** body in strips of linen!
'They mummified the body'

**Fact -
JESUS COULD NOT HAVE RAISED FROM THE GRAVE BY HIS OWN HUMAN
POWER DUE TO THE FACT THAT HE COULD NOT BREATHE!**

V) THE TOMB IS SECURED — (MATT 27:62-66)

Matt 27:64 They want to make sure **Jesus`** body stayed in the tomb for three days!

I believe that it was every intention of the Jews working with the Romans to pull Jesus` body out of the tomb on the third day to show the many people still in town during the Passover feast that their Messiah was dead. This would prove Jesus` claims of raising on the third day were false. Therefore putting an end to Christianity!

Matt 27:65 The tomb is secured with a Roman guard! “4 - 16 Roman soldiers”

Matt 27:66 They put a stone in front of the tomb “A 3 - 5 ton stone”

Matt 27:66 They sealed the tomb.

History tells us that the way the Romans would seal something, was to put two leather straps across the object being sealed. Then they would melt some wax in the center of the two leather straps and insert an impression of a copy of the insignia ring of Caesar. If this seal was broken, the penalty was death.

Fact -

BOTH THE ROMANS AND JEWS WENT TO GREAT EXTENT, MAKING SURE THAT JESUS` BODY STAYED IN THE TOMB FOR THREE DAYS!

VI) JESUS` BODY IS GONE — (MATT 28:1-15)

On the third day, the four Mary's (putting all four gospel accounts together), came to the tomb to prepare Jesus` body for burial, not knowing that this had already been done. When arriving at the tomb, they found an angel who rolled the stone away and sat on it, showing all the Mary's that Jesus` body was already gone. After one of the Mary's reported this to the apostles, both Peter and John ran to the tomb and saw that Jesus` body was gone.

Fact -

JESUS` BODY IS GONE!

VII) WHERE DID THE BODY GO? — (JOHN 20:1-18)

The question that must be answered is this: Where did the body go? Who would have taken Jesus body away? Let's bring the witnesses to the stand.

The Jews **would not**! ‘They wanted Jesus dead’

The Romans **would not**! ‘They supported the Jews’

The disciples **could not**! ‘They all ran, afraid and not powerful enough to get past the Roman guards’

Jesus **could not** have by human power alone! ‘He was dead!’

That leaves only one possibility. That Jesus is not any ordinary man. Jesus is the Son of God. His prophecies that He would raise on the third day came true.

***Fact -
JESUS ROSE FROM THE GRAVE!***

VIII) THE REACTION OF THREE THOUSAND PEOPLE FIFTY DAYS LATER! THE DAY OF PENTECOST — (ACTS 2:1-41)

Acts 2:1 It’s the Day of Pentecost, 50 days after the resurrection of Jesus. History tells us that many of the Jews that were at the Passover feast, would stay until the Day of Pentecost. **Many of the witnesses are still in town!**

Acts 2:1-6 There was a violent sound of wind that attracted the people’s attention! **Miracle!**

Acts 2:4-13 The people heard the apostles speaking in their own native languages. Languages the apostles had never studied! **Miracle!**

Acts 2:15-21 The Spirit was poured out on all people, **fulfilling the prophecy of Joel chapter 2!**

Acts 2:22 They were **reminded of Jesus` miracles** while He was alive, which some of **these people had witnessed!**

Acts 2:24-28 They are reminded of **David’s prophecies** that “*His Holy One*” would not see decay, in which Jesus’ body did not!

Acts 2:32 The apostles reminded them that **they were witnesses of Christ’s resurrection!**

Acts 2:41 **Three thousand people respond** to all of this evidence by being **baptized into Jesus!**

Would these people have been so foolish to have been baptized into a dead Jesus? Or was the evidence so overwhelming and these people knew for a fact that Jesus was alive and that He sits at the right hand of the Father in Heaven? So they believed that they were being baptized into a very **ALIVE** Jesus.

NOW WHAT DO YOU SAY?

No one alive today witnessed the things that happened on this last Passover feast of Jesus. Yet the evidence from those that did are strong, as we must admit. Combine that with the numerous prophecies fulfilled. The evidence of Jesus' miracles which the public witnessed over the years of His ministry (**Acts 2:22**); His death and burial being so out in the open for all to see, major public officials all played a part in His death (**Matt 27:11-14**); the fact that no one could produce a body, even though many safeguards were taken to make sure nothing would happen to the corpse (**Matt 27:62-66, 28:1-8**); then to complete the picture, three thousand people are baptized into a man who they all knew died fifty three days earlier (**Acts 2:41**). The apostles that once lived in fear of their lives (**John 20:19**), now come out and speak boldly about Jesus, not caring if they are put in prison or killed (**Acts 4:1-22, 5:17-42**). Other lives were completely changed (**Acts 2:42-47, Acts 16:22-30, II Co 11:23-30**). People put their lives on the line, some to the point of death (**Rev 2:12-13**), all for a man named Jesus.

Why? Do they know something that is so different about Jesus than that of any other person that has ever lived on this earth? That Jesus has power over the grave? That He resurrected from the dead? That He and He alone is "the first born from the dead" (meaning that He will never die again)? That because of His death, paying the penalty for our sin, that He has conquered our biggest fear, which is death itself? That He holds in His hands the keys to death and Hades (**Rev 1:18**)? Is this what their faith rests on, the resurrection from the dead? The resurrection of Jesus from the dead is the greatest example that God gives us to prove His existence, and the people of the first century knew it for a fact! Their entire faith is based on it!!!

What about you? Is this enough evidence for you? Enough to change your life and whom you follow after? You have to admit, there is a lot here. Just remember that faith demands a response (**Acts 2:41**). If you still are thinking, please study out the rest of this chapter. God has more to show us ...

THE AMAZING PROOF OF PROPHECY

Another way to show the accuracy of the Bible is to use prophecy. The Bible stands in a class of its own when dealing with the subject of prophecy. Other writings of the world claim to make prophecies, but nothing on the scale or accuracy as the Bible does! The Bible is divided into two sections, the Old & New Testaments. The Old Testament was written between 1,400 B.C. and 420 B.C. Within its pages it makes over 330 prophecies and another some 1,500 analogies and anti-types of Jesus. Yet Jesus does not arrive on this earth until about 4 B.C. and He dies in about 29 A.D. This is a gap of hundreds of years between the prophecies and their fulfillment. If we can prove their fulfillment, then this would prove once more that Jesus is God in the flesh and the Bible is truly the Word of God! Let's look at some examples ...

<u>The Prophecy</u>		<u>The Fulfillment</u>
	Jesus	
Micah 5:2, Isa 9:6-7	<u>From Eternity</u>	John 1:1-3, Col 1:15
	Jesus	
Ps. 110:1, Isa. 9:6	<u>Deity</u>	John 1:1-3, Col 2:9, John 20:28
	Jesus	
Ps. 2:7	<u>Son Of God</u>	Heb 1:5, Matt 3:17
	Jesus	
Gen 3:15	<u>Seed Of Woman</u>	Matt 1:1-16
	Jesus	
Micah 5:2	<u>Birth Place</u>	Matt 2:1-11
	Jesus	
Dan 2:44, 9:25	<u>Time Of Birth</u>	Luke 2:1-3

Jesus

Ps. 110:1

Seated At God's Right Hand

Acts 1:9-11

Judas

Zech 11:12

30 Pieces Of Silver

John 13:2,11,18-30

Zech 11:13

Bought Potter's Field

Acts 1:15-19

The Church

Dan 2:44-45

The Kingdom / Church

Luke 3:1-2 Matt 16:18,
Mk. 9:1, Acts Chapter 2

We have only touched the surface of the many prophecies found in the pages of the Bible. I pray that this is enough for you to keep studying with your friend! There is a lot more to see!

HOW CAN I TRUST MY VERSION OF THE BIBLE?

A lot of people ask me this question, “How can I trust the Bible that I hold in my hands?” It has been translated so many times and by so many different people! How can one expect a person to believe that we have the very words of God? This is a fair question and I believe it demands a fair answer! Let’s look at some facts about the writing of the Bible.

THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament was originally written in **Hebrew** (the language of the Jews), but some was written in **Aramaic (Ezra 4:7 & Dan 2:4)**.

The Old Testament was originally written beginning in about 1440 B.C. (with Moses) and ending out in about 420 B.C. (with Malachi). Today we have **no original writings** of the Old Testament in our possession. The oldest copies we have are from the Dead Sea Scrolls which date back to 250 B.C.

The finding of the **Dead Sea Scrolls** in 1947 A.D. helped confirm the reliability of our copies of the Old Testament. The Dead Sea Scrolls contain copies of all the Old Testament books except one, (Esther).

The **Septuagint** is the Greek translation of the Old Testament. This was put together between 250 -100 B.C. due to the change in the Jewish language after the Jews spent many years in slavery in foreign lands.

The **Apocrypha** (seven books from O/T times), were part of the Old Testament up until 90 A.D., when Jewish elders decided that they were not inspired by God and should not be part of the Old Testament. Read for yourself the book of Maccabees I chapter four where it states that they were looking for a prophet but none could be found. This shows that Maccabees himself could not have been a prophet. This fact and many others about these books show that they are not inspired books of God and do not belong in the pages of the Bible.

THE NEW TESTAMENT

The New Testament was originally written in **Greek**.

The Greek New Testament was first translated into **other languages** starting in about 410 A.D. (Latin, Coptic - Egyptian, Ethiopian, and Syriac - Syrian).

See Chart, Page 31

The New Testament was **written between 45 - 79 A.D.** We have no original writings of the New Testament in our possession today. The first fragments we have could date back as early as 54 A.D.! We have a copy of the book of John at the University of Michigan dating back to 200 A.D., believed to be the 3rd copy of that book. The first complete copies of the New Testament in our possession today date back to 350 - 510 A.D. That leaves a gap of 270 years between the originals and the first complete copies that we have in our possession today. **See Charts, Page 31 & 32**

Despite us not having any of the original copies of the New Testament, we do have about **5,500 copies in the Greek.** There is not any writing of ancient times that has been copied so much as the New Testament, which shows the importance of these writings. **See Charts, Pages 31 & 32**

With all those copies, **85% of them are 100% exact!** That only leaves 15% of them that are in dispute. Of the copies that are in dispute, most of them are just a few letters off! The other disputes do not change the things that pertain to eternal life and the other important fundamentals of the Bible.

The **early church fathers** (90 - 400 A.D.) , made much reference of the New Testament in their writings. They have re-written all of the New Testament in their writings except for 28 verses, which also confirms the New Testament as being accurate.

Pagan historians like Josephus and Suetonius confirm the existence of Jesus and many other people of the Bible.

The New Testament is **historically reliable** from beginning to end!

Archaeology has confirmed both the New & Old Testaments again & again!

There is overwhelming accuracy with so many copies in our possession, the church father's confirmation of their writings, the historical accuracy of real people and real events, and archaeology matching up with those stories over and over again. It is my belief that God has kept the Bible intact over the years so that man can know how to be saved from his sins through Jesus and be able to live with God for eternity!!!

OUR ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF THE BIBLE

We have dozens of English translations of the Bible today, and all of them differ in their reading. **See Chart, Page 32** So how can an everyday person trust that they have what they need within their Bibles today to make it to heaven? Good question! The Bible tells us four times "do not add or take away from God's word." Here is just one example . . .

Deut 12:32

32 "Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; **you shall not add to it nor take away from it.**

NKJV

When we deal with different languages, it is impossible to translate word for word. It will take more words to get the true meaning across and sometimes it will take less. Every language in the world is like that. In fact, when translating the Old Testament from Hebrew to English, a person discovers that there are a couple hundred more words in our English Bible than the original Hebrew Bible. It just has to be that way when translating into another language. There is just no way around it! It's the same way when translating our New Testament. It sometimes takes up to six English words to carry the point over from one original Greek word.

So how do we fulfill God's command here and not add or take away from His word? **Meaning And Context!** The only way that I can justify the translations that we hold in our hands today, knowing that they are not word for word from the originals, is that they have not changed the meaning or context of the original message.

There are two basic ways we get our Bibles today. **Translations**, where you try to get as close as you can to make it word for word, but yet make it understandable in our English language. This is either done by committees or individuals. I believe that committees are much better than one-man translations (two heads are better than one!) **Paraphrases**, this is where a person reads the text, and then writes down what it means to him. This is much different than trying to translate word for word. I would not suggest using a paraphrased version of the Bible!!! Here both the meaning and context can be lost and most often are!

Another thing to remember is that **our English language changes** over the years. Words change their meaning. Because of this it is important to revise our older English versions of the Bible. The King James version has done this many times. Others create newer translations and this is why we have so many today.

Make sure you **pick a good translation** of the Bible. Will it be word for word from the original? No, that is impossible! Can I trust what I am reading? Yes, **but make sure you do your part.** Stay with the context of the Bible on the subject you are studying. Don't just take one verse in the Bible to prove your point. Look at the overall view of the Bible on the subject. Even if a translator makes a mistake or slants a verse, the other verses in the Bible on that subject will bring it back into context. Read other versions when studying and always pray before reading. The Bible is the greatest book on the planet! Don't let doubt keep you from God's truth for the salvation of your soul!

Here are some important verses to remember when studying your Bibles ...



Ps 119:160

160 The sum of Your word is truth,
And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.

NASU

2 Tim 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.

NASU

John 8:31-32

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, [32] and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

ESV

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

NIV

2 Tim 3:14-17

14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, **15** and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. **16** All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, **17** so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

NIV

2 Peter 1:20-21

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.

NASU

We need to trust that the great God of heaven that created us and this universe is powerful enough to keep His word intact so that man can know about Him and His Son and be saved from their sins!!!

1 Cor 14:33a

33 For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, ...

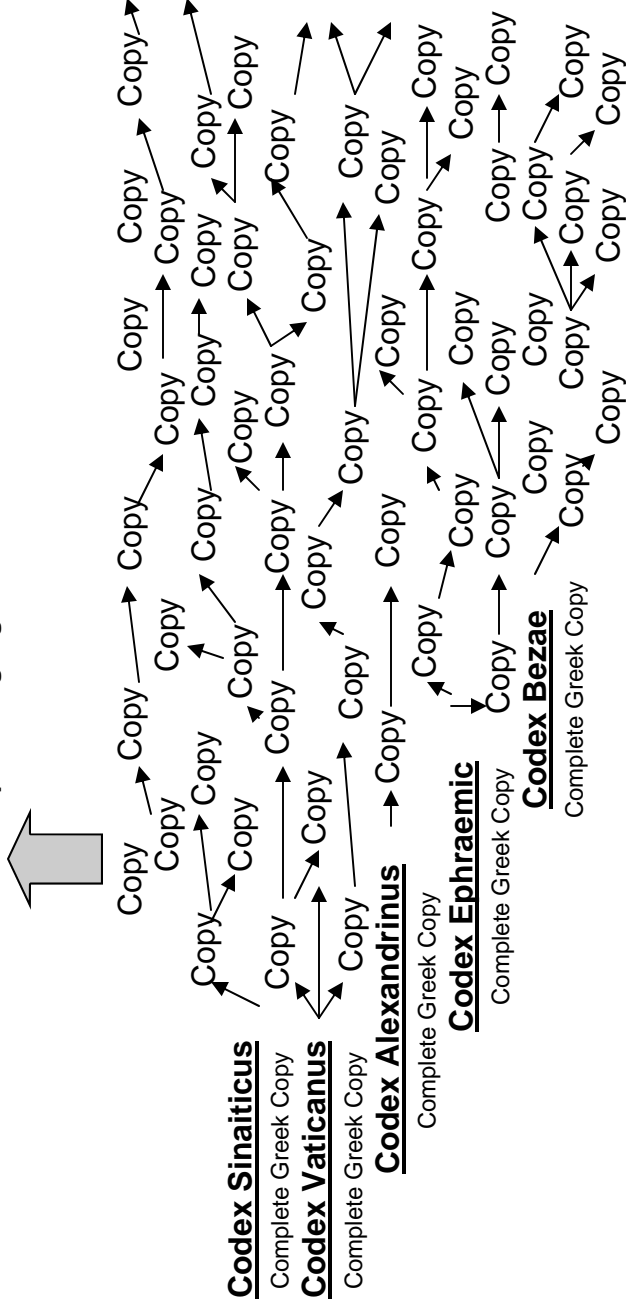
NKJV

HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO US / CHART I

45 A.D. 79 A.D. / 200 A.D. 350 A.D. 450 A.D. 510 - 570 A.D. 1000 A.D.

N/T Originally Written

Translated into Latin & Ethiopian Language



We Have A 270 Year Gap Between The Original N/T Writings & The First Complete Copies In Our Possession

Translated Into Syrian & Egyptian Language

We have about 5,500 complete or partial copies of the Greek New Testament today

HOW THE NEW TESTAMENT CAME TO US / CHART II

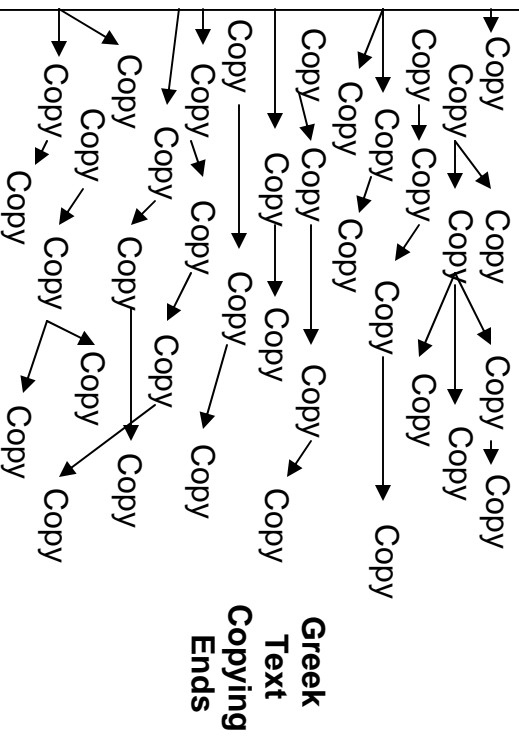
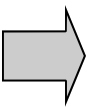
Translated Into English Language
 Wycliffe Bible 1380

1380 A.D. 1400 A.D.

1522 A.D. 1611 A.D.

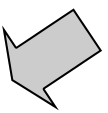
1800 A.D. 1901 A.D.

2000 A.D.



Greek Text Copying Ends

Translated Into German Language



Main English Translations

- Geneva Bible 1560
- Tyndale Bible 1525
- Bishops Bible 1568
- Coverdale Bible 1535
- King James Version 1611
- Revised Standard 1952
- New American Standard 1971
- American Standard Version 1901
- New International Version 1978
- Revised Version 1881
- New King James Version 1982
- English Standard Version 2000
- New Revised Standard Version 1990

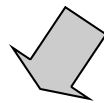
UNCOVERING THE BIBLE IN ARCHEOLOGY

Yet another way to prove the reliability of the Bible is by using archeology. The Bible is a history book and deals with real people, places and events. We should therefore be able to use archeology to prove that the stories of the Bible are true.

The Bible contains many people and places that we know existed in history. In this the Bible is true. But for the person that truly struggles to believe the Bible as fact, I would like to use something out of the ordinary, something that can only be attributed to the awesome power of God. It is the story of the Exodus of the Israelites; their crossing of the Red Sea and arrival to Mt. Sinai.

For anyone that has truly searched out this Exodus story in the Bible and put it to the test of archeology, there are some problems. If you look at **Map #1, On Page 35** (the traditional sight of Mt. Sinai), you will notice that the traditional site of Mt. Sinai is located in the Sinai Peninsula which is named after the mountain. Here are three problems with that traditional view ...

THE FIRST PROBLEM is that the Bible says that Mt. Sinai is in **Midian**.



Exodus 4:19

And the Lord said unto Moses in Midian, Go, return into Egypt: for all the men are dead which sought thy life.

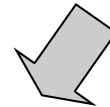
NKJV

THE SECOND PROBLEM is that the Bible says that Mt. Sinai is in **Arabia**.

Gal 4:25

25 Now Hagar stands for Mount Sinai in Arabia ...

NIV

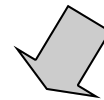


THE THIRD PROBLEM is that the Bible says that Mt. Sinai is **outside of the borders of Egypt** during the time of the Exodus.

Exodus 3:12

He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain."

ESV



The problem with this kind of thinking is that the Sinai Peninsula is not in the land of Midian, neither is the Sinai Peninsula in Arabia, and third of all the Sinai Peninsula belonged to Egypt and was part of its land during the Exodus. On top of that, if you have ever seen pictures of the traditional site of Mt. Sinai, it is impossible to encamp upwards with 3,000,000 people in front of that mountain in which the Bible says Israel did. Plus, no archeological remains of the Israelites have ever been found around the traditional site. That is hard to believe when you consider that the Bible says that the Israelites spent over a year in front of that mountain. You would think that they would have left some kind of remains behind. So is the Bible wrong? **NO, the maps are!!!** According to the Bible, **it is impossible for Mt. Sinai to be in the Sinai Peninsula.** Our modern day maps place Mt. Sinai in a place that the Bible never did! No wonder we can not find any remains around the traditional site, because the traditional site is wrong and the Bible told us that!

The Bible places the true location of Mt. Sinai east of the Sinai Peninsula beyond the Gulf of Aqaba (**See Map # 3, Page 39**). Here is where archeology and the Bible match up perfectly. If you look in the right place you will find all kinds of proof. We are going to prove that by using the Bible and archeology!

PROVING THE EXODUS JOURNEY

The People Leave Goshen

Exodus 13:17-18

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." [18] **But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea.** And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.

ESV

When the Israelites left Goshen (**See Map # 2 On Page 37, Point # 1**), they took the desert road (**See Map # 2 On Page 37, Point # 2**) towards the Red Sea.

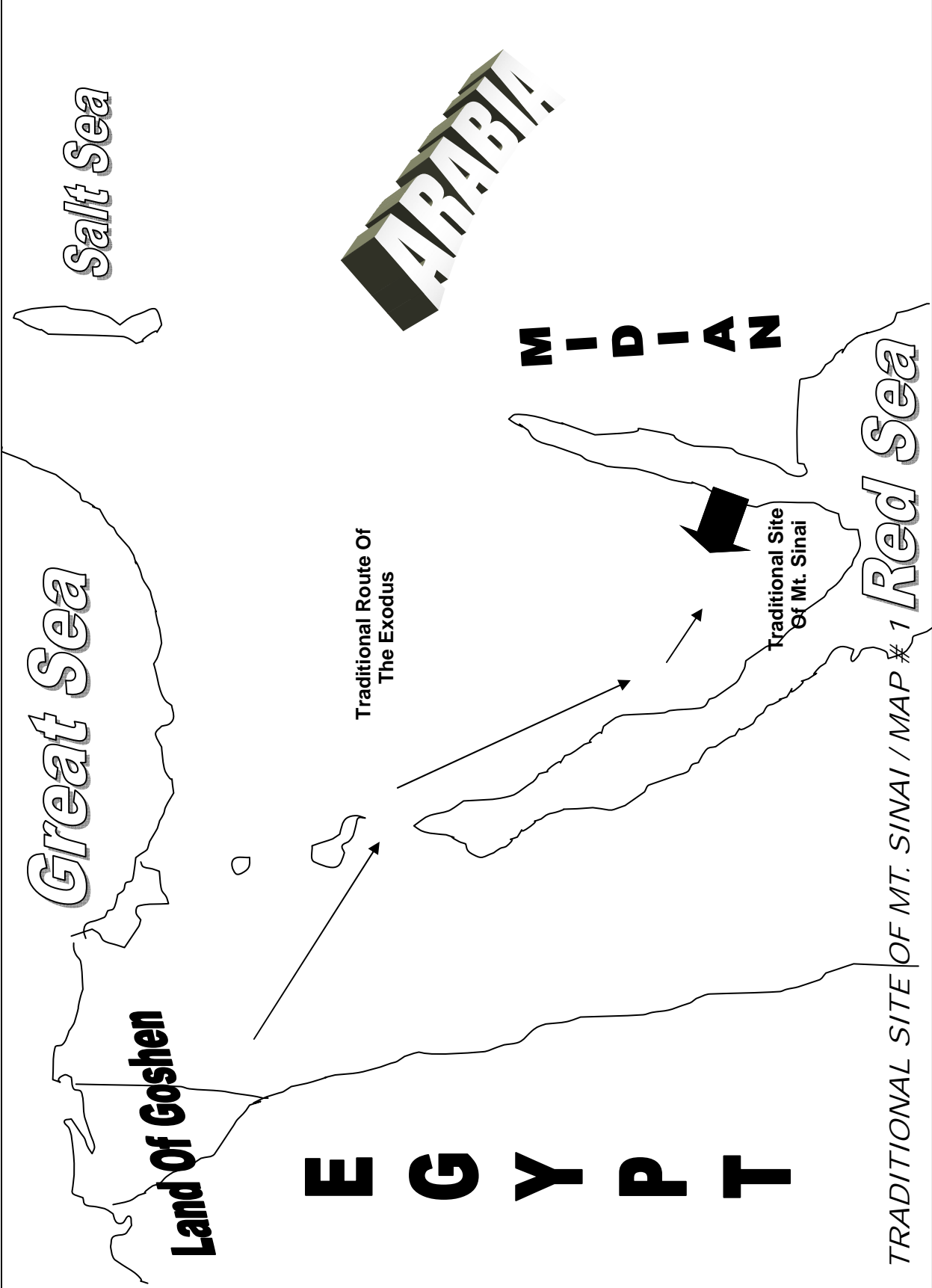
God Turns Them Back Towards Egypt

Exodus 14:1-2

Then the Lord said to Moses, [2] **"Tell the people of Israel to turn back** and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. ESV

Then the Lord turned them back around towards Egypt.

(**See Map# 3 On Page 39, Point # 1**)



Israel Becomes Hemmed In

Exodus 14:3

For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; **the wilderness has shut them in.**'

ESV

The Lord then hemmed them in so that Pharaoh would go after them. (See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 2) There are two different views on where the Israelites went from this point. My friend and teacher, Ted Stewart, believes that the Israelites traveled down the desert road across the top of the Sinai Peninsula until they reached the top of the Gulf of Aqaba. Then, instead of turning back towards Egypt, God turned them south and moved them down the side of the Gulf of Aqaba. The other view comes from a video I watched on the Exodus 'The Exodus Revealed', where they believe that God turned them around towards Egypt and then hemmed them in by forcing them down into a dried up river bed with walls 2,000 feet deep on each side. (See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 3) Both views are very possible and each bring them to the same spot for the crossing of the Red Sea. Both fit biblically, but for those who have watched the video on National Geographic, I will use the riverbed theory.

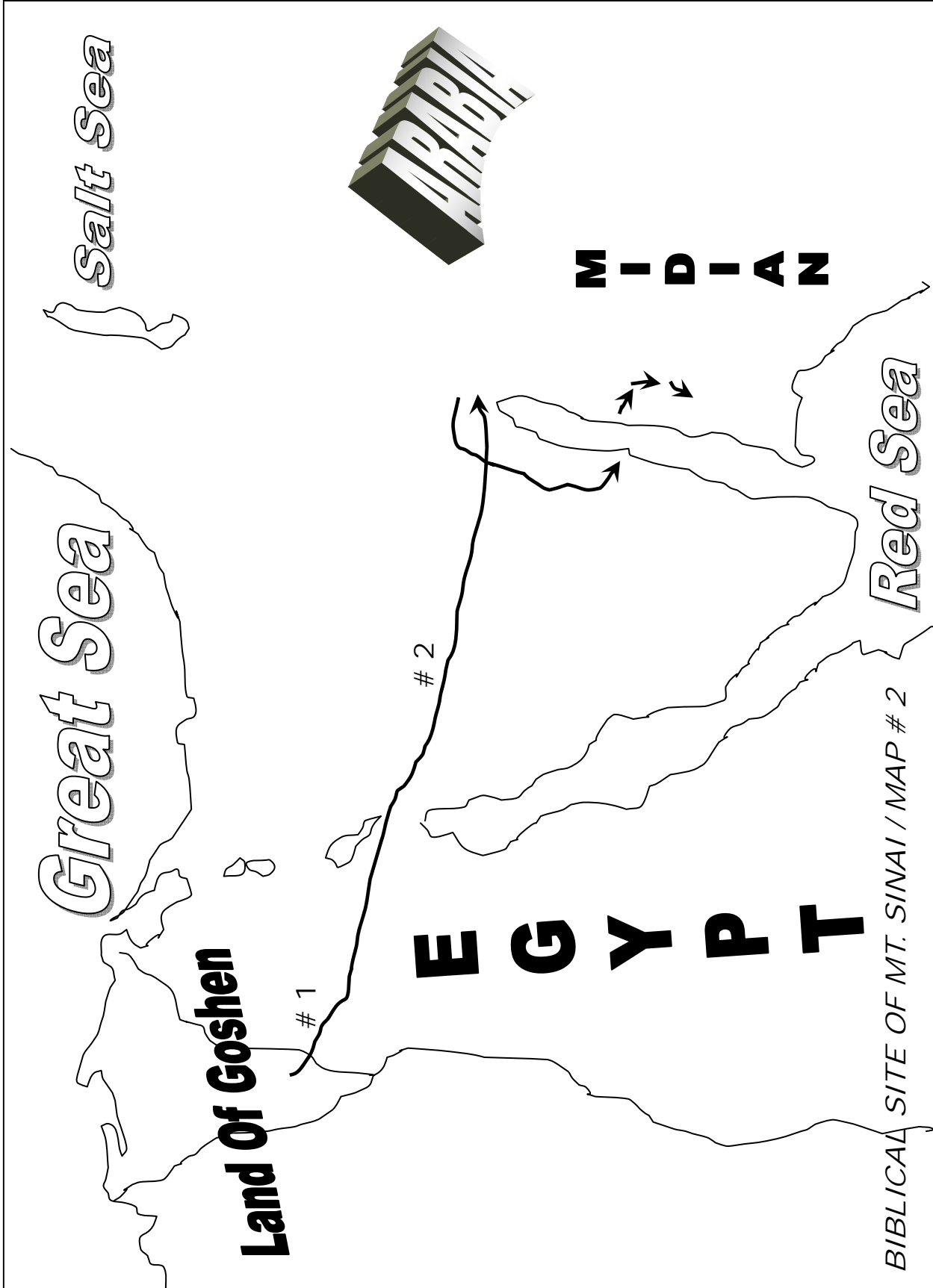
The Israelites Are Trapped

Exodus 14:4-9

And **I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them,** and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so.

[5] When the king of Egypt was told that the people had fled, the mind of Pharaoh and his servants was changed toward the people, and they said, "What is this we have done, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" [6] So he made ready his chariot and took his army with him, [7] and took six hundred chosen chariots and all the other chariots of Egypt with officers over all of them. [8] And the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and he pursued the people of Israel while the people of Israel were going out defiantly. [9] The Egyptians pursued them, all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and his horsemen and his army, and overtook them encamped at the sea, by Pi-hahiroth, in front of Baal-zephon. ESV

Once Pharaoh hears that the Israelites are trapped (possibly in the riverbed) he gets his army together and goes after them. The Egyptian army pursues the Israelites right up to the edge of the Red Sea. When Israel gets to the Red Sea, they find themselves on an enormous beach (See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 4). When they get there, they discover that the large mountains both to the right and to the left come very close to the waters edge which would not allow their escape. In front of them sits the Red Sea and its eight miles of water that separates them from the land on the other side! The Israelites are trapped on all sides!



There has been an interesting discovery on this beach within the last 20 years or so. Buried in the sand on this beach they discovered a large pillar. Directly opposite on the other side of the Red Sea they found another pillar just like it. It had King Solomon's name on it and it read that this is where the Israelites crossed and where Pharaoh and his army died (**See Map# 3 On Page 39, Point # 6 a & b**). The deduction is that King Solomon, who lived about 500 years after this event, had these pillars erected to mark the spot of the parting of the Red Sea. The Arabian government has since removed the pillar on their side of the Gulf of Aqaba.

The Red Sea Parts

Exodus 14:15-16

The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. [16] Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, **that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground.**

ESV

Exodus 14:21-22

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the Lord drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. [22] **And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground,** the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.

ESV

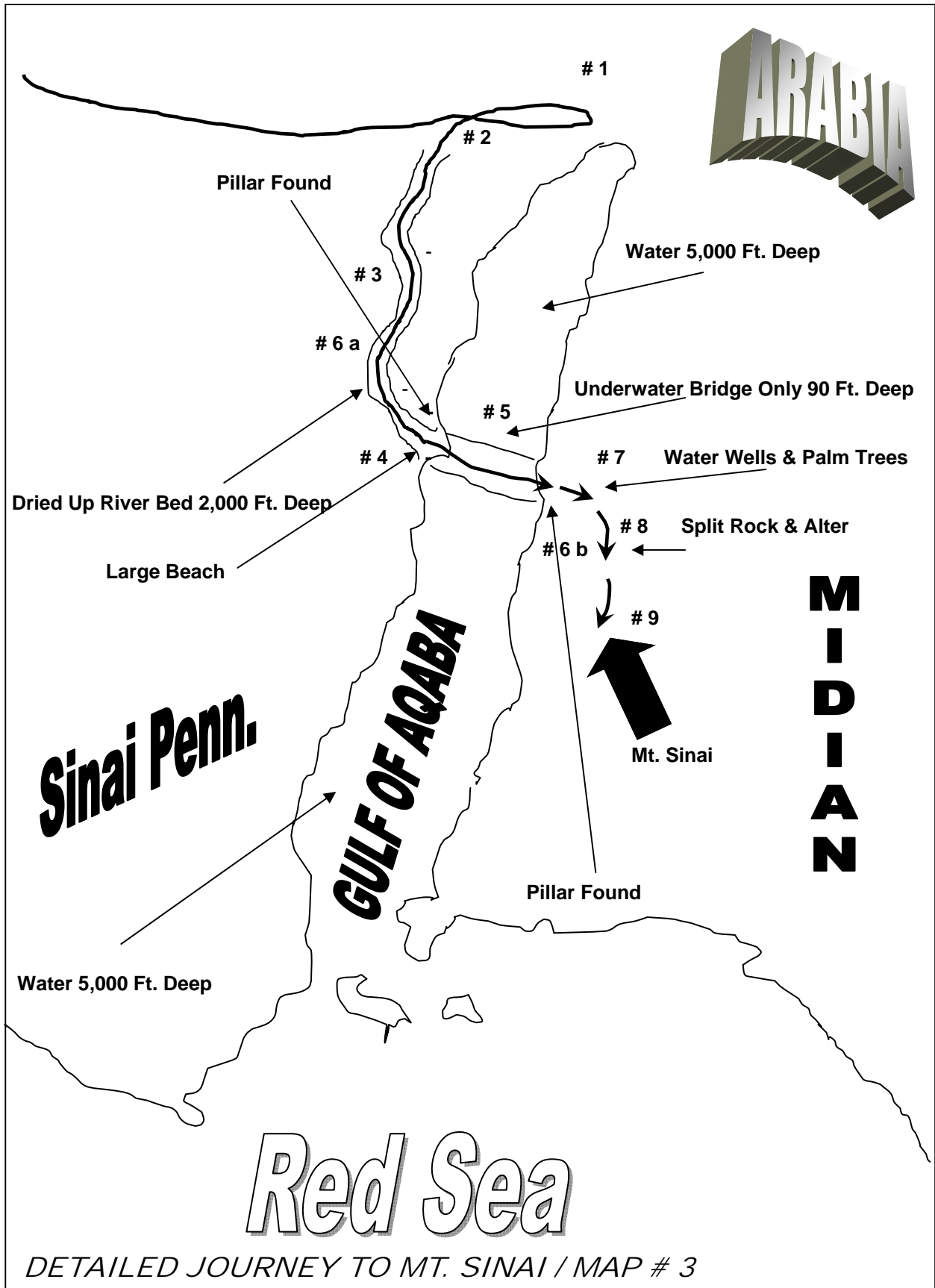
There is something very interesting about the Gulf of Aqaba at this spot. The Gulf of Aqaba is about 5,000 feet deep both to the north & south of this beach. But right at the point of this beachhead where the pillars were found, the Gulf of Aqaba forms an underwater bridge where the water is only 90 feet deep at its deepest point (**See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 5**). This underwater bridge is eight miles wide and eight miles across and it gently slopes down from both sides so that Israel would be able to cross with ease.

Egypt Pursues The Israelites

Exodus 14:23-28

The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen. [24] And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, [25] **clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily.** And the Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians."

[26] Then the Lord said to Moses, "Stretch out your hand over the sea, that the water may come back upon the Egyptians, upon their chariots, and upon their horsemen." [27] So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the sea returned to its normal course



when the morning appeared. And as the Egyptians fled into it, **the Lord threw the Egyptians into the midst of the sea.** [28] The waters returned and covered the chariots and the horsemen; of all the host of Pharaoh that had followed them into the sea, **not one of them remained.**

ESV

If this is where the Egyptians drowned, wouldn't you think that there would be some evidence lying on top of this underwater bridge? This event in history took place about 3,448 years ago. What would happen to chariot parts over that vast amount of time? They would dissolve, right! Yet I am told that underwater coral only grows when it has something to attach itself to. Sure enough there is growth of underwater coral under the water right on top of this underwater bridge. Guess what shape it is found in? Chariot wheels & spokes! There have been at least three sets of camera teams that have taken footage of these coral incrustations that take the shape of ancient chariot wheels and they litter the top of this underwater bridge!

See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 5

The Second Stop After The Red Sea

Exodus 15:27

Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve **springs of water** and **seventy palm trees**, and they encamped there by the water.

ESV

As soon as the Israelites came up out of the Red Sea, the Bible tells us that they traveled in the wilderness for three days and came to some water and wells. This would now put the Israelites in Saudi Arabian territory. Miles down this path you find some wells and palm trees! This was the Israelites' second stop after crossing the Red Sea. Again we see archeology and the Bible matching up!!!

See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 7

Water Comes From The Rock

Exodus 17:5-6

And the Lord said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. [6] Behold, I will stand before you there **on the rock at Horeb**, and you shall strike the rock, and **water shall come out of it**, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel.

ESV

After traveling beyond the water wells and through the desert, you come to a large rock that is split in half. At the base of this rock you discover that the rocks are very smooth as a result of once having mass amounts of water coming from it. Could this be the rock that Moses struck? It sure fits the story of the Bible well!

The Altar That Moses Built

Exodus 17:15-16

And **Moses built an altar** and called the name of it, The Lord is my banner, [16] saying, "A hand upon the throne of the Lord! The Lord will have war with Amalek from generation to generation." ESV

At the very same place that the rock was struck, the Amalekites fought Israel. After the battle the Bible says that Moses built an altar to the Lord. Guess what you find next to this rock in Saudi Arabia, an altar of stone! **See Map On Page 39, Point # 8**

The Israelites Come To Mt. Sinai

Exodus 19:1-2

On the third new moon after the people of Israel had gone out of the land of Egypt, on that day they came into the wilderness of Sinai. [2] They set out from Rephidim and came into the wilderness of Sinai, and they encamped in the wilderness. **There Israel encamped before the mountain,** ESV

Exodus 19:16-19

On the morning of the third day there were thunders and lightnings and a thick cloud on the mountain and a very loud trumpet blast, so that all the people in the camp trembled. [17] Then Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they took their stand at the foot of the mountain. [18] **Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke because the Lord had descended on it in fire. The smoke of it went up like the smoke of a kiln, and the whole mountain trembled greatly.** [19] And as the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him in thunder. ESV

There is a range of mountains within sight of the split rock and altar. When you go over to this mountain range the mountains are all the same color, except for the one in the middle. There is one mountain out of this group that is black in color about 1/3 of the way down from the top and then it turns back into its original color. The Bible here tells us that Mt. Sinai was "all of a flame and filled with smoke." Could this be why this mountain is black on top? Could this be Mt. Sinai? **See Map On Page 39, Point # 9**

Israel Becomes Impatient

Exodus 32:1-4

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."

[2] So Aaron said to them, "Take off the rings of gold that are in the ears of your wives, your sons, and your daughters, and bring them to me." [3] So all the people took off the rings of gold that were in their ears and brought them to Aaron. [4] **And he received the gold from their hand and fashioned it with a graving tool and made a golden calf.** And they said, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt!"
ESV

According to the Bible, Moses was gone for 40 days with God on top of Mt. Sinai. This was too long for the Israelites and they became impatient, so they melted down their gold and worshipped a calf. This would have been something that they had seen the Egyptians worship back in Egypt. One of the things that you discover at the base of this mountain is a pile of huge rocks. As you walk around these rocks you discover that there are twelve Egyptian-like paintings of a calf.

See Map # 3 On Page 39, Point # 9

Do you know that when this was discovered by archeologists, the Saudi Arabian government instantly had a fence put around this mountain and the pile of rocks with a sign on the fence stating that if anyone crosses this fence they will be prosecuted severely! Apparently the Saudis must think there must be something special about this mountain! Remember the Saudis are in a Muslim nation, not a Christian one. I am sure that they do not want a bunch of Christian sightseers running around their nation looking at the true Mt. Sinai!

Can you see that when you find where the Bible says Mt. Sinai is, the archeological evidence is enormous! **The Bible is right again!** I wish I had time to tell you about the literally hundreds of finds in archeology that prove the Bible is reliable over and over again. The findings are endless!

So what does this do for you? I hope this evidence has made you think. Think very hard! If all of this evidence is true, then that means that we have a very powerful God that watches us from above. A God that is powerful enough to destroy the greatest army of its time, at the bottom of the Red Sea, in one swoop! A God that would descend on top of a mountain in fire, smoke, and lightning! A God that would cause tons of water to come out of a rock out in the middle of a desert to provide for His people! What should our response to a God like that be? Well, that is for you to decide!

I pray that you keep studying through this workbook. If your amazement has been sparked, then get ready, because there is a lot more to see from our Almighty God! May God be with you through the most exciting journey you will ever take. The one in discovering your Creator!

CHAPTER THREE

THE SIN PROBLEM

Sin: 'Where All Our Problems Originated From' 45



How Does Sin Work? 47



SIN

'WHERE ALL OUR PROBLEMS ORIGINATED FROM'

GOD GAVE MAN CHOICE

God had two choices when making man, to make him a robot or to give him choice! God chose to give man choice and with choice there automatically comes two sides to choose from, right or wrong / good or evil. When man first shows up on the scene, we see that choice put before him ...

Genesis 2:16-17

And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, "You may surely eat of every tree of the garden, [17] but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

ESV

GOD SETS A STANDARD

This standard is called law, God's law. In the Garden of Eden there was one law set forth by God and that law was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (**Gen 2:16-17**). All of God's laws are righteous or right (**Ps. 119:75,138,172**). Only God has the authority to say what is right and what is not, He is God.

1 John 3:4

4 Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

NKJV

All lawbreaking of God's laws is called sin (**1 John 3:4**). Sin is missing the mark, God's mark. Think of any sin and see if you can't also fit the word 'self' into each one? If you can, then this makes sin 'selfishness'. We want it our way instead of God's way! This is really what sin comes down to.

MAN BROKE THAT STANDARD

Adam and Eve did ...

Genesis 3:6

So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to

the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband who was with her, and he ate.

ESV

All of mankind will ...

Romans 3:23 

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

ESV

GOD'S PENALTY FOR BREAKING THAT STANDARD

Romans 6:23

For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

ESV

The wages of sin is death and there are two kinds of death in the Bible, both resulting from sin.

PHYSICAL DEATH (Gen 3:19 & Gen 5:5) *Where the body dies.*

Gen 3:19

19 By the sweat of your face You will eat bread, Till you return to the ground, Because from it you were taken; For you are dust, And to dust you shall return."

NASU

This is a consequence of sin, which none of us can escape.

SPIRITUAL DEATH (Gen 3:23 & Isa. 59:1-2) *(Separation from God).*

Isa 59:2

2 But your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, And your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

NASU

Our sins will result in an everlasting separation from God. The Bible tells us this will be an eternal place of judgment, pictured as weeping and gnashing of teeth, darkness, agony and everlasting fire (**Matt 8:12, Luke 16:24 & Rev 20:14**). This is not a place that anyone in their right mind would want to be. The question then becomes, is there any way out for man?

See the following chapters for these answers ...

HOW DOES SIN WORK?

Now that we understand that sin separates us from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**), we also need to understand how sin comes about. This may seem like a simple question, but like with so many other things, Satan has a way of confusing people in this area.

THE DOCTRINE OF ORIGINAL SIN

The Catholic faith and a few others, all teach that a person is born with sin. This is a quote from a Catholic book. "The sin of Adam, in virtue of his position as head of the human family, is transmitted to all his posterity" (Denz. 102, 129ss, 174 – 175, 376)

The reason for this kind of thinking probably comes from the following scriptures . .

“Scripture”

(**Gen 8:21**) "even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood" NIV

(**Ps 51:5**) "Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me." ESV

(**Jer 13:23**) "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard its spots? Neither can you do good who are accustomed to doing evil". NIV

(**Lam 5:7**) "Our fathers sinned and are no more, and we bear their punishment". NIV

(**Rom 5:15**) "For if the many died by the trespass of the one man" NIV

(**Rom 5:17**) "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man" NIV

(**Rom 5:18**) "Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men." NIV

(**Rom 5:19**) "For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners." NIV

Let's look at this subject in context of some of these verses and the overall view of the Bible. Then we will be able to judge whether man is born with sin or if he has to personally commit sin before he becomes a sinner. The answer is important in our understanding of how sin works!

UNDERSTANDING ROMAN'S CHAPTER FIVE (12-21)

The real thrust of thinking that man is born with sin comes from the misunderstanding of **Romans 5:12-21**. One thing that is overlooked is the last part of the first verse in this section of scripture...

Rom 5:12

12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned--
NKJV

The book of Romans needs to be taken as a whole, as does the entire Bible. Both in Romans chapter 3:23 and here in 5:12, we can see why man is separated from God, **because all of us have personally sinned**. Please keep those verses in mind before you read the rest of **Romans 5:13-21**.

CONSEQUENCES FROM ADAM'S SIN

So why does Paul make it sound like we were born with sin in some of the verses found in Romans chapter five? What is Paul trying to accomplish? Paul is showing us that Adam's sin affected this world in ways that none of our sins did. Keep in mind that there is a big difference between consequences of sin and being accountable to God for sin. See if this chart below will help in your understanding ...

Only Adam's sin introduced " sin into the world ". <i>(When we sinned, sin was already here)</i>	(Rom 5:12)
Only Adam's sin introduced " spiritual death " into the world <i>(When we sinned, spiritual death was already here)</i>	(Rom 5:12)
Only Adam's sin introduced " physical death " into the world. <i>(When we sinned, physical death was already in the world)</i>	(I Co 15:21-22)
Only Adam's sin lost us physical Eden for all men. <i>(By the time we sinned, access to the Garden was already closed off)</i>	(Gen 3:24)
Only Adam's sin brought a curse upon the ground and physical creation <i>(By the time we sinned, the world had already been cursed)</i>	(Gen 3:17-18 & Rom 8:20-21)
Only Adam's sin imposed " sweat of the brow and pain in childbearing. " <i>(By the time that we sinned, these curses were already in the world)</i>	(Gen 3:16-19)

Only Adam sinned in an innocent world.

(By the time that we sinned, the world had already lost its innocence)

Only Adam's sin violated "**the law of the forbidden tree.**" **(Gen 2:17 & 3:6)**

(You and I did not violate this law, it was already done)

From this chart we can clearly see that Adam & Eve's sin affected us in ways that no one else's sin does. This is called '**consequences of sin**', and there is no doubt that there are consequences of Adam and Eve's sin that affects all of us. But the question still remains, does Adam's sin separate me from God or is it my own personal sins that separate me from God? This is the question that demands an answer! Let's see what the rest of the Bible says on this subject . . .

Ezek 18:1-4

Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying,

2 "What do you mean by using this proverb concerning the land of Israel, saying,

'The fathers eat the sour grapes,

But the children's teeth are set on edge'?

3 "As I live," declares the Lord GOD, "you are surely not going to use this proverb in Israel anymore. 4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. **The soul who sins will die.**

NASU

During the time of Ezekiel, the nation of Israel had been overrun by another nation called Babylon and the Jews were being affected in terrible ways. So they made a saying up that basically said, "the reason these bad things are happening to us is because of our father's sins, not ours." But God says wait a minute, I don't want to hear that kind of talk anymore. It's not your father's sins you ought to be worried about, but it's your own personal sins. "**The soul that sins will die.**" Even though we may have inherited the consequences of our father's sins, that does not mean that God will hold us personally responsible for our ancestors' sins. If a pregnant mother decides to take crack cocaine while she is pregnant or nursing, the baby may be born with physical problems because of the choices that the mother made. But what we need to understand is that God will not hold that baby responsible to himself for the sin that the mother committed. The only person that will be held responsible is the individual that personally did the sinning. The only thing that separates us from God is our personal sin and no one else's. You can clearly see this if you read the rest of Ezekiel chapter eighteen, which is repeated again and again throughout the chapter.

BECOMING ACCOUNTABLE TO SIN

So if a person is not accountable towards God for Adam's sins, nor their ancestors' sins, but are only accountable towards God for their own personal sins, then at what point does a person become a sinner? When does a person become

accountable to God for their sins? The same book of Romans that teaches us about Adam's sins will give us that answer. This is why you must take the book of Romans and the Bible as a whole on any given subject ...

Rom 7:7-12

7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." 8 But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. 9 Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. 10 I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. 11 For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. 12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good. NIV

Here Paul talks about spiritual death, not physical. Paul tells us when he spiritually died (separation from God **Isa. 59:1-2**). It was when the commandment came and sin sprang to life and put him to death. Think about how the commandment comes. Its when we become old enough to understand God's laws. At that moment God's commandments first come to us. Once that happened to Paul, he says that 'sin sprang to life'. As Paul already stated, it is not God's commandments that are sinful, God's commands are holy, righteous and good. Sin comes in when we personally make the decision to break God's commands. That is called lawbreaking, which is sin (**I John 3:4**). At that point sin brings spiritual death. This is where Paul died (spiritually).

Paul makes an interesting statement here. He says '**once I was alive** apart from the law'. Now think about Paul's life for a minute. Every minute Paul was alive, law was in place, right? So when was Paul alive apart from law? Well, from this we can see that Paul was not born with sin, because if he was, there would have never been a time that Paul could have been alive (spiritually)! Paul would have been born dead (spiritually), born a sinner from birth. But Paul did not die until the commandment came. How does the commandment come when the commandment had already been in place 1,400 years before Paul was born? Again, what does it mean, the commandment came? The commandment came when Paul was of an age of understanding. Once Paul knew of God's commandments, he had to knowingly and willingly decide in his mind to break that law. When he did this, sin sprang to life and Paul died (spiritually). So between Paul's birth and his understanding of God's commandments, Paul was alive towards God. We do not become accountable towards God for sin until we willingly and knowingly are conscious of God's laws and willfully make that decision to break it. It is then at that moment that we die spiritually.

This is why babies, children, and mentally impaired people are safe with God, because these people do not have the mind capacity to know God's commands and then make the decision whether to obey or violate those commands. Both Adam and

Eve understood the commands before they broke them. So when we read in **(Romans 3:23)** that “all have sinned”, Roman’s chapter seven will explain who the “**ALL**” is. The “**ALL**” are only people that have a mind capacity to understand God’s laws and then choose to violate them.

These next words of Jesus confirms this point when dealing with children. Watch what Jesus says about little children ...

Matt 19:14

14 But Jesus said, "Let the children alone, and do not hinder them from coming to Me; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

NASU

The real problem with the original sin theory is that it changes the gospel. There are two problems with the idea that babies are born with sin. One is you are placing someone’s sin on a child who had nothing to do with the sin. No choice was made by the infant! Then to fix the problem of the child’s sin, parents try to step in and have faith for the child to get them out of their sin problem. Yet the baby or child is unable to have their own personal faith! Both of these ideas change the gospel message. **Only (personal) faith bathed in Grace is the solution to the (personal) sin problem.** If I insert my faith on behalf of someone else for their salvation, then that changes the gospel and the gospel can not be changed (**Gal 1:6-10**).

As a concerned Christian, I understand wanting to have faith for other people, but it does not work that way biblically. Some parents baptize their infants, but whose faith is that baptism based on? Is it based on the child’s faith or the parent’s faith? Other people baptize for the dead. If I am being baptized for a person that is already dead, then where is the dead person’s faith? What if I was baptized for a man like Hitler who had no faith? Will my faith make up for his lack of faith while he was alive? Read the last half of **Luke 16** and you will see what Jesus says. Our chance to have personal faith is on earth. Once you die it’s too late to change that fact! Others pray for the dead in hopes of sending them from an imaginary place called purgatory into heaven. But again where is the personal faith of that person being prayed for? Some will even pay money for dead people, in hopes of getting them out of hell and placed into heaven. But again where is the personal faith of that person? Faith has to be personal and the same book of Romans will tell us that, “the righteous will **Live** by faith” (**Rom 1:17**). We are told no less than 6 times in our Bible that we must “**LIVE**” by faith. That makes faith personal.

The children here that Jesus is referring to in **Matthew 19:14** are already in the kingdom of God. How can that be? Because they are not of the age of full understanding of what right from wrong really is. Thus none of them have personally sinned. This makes them safe with God. Babies, children & mentally impaired people are safe with God, so says Jesus! This does not mean that these children will always be safe with God. As these children get older and they start to understand God’s laws, and choose to violate them, then at that moment they become sinners! They are no longer

safe with God. Read chapter four and following to see what can save them from this state.

Some people try to use this next section of verses to justify why babies and children should be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. But let's see if that is really what the text says . . .

Acts 16:30-34

30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." **32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. **33** At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. **34** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-he and his whole family.

NIV

The jailor asks "**what must I do to be saved?**" The answer, "*believe in the Lord Jesus, you and your family*". Jesus said the same thing in **John 3:16**. But going back again to the book of Romans, what is the only way one can believe? It is to hear the word of God, through teaching (**Rom 10:17**). So before anyone can be saved in this household, they must first hear the word of God. This is just what happened in **vs. 32**, "*he spoke it to all the others in his house.*" Then they repented by washing Paul & Silas' wounds. At that moment they all were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins **Vs. 33**. This whole process defines what biblical belief is - **hearing, repenting and baptism**. After that process, the text says that they (his whole family) had come to believe in God. Babies, young children, and mentally impaired people can not be taught these things and then in turn obey them. Conclusion, there were no babies, young children, or mentally impaired people belonging to the jailor's household. They all had to be old enough to have personal sin and respond with personal faith!

The plan of faith for salvation only applies to those who need it! Only those who have personally sinned. Babies, children, and the mentally impaired are lacking two things: the understanding to break God's laws and the understanding to have the faith to right those wrongs through Christ. Sin is personal, faith is personal, and our accountability towards both are personal!

The Soul That Sins Will Die (Ezek 18:4)

I pray this study helped you to understand how sin works. Now let's see what can fix that problem! ...

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SIN SOLUTION

Grace Working Through Faith 55



With Chart
'The Way Made Clearer' 60



GRACE WORKING THROUGH FAITH

Now that we understand the bad situation that we are in because of sin (eternal separation from God) the question must be asked, are we just stuck in this dilemma, or is there any hope? Our gracious heavenly Father has some great news for us, and it is best summed up in three verses found in the book of Ephesians ...

Eph 2:8-10

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9** not of works, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

NKJV

There are three vital parts to verse eight that need to be understood for our salvation to work. Let's take a good look at them ...

YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED (EPH 2:8b)

The word **saved** means to 'deliver from'. This word is important because of the fact that we have all sinned (**Rom 3:23**) and the penalty for that sin is death (**Rom 6:23**), eternal separation from God (**Isa. 59:1-2**). The only hope that man has, is to be delivered from that state. We desperately need and want to be **saved** from the state that sin has put us in! Without being saved, we have no hope.

BY GRACE (EPH 2:8a)

The word grace literally means, **unmerited favor**. Meaning that this was not something earned on our part. Think of it like this. When someone does something good, they are usually rewarded for their nice deed. That makes sense to us. But could you imagine doing something bad and getting something good? That is harder for us to understand. That is what grace is. We sin, which deserves God's wrath and judgment, and instead we get God's blessings. God will rescue us from our deserved judgment of death, and give us life instead. That is grace.

But this grace can only come about by one means, Jesus the Christ. For one to be saved, there needs to be a Savior. This is not something we could have done on our own or done for ourselves. See, God will not sweep sin under the carpet and just forget about it. Oh no. Sin must be paid for. The wages of sin is death; thus someone has to die and make payment. This is where Jesus comes in.

See if this chart will help? ...

God's
Riches
At
Christ
Expense

We get God's riches (eternal life), but at someone's expense. That expense will be the payment of Jesus' life in our stead. He will have to die in our place so that we can live. The book of Roman's will help us in our understanding ...

Rom 3:10

10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE:"
NASU

We can clearly see that no one on this earth has ever been righteous. We are all sinners, even those good people we know (**Rom 3:23**). That puts all of mankind on the same level. Watch who stands in a higher place ...

Rom 3:21

21 But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify.
NIV

Who was it that came from God that the law and prophets in the Old Testament were pointing to? Jesus Christ! Jesus the Christ is different from all mankind because He never sinned (**John 8:46, II Co 5:21**). Jesus was that Lamb without blemish (**I Peter 1:19**). Only Jesus can be that acceptable sacrifice to God because He and He alone is the only one that is not contaminated by sin. Now do you see why Ephesians chapter two verse eight says that "this is not of yourselves"? Grace is not something that man could have accomplished for himself. Grace is a gift of God (**Eph 2:8**). It is only by this grace that we can be saved, and nothing else. That is why we sing the song that says... 'Jesus Paid It All'. Grace has Jesus` name written all over it. Without Jesus, there can be no salvation!

THROUGH FAITH (EPH 2:8c)

Even though we see that it is only by Jesus` sacrifice that we can be saved, we need to understand that there is one more piece in the puzzle that needs to be in place before our salvation can work. This is where our faith comes in. The apostle Paul likes to use the example of Abraham out of the Old Testament in many of his letters to show how faith works. Lets go back and look at Abraham for a minute ...

Gen 15:6

6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

NIV

Let me ask you a question. Is Abraham righteous? Before we answer, remember what **Romans 3:10** says, "no one is righteous not one." That would include Abraham wouldn't it? So in and of himself, Abraham is not righteous. Why? Because Abraham is a sinner (**Rom 3:23**). Yet God credits Abraham with righteousness. How can God make someone who is not righteous, righteous? I am glad you asked, Romans will give us the answer ...

Rom 3:22

22 This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference,

NIV

See when Abraham **believed** God, or had **faith** in God, God credited him with righteousness. God took the righteousness that Jesus brought into the world and credited it to Abraham. Is Abraham righteous? No! But he is made righteous through Jesus when he put his **faith** in God. God, in a sense, borrowed from the cross of Christ that was guaranteed to come to the future (**Gen 3:15**) and credited Abraham with righteousness 1,800 years before righteousness ever arrived on earth (Jesus). This is all because of the faith that Abraham had in God. The same thing happens to us when we put our faith in God! Unrighteous people like ourselves will be made righteous through faith in Jesus.

See how it works? Saved **by Grace (Jesus), through Faith (man)**. Only then does God save us through the price that Jesus paid on the cross. Yet man can not access that Grace without Faith. When it comes to Salvation, two parts must work together. God's part (Grace) and our part (Faith) and the result of that is (Salvation).

Eph 2:8

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith; ... NASU

MAN'S MISUNDERSTANDING OF FAITH

It sounds pretty simple, doesn't it? I will just acknowledge that God is real, and then at that moment my faith in Jesus will access God's grace and then I will be saved from my sins, right???

Here is what I believe to be the biggest misconception and misunderstanding in the entire Bible. **Defining what true biblical faith is!!!** Let me share some verses with you ...

Matt 7:21-27

21 "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' 23 Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

NIV

Faith is an **action word**. You can not just lay on the couch all your life and claim to have faith. Faith has to live and breathe. Faith has to move, but not just anywhere! It must move in the direction of God, in a direction that is founded on God's commands. That is why **Matt 7:21** says; "But only he that **does the will** of my father in heaven". Faith has to do, act, and move in the direction of God. This is very clearly seen in **James chapter two ...**

James 2:14-19

14 What good is it, my brothers, if a man claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save him? 15 Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to him, "Go, I wish you well; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about his physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead. 18 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by what I do. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that-and shudder. NIV

Many people believe that all they have to do is acknowledge God and that somehow qualifies them as having faith, a saving faith. The Bible is very clear here in James. If that is all your faith consists of, **it is a dead faith**. Yes, it is faith, but no, it is not a saving faith!!!

Let me ask you a question. Does Satan believe in God? He has to, he once lived with God. He talks to God (**Job 1:1ff**). He even knows what God looks like. So Satan believes in God without a doubt, right? Yet I have never seen God with my eyes! I have no idea what God looks like! Yet I also claim to have faith in God. Here's another question for you. Will Satan ever make it back to live with God in heaven? No! But we already saw that he has faith, right? So what is the difference in Satan's faith and

and mine? **A true child of God obeys God and Satan does not!** A child of God's faith moves in the direction of God, based on His commands. Satan refuses God's commands. A child of God has a biblical saving faith and Satan has a dead faith. Can you see the difference? Let's go back to the book of Romans for a minute ...

Rom 4:12

12 And he is also the father of the circumcised who not only are circumcised but who also walk in the footsteps of the faith that our father Abraham had before he was circumcised. NIV

See, faith walks! It moves in the direction of God. If you remember, God told Abraham to leave his land of Ur and go to the promised land (**Gen 11-22**). What was Abraham's response to God? He walked! He moved in the direction of God based on God's commands. That is a biblical saving faith. It is a faith that obeys. Here is another example with the children of Israel ...

Heb 3:16-19

16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? **17** Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? **18** And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? **19** So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief. NKJV

The children of Israel were not very faithful to God after they left the land of Egypt. This is why they spent 40 years doing laps in the desert. God here, speaking of them, said in verse 18, that the reason they will never enter His rest (Heaven), is due to their **disobedience**. Then in verse 19 He says they will not enter because they **do not believe**. Well which is it? Is it their disobedience that keeps them out or their unbelief? They come as a package. If you don't obey God then you really do not believe in God. But if you obey God, then God recognizes that as true biblical saving faith! That is the kind of faith that will access God's grace which will result in salvation!

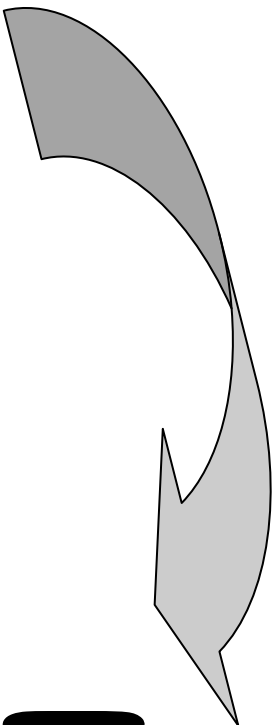
Faith is never about **PERFECTION**. If it were, we would not need Jesus. We would already be right with God because of what we have accomplished.

Faith is always about **DIRECTION**, always going in the direction of God, based on His commands and His agreement (Covenant) that He makes with us!

Do you now understand how salvation works? It does not matter where you are in the Bible, salvation works on the same basic principle of Grace and Faith. Old Testament or New, it all works the same. But remember that faith is based on God's direction through His word. God's directions for us changes with His Covenants. Let's see what Covenant that we are under so that we will know what direction that our faith and the obedience from that faith should be based on. The next chapter will explain this...

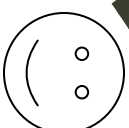
Solution To The Sin Problem

FAITH

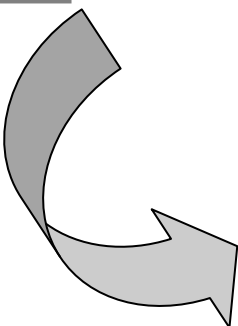
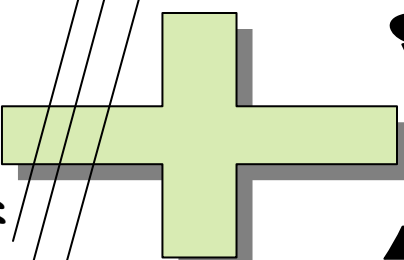
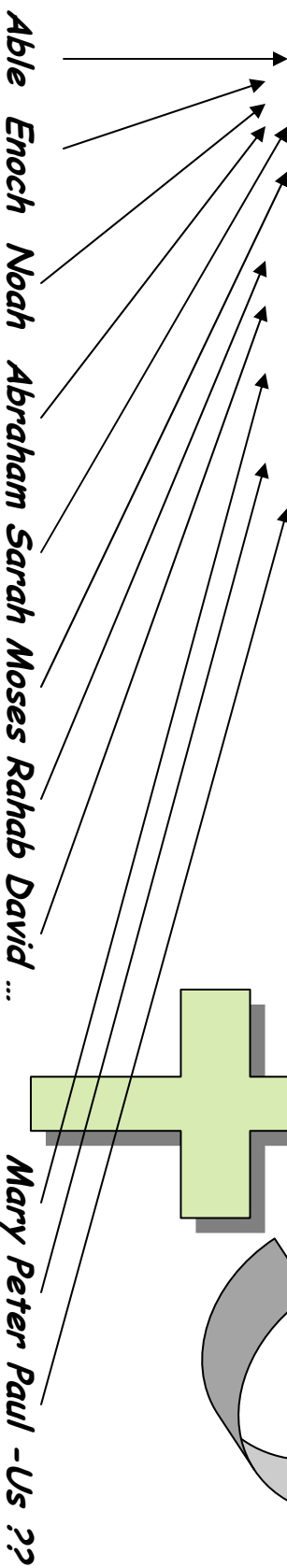


GRACE

HEAVEN

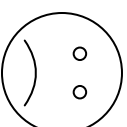


(Eph 2:8-9) Saved By Grace Through Faith
(Heb 11:6) It's Impossible To Please God Without Faith



Adam Cain Eve Noah Abraham Sarah Moses Rahab David Mary Peter Judas All Of Us!

SIN



HELL

All Have Sinned / Failed (Rom 3:23)
All Sin Is Law Breaking (1 John 3:4)

CHAPTER FIVE

UNDERSTANDING HOW THE BIBLE WORKS

Covenant: **'Understanding The Importance Of It'** 63 ★

Covenant: **'Why The Need For A Change'** 73 ★

Covenant: **'The New Begins'** 75

With Chart

"The Day Of Pentecost" 76



COVENANT

‘UNDERSTANDING THE IMPORTANCE OF IT’

Now that we see how to get out of our sin problem through faith in Jesus, the next question we need to ask is, what does God expect from me so that I can please Him with an obedient faith. To answer that question, we must first understand how the Bible works. The Bible is split into two main sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The word testament can also mean covenant, agreement or even imply a contract in a sense. The more you get into the Bible, you will discover that God has made several covenants with man. Think of the covenants of the Bible as building blocks, each connecting to the other with the final piece ending with the covenant of Christ or the New Testament. In this chapter we will see which covenant or agreement that applies to us today so that we will know what God expects from us.

WHAT IS A COVENANT AND HOW DOES IT WORK?

In essence a covenant is an agreement, but an agreement with a solemn and binding force.

This concept of covenant is important in understanding our salvation. If I were to ask you, how do you know if you are saved or not, your answer should not be based on what you feel. Even though some people want to make that mysterious “feeling” a test of their salvation, nowhere does the Bible teach such a thing. After all, ‘feelings’ (in the scriptures) are seen as a fickle thing at best. You may feel you’re saved one minute, and the next minute feel you are not because of sin or temptation. At other times you may feel you are in a right standing with God, when in reality you are not. Salvation can never be based on feelings of the heart, rather it is based on a formal, rational agreement made between God and yourself. That brings us to this word covenant.

When it comes to the Bible, God draws up all the conditions to His covenants, not the other way around! Man cannot argue, dispute, or change God’s covenants that He makes with us, **despite the fact that man tries this all the time.**

Gal 3:15

15 Brothers, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.

NIV

DIFFERENT KINDS OF COVENANT

There are many different types of covenants found within the Bible, but to keep things simple, we will only look at the three main types. These three are the most important found in the Bible!

A Self - Assumed Covenant

This is a covenant of promise (in fact all covenants have the hope of promise within them). With this covenant, one party imposes obligation to himself. The second party is the one who receives the blessing, but has to do nothing for it. In fact, the recipient of this kind of covenant is not represented as doing anything in the matter, either by way of seeking or asking for the covenant, or of performing any covenant obligations or conditions.

A good example of this kind of covenant is found in **Gen 9:8-17**, where God makes a covenant with Noah, his family, all their descendants, all living creatures, and with the earth for all time. Under this covenant, God is telling these parties that He will never destroy the entire earth with a flood again. What is special about this covenant, is that the recipients are not under obligation to do anything here. Only God is obligated to do anything under this kind of covenant. This can also be called a one-sided covenant, only one side plays any part. The other party does nothing.

A Parity Covenant

This kind of covenant is between equals. This kind of covenant is a two-sided covenant, where both parties agree to accept the terms of the agreement.

Some good examples of this are with friendships, like with David & Jonathan in **I Sam 18:1-4**. Another one is in marriage (**Mal 2:14**) and still another for political alliance (**Josh 9:15**). God however, **never enters into such a covenant of equality with man**. This kind of covenant is only between people!

A Suzerainty / Vassal Covenant

This kind of a covenant is a one-sided disposition imposed by the superior party. A good example of that is found in **Ezek 17:11-18** where Nebuchadnezzar made a covenant with Judah & King Zedekiah. The King here had the upper hand over Judah. He tells Judah the conditions of how things will be. Judah has no say because the King has overtaken Judah and he has the upper hand. If Judah fails to keep the conditions, the King will come in and destroy Judah. In fact that is just what happened years later.

When God enters into a covenant relationship with man, He institutes a life and death bond, a blood bond. A covenant is a bond in blood, or a bond of life and death, and administered by the suzerain or superior (God) to the inferior or vassal (man). Man is not on an equal basis with God, even though sometimes we want to think we are! This is why man tries to call the shots, telling God how it will be! Every time man tries this, we end up in trouble, just like Judah did. This kind of covenant is the most important kind to understand because this is the kind that dictates the concept of how man is saved!

GOD IS BOUND BY COVENANT

In **Genesis chapter 15** God makes a covenant with Abram. Abram asks God, how he could be sure that God will deliver on His promises that He made to Abram? Abram is told by God to take some animals and cut them in two. Spreading the parts out by leaving an isle down the middle. Abram then falls into a deep sleep and sees a fiery pot and a torch pass between the animals. This is a vision of God passing through the animals, showing that the ceremony is complete. Since Abram did not also pass through, we see that this is a **Self Assumed Covenant** (one-sided). Now if Abram had passed through, then it would have been a **Suzerainty / Vassal Covenant** (two-sided). The important part of this covenant is the animals. By walking between the dead animals, God is assuring Abram of His commitment to this covenant. The consequences resulting back to the dead animals and their death. This is the penalty of not keeping covenant, which now God is bound by (**Jer 34:17-20**). This shows us that covenant making is serious business to God. That is why covenant is a blood bond. **You must keep your word!**

Why should this be important to us? It's because of our salvation. When I go before God in the final judgment, how will I know if He will grant me forgiveness and give me eternal life? It all has to do with covenant. If I meet my end of the covenant agreement, then He has to keep His end. How do I know this? Because He is bound in a sense by blood. This should give us more confidence in understanding our salvation (**I John 5:13**).

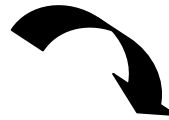
MAN IS ALSO BOUND BY COVENANT

Here is where man's part comes in. Later on in **Gen chapter 17** God steps up that same covenant with Abram and makes it a Suzerainty / Vassal Covenant (two sided covenant). Here He tells not only Abram but all of Abram's descendants after Him to keep this covenant. Now the Vassal (man) has to do something, and that is that each male child must be circumcised on the 8th day of life. Now because covenant is a blood bond, each party must keep His end of the agreement. If not, you will have to pay with your blood. That is one of the reasons God chose circumcision, because there is blood involved, showing man the seriousness of the covenant he is entering.

KEEPING COVENANT IS SERIOUS BUSINESS

This is clearly seen in a very interesting story about Moses. Moses in **Exodus chapter 4** is on his way to Egypt to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go. But while on his way in verse 24, it says that God sought to put Moses to death. Why? Because Moses failed to circumcise his son and his wife had to do it for him. Moses had failed to keep the obligations of the covenant that God had made with Abraham and all of his descendents (of which Moses was one). That is why, I believe, that God was about to put him to death. Since Moses had not kept his end of the covenant, God was going to kill him. Moses came close to paying with his own blood!

As we are about to see in this chapter, **we today are not under this covenant.** This covenant only applied to the Hebrews and ended at the cross of Jesus (**Col 2:14-17 & Hebrews 9**). The point that God wants us to see here, is that no matter what covenant you are under, man must keep his end of the agreement. This is clearly seen in a passage for Christians that were under the New Covenant. This is the one that we today are under. Watch the seriousness ...



Heb 10:26-31

26 If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, **27** but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. **28** Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. **29** How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? **30** For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people." **31** It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

NIV

When we enter into a covenant with God, and fail to do our part, we also will be put to death, eternally. This is why it is so important for all of us to understand the concept of covenant. If we don't, it could cost us our eternal lives!

Now lets see what covenant applies to us today and see why there had to be a change in covenants ...



COVENANT

'WHY THE NEED FOR A CHANGE'

As we saw in our last study on covenant, we know that no one can change a covenant. Once a covenant is duly established, no one can add or take away from it (**Gal 3:15**).

But what needs to be understood, is that if a covenant is broken by one of the two parties, then the old covenant 'can' be brought to an end, and a new covenant can take its place.

We see this with the covenant that God made with the Israelites on Mt, Sinai through Moses. In **Ex 24:7** we see that the people entered into agreement with God to do all that God had commanded the people to do under this covenant. "*Then he took the Book of the Covenant and read it to the people. They responded, "We will do everything the LORD has said; we will obey."* Later on in **Deut 29:9** God continues to tell the people to make sure you do what I commanded you under this covenant. "*Carefully follow the terms of this covenant, so that you may prosper in everything you do.*" That is why God's covenants with man must be seen as covenants of promise, because if man keeps God's commandments, blessings will follow. But if Israel failed to do what God has commanded them to do under His covenants, then this is what God said would happen to them . . .

Deut 29:19-21

19 When such a person hears the words of this oath, he invokes a blessing on himself and therefore thinks, "I will be safe, even though I persist in going my own way." This will bring disaster on the watered land as well as the dry. **20 The LORD will never be willing to forgive him; his wrath and zeal will burn against that man.** All the curses written in this book will fall upon him, and the LORD will blot out his name from under heaven. **21** The LORD will single him out from all the tribes of Israel for disaster, according to all the curses of the covenant written in this Book of the Law. NIV

As you follow the Old Testament, you will see that God's children individually and as a nation broke God's covenant again and again. Because of this, God knew the need for another covenant. **Hebrews 8:7-8** says "*For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another. But God found fault with the people and said*". . . It wasn't that there was anything wrong with the first covenant, at least not with the covenant itself. The problem was with man. When you look at the 10 commandments with a truthful heart, you start to see that everyone breaks them. God's laws demand perfection. The question then may be asked, did God ask us to do something that we were unable to do? The answer is not if we were unable, but more that we were unwilling. All of us are capable of perfection (Jesus

proved that by coming in the flesh), but we are unwilling to do it. Under the law of Moses (covenant), God was demanding perfection. So the question remains, why did God make this covenant with man if He knew man would be unwilling to keep it? My answer, because God wanted us to see just how ungodly we were and for us to see that we were in deep need of saving. **He wanted us to understand that we were in desperate need of a Savior!**

That brings us to the New Covenant of Christ that was predicted to come in the Old Testament . . .

SIGNS OF SOMETHING NEW COMING

Isa 42:1-9

1 "Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on **him** and **he** will bring justice to the nations.

2 **He** will not shout or cry out, or raise **his** voice in the streets.

3 A bruised reed **he** will not break, and a smoldering wick **he** will not snuff out. In faithfulness **he** will bring forth justice;

4 **he** will not falter or be discouraged till **he** establishes justice on earth. In **his** law the islands will put their hope."

5 This is what God the LORD says--
he who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and all that comes out of it,
who gives breath to its people,
and life to those who walk on it:

6 "I, the LORD, have called **you** in righteousness; I will take hold of **your** hand. I will keep **you** and will make **you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles,**

7 to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.

8 "I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

9 **See, the former things have taken place, and new things I declare; before they spring into being I announce them to you.**" NIV

This prophecy is of the coming Messiah (The Christ). When He comes, He will give freedom to the people. What is it that enslaves us? It is our unwillingness to perfectly keep God's commands. This is called sin, missing the mark that God has established. So God sent Jesus to be a **covenant** for us. Jesus' covenant will complete all the other covenants that God had made. It's as though God was building up to the final covenant. Each covenant worked together to form a complete package, all being perfected and completed by Christ's final covenant.

Hebrews 8:6

6 "But the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, and it is **founded on better promises.**"

NIV

The only promise that was given under the Old Covenant was **death**. The Old Covenant was based on law, and law demands perfection. Thus, since no one has kept the law of God perfectly, death is the only promise to be hoped for. This is why there had to be another way out. That is where Jesus comes in. He brought a New Covenant which is based on better promises. Here is another prediction of that New Covenant found in the Old Testament ...

Jer 31:31-34

31 "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah-- 32 not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. 33 But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in **their** minds, and write it on **their** hearts; and I will be **their** God, and **they** shall be My people. 34 No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for **they** all shall know Me, from the least of **them** to the greatest of **them**, says the LORD. For I will forgive **their** iniquity, and **their** sin I will remember no more."

NKJV

This could very well be one of the most important verses in the Bible when it comes to understanding our salvation. Let's break it down. First of all, the reason for a New Covenant is because man broke the first one. That was not hard to do. One sin would have accomplished that. So God forewarns Israel that there will be a New Covenant coming. He also shows that there will be differences between the old and new Covenants. Under the Old Covenant, an Israelite was born into a covenant relationship with God the day he/she was born. Then later they would be taught about God and would choose whether to believe and obey God.

Not so under the New Covenant. Under the New Covenant you must have God's laws written on your mind, **first**. Under the New Covenant you must have God's laws written on your heart, **first**. Let me ask you a question, how do you have something written on your mind? It's through education, **you have to be taught**. Here is another question, how do you have something written on your heart? To have something in your heart, **you have to obey**. See the difference between the Old & New Covenant? Under the New Covenant, you must be taught **first**, and you must obey **first**. Then at that point God says, I'll be **their** God! Whose God? Only the ones who are taught and obey. At that point God says, **they** will be my people. Who can be God's people? Only those who have been taught and obey! See, this

is important to understand how our salvation works under the New Covenant. If I am not taught (from God's word) and I do not obey God (based on His commands), then I am not in a covenant relationship with God. This is why it says that they will no longer teach their brother or neighbor to know the Lord, because **they** will already know me. Under the Old Covenant you had to teach those born in a covenant relationship with God about God as they got older. Not so under the New Covenant. You **can not** get into a covenant relationship with God without already knowing the Lord! This is not talking about teaching the lost of the world to know the Lord. The Bible from beginning to end tells us to teach the lost about God. But for a person to be in a covenant relationship with God under the New Covenant, you have to be taught **first!** Can you see the difference in covenants here?

THE NEW COVENANT IS FOUNDED ON BETTER PROMISES

Now, if I am **not** in a covenant relationship with God, then I **do not** have the blessing of the last part of this **promise**. You do not want to miss out on this part of the promise!!!

Jer 31:34

For **I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.**"

NKJV

If I do not have my sins forgiven, I am still in a separated state with God. I am lost and without hope! This is why we must be in a covenant relationship with God. If I am under contract (covenant) with God, then I am under obligation to do my part (a faith that obeys)! God is also under contract (covenant) with man, He is obligated by oath to forgive us! That should give us assurance! Not to doubt our salvation (**I John 5:13!**) If I do my part, God will do His part, guaranteed!!!

In the New Testament, Jesus confirms this principle ...

John 6:44-45

44 "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and **I will raise him up at the last day.** **45** It is written in the Prophets: **'They will all be taught by God.'** **Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.**

NIV

Can you see it? Can you see the connection? Jesus says you have to be taught by God. Jesus says you have to listen and learn (obey), if you want to come to Him! Then and only then Jesus promises, "**I'll raise him up in the last day**", which implies forgiveness of sins! Both Jeremiah from the Old Testament and Jesus speaking in the New Testament are in complete harmony in the conditions that we must meet under this New Covenant that is coming. Oh, how the Old and New Testaments of God come together into a perfect and complete package!

JESUS AND THE NEW COVENANT

We also must understand that Jesus will play an important part in establishing this New Covenant package at His arrival. As God ends out the Old Testament, He predicts Jesus' coming here in the book of Malachi...

Mal 3:1

1 "Behold, I send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts.

ESV

When Jesus comes, He will bring or institute a covenant, a New Covenant. This New Covenant must come for man's salvation to take place! It does not matter when you lived, before Christ or after. All of man's salvation will depend on the coming of Christ and His new or completion to God's covenant package. This is clearly seen in the next verses ...

Hebrews 9:15

15 "For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance-now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.

NIV

Let us look at the next chapter and see when the New Covenant begins and see what conditions apply so that we can gain the promise of forgiveness of sins and eternal life ...

COVENANT

'THE NEW BEGINS'

Now that we have discovered from the Old Testament that the Old Covenant is to come to an end, and a new one is to take its place. It will be important to understand when this New Covenant is set in place.

WHEN DOES THE CHANGE TAKE PLACE?

It is important to understand that the coming of the New Covenant centers around Christ and His death on the cross. Important covenant making always involves blood for a covenant to be set in place.

Heb 9:16-22

16 For where a covenant is, there must of necessity be the death of the one who made it. 17 For a covenant is valid only when men are dead, for it is never in force while the one who made it lives. 18 Therefore even the first covenant was not inaugurated without blood. 19 For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the Law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, 20 saying, "THIS IS THE BLOOD OF THE COVENANT WHICH GOD COMMANDED YOU." 21 And in the same way he sprinkled both the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry with the blood. 22 And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.

NASU

When Jesus comes to this earth, He will show this same kind of thinking when speaking about His blood in connection with the New Covenant at the Last Supper.

Matt 26:27-28

27 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; 28 for this is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.

NASU

Since Jesus is the Messenger of this covenant (**Mal 3:1**), then this makes this covenant His. As we saw in Hebrews, it will take the blood of the Author of this covenant to institute it into place. This will happen when Jesus dies on the cross for our sins.

We also need to understand that at the cross, the Old Covenant or Old Law was done away with. This will be important in understanding what covenant applies to us. Without this understanding, people will be confused by what part of the Bible applies to us today. The book of Colossians will explain this well...

Col 2:14-17

14 having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, **nailing it to the cross**. **15** And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

16 Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **17** These are a shadow of the things that were to come; **the reality, however, is found in Christ**. NIV

All of these verses point to the death of Jesus as the starting point for the New Covenant to begin and the Old Covenant to end. But if we look closely at Hebrews chapter nine again, we may see the beginning point of the New Covenant, including the Day of Pentecost, which is 53 days after the death of Jesus.

Heb 9:16-18

16 In the case of a will, it is necessary to prove the death of the one who made it, **17** because a will is in force only when somebody has died; it never takes effect while the one who made it is living. **18** This is why even the first covenant was not put into effect **without blood**. NIV

THE DAY OF PENTECOST (The Reading Of The Will)

The NIV version of the Bible uses the word “**will**” and the NKJV version of the Bible uses the word “**testament**” in place of the word covenant. When someone dies, there is a will and testament read after their death. It usually tells us the wishes of the deceased. Covenants of the Bible work the same way. Remember that a covenant always carries with it promises. But with those promises, there must be conditions met before the promises can be gained. We see this today sometimes when people die. They will leave behind their wealth, but before the recipients can receive the money, they must first meet some of the guidelines laid out by the deceased.

This same kind of process takes place with the New Covenant on **the day of Pentecost**, 53 days after the death of Christ (**Acts 2**). Promises were made to the people, but conditions had to be met before the promise could take place.

See chart on page 76 for the importance of the day of Pentecost.

I call this “**The Reading of the Will**”. See if Acts chapter two does not sound like a modern day will being read?

The first thing that must happen for a 'will' to be valid, is to prove the death of the one who made it. This is just what the apostles do ...

Acts 2:23

23 this Jesus, delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God, you crucified and killed by the hands of lawless men.

ESV

The next thing that happens in a reading of a 'will', is the conditions that must be met by the recipients before the promises can be distributed . Look for the conditions given here under the New Covenant ...

Acts 2:37-39

37 When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" **38** Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

NIV

We must now ask, what can be gained once these conditions are met? Watch for the two promises given ...

Acts 2:38-39a

38 Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...

NIV

See how the day of Pentecost served in a way as a will and testament. All of us today now live under the conditions of the New Covenant of Christ. If we hope to gain the promises of forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit (God sealing us as His own possession **Eph 1:13-14**). Then we must also meet the conditions under that New Covenant. Without this, we will have no hope of the promises of forgiveness of our sins and eternal life.

Please read the next two chapters, so that you will better understand what God truly expects of us in becoming His covenant children ...

The Importance Of The Day Of Pentecost

Acts Chapter 2

Jer 31:31-34

Mal 3:1

Mark 9:1

Ezek 37:13-14

John 7:39

John 17:20

Isa 42:1-9

Matt 3:11-12

Acts 1:4-8

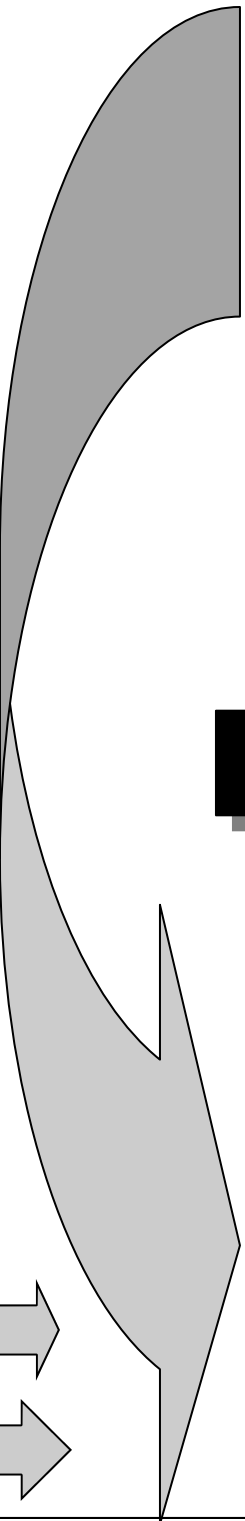
Joel 2:28-32

John 3:3-5

Luke 24:47-48

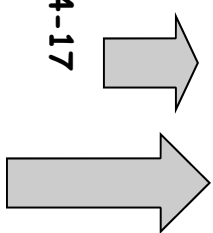


Day Of Pentecost



Col 2:14-17

Heb 9:15-17



CHAPTER SIX

HOW ONE BECOMES A CHRISTIAN

One Must Decide To Follow First:
'Becoming A Disciple Of Jesus'

79



Becoming A Saved Child Of God:
'The First Conversion Story'

83



With Chart
'The Day Of Pentecost' 87



ONE MUST DECIDE TO FOLLOW FIRST **'BECOMING A DISCIPLE OF JESUS'**

This is without a doubt the most important chapter in this workbook. We will now discover how a person becomes a child of God under the New Covenant.

GOD'S COMMISSION TO CHRISTIANS

Matthew 28:18-20

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. [19] Go therefore and **make disciples** of all nations, **baptizing them** in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] **teaching them** to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." ESV

This is famously known as one of the "Great Commission" verses of the Bible. Once a person becomes a covenant child of God (a Christian), they are to go out and teach others. But as we look at these instructions, notice that there is a progression to that process of how a person is made a covenant child of God.

Part One - "Go Make Disciples of All Nations"

Part Two - "Baptizing Them in the Name of The Father, Son & Holy Spirit"

Part Three - "Teach Them Everything I Have Commanded You"

THE FIRST STEP

If you noticed, the first step on the road to becoming a Christian is to become a disciple. Let me make an important point here. Many people equate that if you are a disciple of Jesus, that automatically qualifies you as being a Christian. Being a disciple or follower of Jesus does not necessarily make you a covenant child of God. According to the verses above, a person is not in the family of God until they are baptized. That is why it says, "go make disciples of all nations, baptizing them **in** the name of Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit". The word '**in**' is the word **eis** (ice) in the Greek; *Which is a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered)*. Thus, a disciple of Jesus is not into the possession of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit until they are baptized (**Gal 3:27**). Yet before that can take place, a person must **first** be made a disciple! The first and most important step in becoming a saved child of God, is making the decision to become a disciple of Jesus.

WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

So what is a disciple? I am glad you asked! This is the definition of the word disciple from the Greek ...

Disciple “*MATHETES*”

A learner, to learn (indicating thought accompanied by endeavor). In contrast it denotes a teacher. Thus a disciple is one who follows one's teachings.

MAKING A COMMITMENT

Before one can become a follower of Jesus, they must first make a very important decision. Watch these words of Jesus ...

Luke 14:25-33

Now great crowds accompanied him, and he turned and said to them, [26] "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. [27] Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. [28] For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? [29] Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, [30] saying, 'This man began to build and was not able to finish.' [31] Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? [32] And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. [33] So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

ESV

Becoming a follower of Jesus is a very serious thing. This is why Jesus wants us to think about it before we commit. Jesus wants us to realize that no one can come before our Lord if we are to be His follower. Not mother, father, wife, children, friends, and most of all not even ourselves. All through the Bible we are told to love people, all people. But Jesus wants us to realize that we are never to love them more than Jesus (**Matt 10:37-39**). He must come before all.

Jesus illustrates this by using the symbol of the cross. The cross represented death and sacrifice. When Jesus went to that cross, He gave up everything to go there and He did that for us. Jesus is telling us the same thing. We must pick up our cross (symbolizing death and sacrifice), before we can follow Him.

But before we jump in line, Jesus wants us to really think about that first! This commitment is not something done for a few weeks. It is something decided for the rest of your life!!! That is why Jesus gives the example of the man that is building a tower. Will he have enough money **to finish**? Will he be able to **complete it**? God wants us to know that being a disciple of Jesus is something we commit to for the rest of our lives!

This concept is seen very clearly in seven short letters written to churches of Asia in the second and third chapters of the book of Revelation...

Rev. 2:10

Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life.

ESV

Rev. 2:26

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ESV

Rev. 3:11

I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown.

ESV

Becoming a disciple and follower of Jesus must have a high level of commitment. A high level of commitment that is higher than any commitment that one can make to anyone or anything!

WHY FOLLOW JESUS?

All of us have followed after someone in our lives. We followed our parents when we were younger. Mom would put her hand out before crossing the road and we would grab it and follow. Why? Because we knew we would be safe with her. As we got older, we followed after our friends. We formed a trust with them and we felt secure being around them. When we fell in love, we followed after our spouses-to-be, because no one made us feel better inside than the one we were about to marry. Even dogs will follow their owners because of the security they feel knowing where their food and shelter comes from. No one will follow after anyone without them first having some good reasons.

Now here is the million dollar question. **“What would make you follow Jesus more than anyone or anything on this earth?”** Think about that for a minute! If good solid reasons can not be given why one should follow Jesus, a person is not going to follow and that’s the bottom line!!!

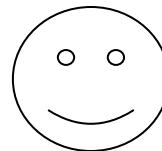
This chart is a list of just some of the reasons why I follow Jesus. See if it will help

...

1. Jesus created you **John 1:1-3, Col 1:16-17**
2. Jesus died in your place **John 3:16, Col 1:13-14**
3. Jesus loves you like no one else **John 3:16**
4. Jesus provides all your needs **John 1:3, Col 1:16-17**
5. Jesus promises never to leave you nor forsake you **Heb 13:5**
6. Jesus is holy & righteous **Rom 3:21, II Cor 5:21**
7. Jesus holds the keys to death and Hades **Rev 1:18**
8. Jesus is God, the great I Am **Isa. 9:6, John 1:1, 8:24**
9. Jesus has the words of life and by His words we will be judged **John 12:47-50**

If you really think about it, even the very dearest people to our hearts have failed us at one time or another. Our mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, friends, and even our dogs. Yet these are the very people that we follow after in this world. But when you start to consider Jesus and this list above, **no one on this earth comes close!** No one can both promise and deliver on the things that Jesus can give us. This demands a response on our part, a response to follow Jesus above all others. A commitment that is everlasting!

Are you ready to be **a disciple and follow Jesus**? If so, then you have taken the first step towards salvation. Remember, you are not in Christ yet. Making the decision to follow is just the first step. Continue to read the rest of this chapter and find out from God's word how you can become a saved covenant child of God ...





BECOMING A SAVED CHILD OF GOD

'THE FIRST CONVERSION STORY'

'ACTS CHAPTER TWO'

If a person wants to become a saved child of God under the New Covenant (the covenant that we are under), then there is no better place to start than to look at the first conversion story in our Bibles under that covenant, which took place on 'The Day of Pentecost'. I want you to see how God is building up to this very important day...

FOLLOW THE PROGRESSION

In John chapter seventeen, Jesus is about to go to the cross for our sins. Before He does, He spends some time with the Father in prayer. There are three sections within this prayer. In the first section Jesus prays for Himself (**John 17:1-5**). In the next part He prays for His apostles / disciples (**John 17:6-19**). Then in the last part He prays for us, those that will believe in Him sometime to the future (**John 17:20-26**). Watch Jesus make the transition from the second part of His prayer to the third part...

John 17:20

20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message,

NIV ← Apostles

Did you notice how people living today will believe in Jesus? Jesus said it would be through "**their message**". The 'their' that Jesus is making reference to here to is to **the apostles**. This is very important for us to understand when it comes to our salvation. **God's saving message will only come to us by way of the apostles.**

John 20:21-23

21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone his sins, they are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

NIV

Apostles →

Jesus has now died and been resurrected from the grave, and once again he is speaking to His apostles here in John chapter twenty. The reason for the message coming by way of the apostles is because Jesus is leaving. He will be returning to heaven and is therefore sending out His apostles who will continue to preach God's saving message on earth. It is important for us to understand that the apostles are

A) They were TAUGHT about Jesus (Acts 2:14-40, 42, 46).

Before a person can have faith, they must first be taught from the word of God (**Rom 10:17**). The inspired apostles are teaching the people about Jesus (**Acts 2:14-ff**). Remember that the message is going to come from the apostles (**John 17:20**). Teaching someone about Jesus must be done before salvation can take place.

For more detail on what should be taught, see pages 79 through 82

B) They BELIEVED what they were taught about Jesus (Acts 2:37).

It is impossible to be pleasing to God without faith or belief (**Heb 11:6**). These people believed what they were taught about Jesus (**Acts 2:37**). Biblical belief in God will always lead to obedience (**Rom 1:5, 16:26**).

For more detail on faith, refer back to pages 56 through 59.

C) They SURRENDERED to the authority of Jesus (Acts 2:38-47).

All authority has been given to Jesus (**Matt 28:18**). For a person to have a true faith in God, they must earnestly seek after God (**Heb 11:6**). Once these people hear what God wants them to do to be saved, they must submit or surrender to Jesus' authority. In **Acts 2:38**, the apostle Peter tells them to 'Repent, and be baptized 'into' the name of Jesus'. In the Greek, the word 'into' here means 'on the authority of Jesus'. If a person will humble themselves to the authority of Jesus, then they will do what He says by repenting and being baptized and whatever else His word tells us to do. Surrendering to Jesus' authority is a vital step in salvation.

For more detail on the authority of Jesus, see pages 197 through 201

D) They LOVED Jesus and those around them (Acts 2:41-47).

"We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers" | **John 3:14**. That makes loving others a must for our salvation. Jesus tells us that if we love Him, we will obey His commands, **John 14:15**. These people that heard the apostles message showed that they loved Jesus because they obeyed Him by repenting, being baptized, and continuing to walk faithfully for the rest of their lives (**Acts 2:38-47**). They also loved others within the family of God by meeting with each other daily and eating with one another in their homes (**Acts 2:46**). Their love also reached out to the community around them as they sold their possessions and gave them to those who were in need (**Acts 2:45**). Only by looking at the example of Jesus' love for us, can we hope to learn this kind of love for others.

For more detail on love, see pages 149 through 150.

E) They CONFESSED Jesus (Acts 2:37, 42-47).

It is important to acknowledge God in our lives (**Matt 10:32-33**). These people confessed Jesus in a sense, by asking the apostles what they must do (**Acts 2:37**). They also confessed Jesus by the way they lived after becoming a child of God (**Acts 2:42-47**). We must confess Jesus with our mouths and by the way we live, if we want to be pleasing to our God (**Heb 13:15-16**).

F) They REPENTED in a direction towards God (Acts 2:38, 41-47).

Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of life and action (**Acts 26:22**). Peter told the people to repent (**Acts 2:38**), and the people proved their repentance by their changed life (**Acts 2:42-47**). Repentance is something we all must do for salvation to occur.

For more detail on repentance, see pages 107 through 109.

G) They were BAPTIZED into Jesus (Acts 2:38, 41).

Peter also told the people to be baptized into Jesus for the forgiveness of their sins (**Acts 2:38**). Baptism is the crossing over point, crossing over from death to life (**Rom 6:2-4**). Baptism is where we put on Christ (**Gal 3:27**). Baptism is where we bury the dead body 'due to our sins' into Jesus, and a new body is raised up, washed clean from our sins, and raised to go in a new direction with God (**Rom 6:2-4**). Baptism is where Jesus adds people to His number / the church (**Acts 2:41,47**). A person must be baptized into Jesus to be saved (**Mk 16:16**).

For more detail on baptism, see pages 111 through 116.

H) They CONTINUED to walk by faith (Acts 2:42-47).

Faith is an action word. Christians must actively be living for God. **Rom 6:4** tells us that once a person is baptized, they are raised to walk a new life. To be a true Christian, we have to live for Jesus all the days of our lives (**Heb 11:13**). Continuing to walk faithfully with God is a continual act on the part of a true believer.

For more detail on walking faithfully with Christ, see pages 153 - 155

RESULTS — They were FORGIVEN OF THEIR SINS (Acts 2:38)

They received THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (Acts 2:38)

The Lord ADDED THEM TO THEIR NUMBER/THE CHURCH (Acts 2:41,47)

They were being SAVED (Acts 2:47)

There you have it! If you want to be saved from your sins, become a covenant child of God, be a part of His Kingdom and be added to the Lord's church, then all you have to do is follow the apostles' direction and do the same things these people did in Acts chapter two. I hope you can see just how important Acts chapter two is when it comes to our salvation. Acts chapter two is the most complete and detailed conversion story in the New Testament.

Look at the similarity of what Peter preached in Acts chapter two and what Jesus commissioned His apostles with in Matthew chapter twenty eight. The two match up perfectly!

ACTS CHAPTER TWO

MATTHEW CHAPTER TWENTY EIGHT



Things Taught Prior To Conversion

- Teaching About Jesus (2:14-40)
- Must Believe That Teaching (2:37)
- Must Surrender To Jesus' Authority (2:38)
- Must Love God And Others (2:41)
- Must Confess Jesus (2:37)
- Must Repent (2:38)

Making Disciples (28:19)

Things That Take Place At Conversion

Must Be Baptized (2:38,41)

Baptizing Them In (28:19)

'The Crossing Over Point'

Dead (Due To Sin)

Buried (In Christ)

Raised (To Walk A New Life)

Things That Take Place After Conversion

- More Teaching About Jesus (2:42)
- More Belief In Jesus (2:42-47)
- More Surrendering To Jesus' Authority (2:42-47)
- More Loving God And Others (2:42-47)
- More Confessing Jesus (2:42-47)
- More Repentance (2:42-47)
- Continuing To Walk Faithfully With Jesus (2:42-47)

Teaching Them More (28:20)

(SALVATION TAUGHT IN IT'S FULLEST FORM)

The Importance of The Day of Pentecost

Acts Chapter 2

Day of Pentecost

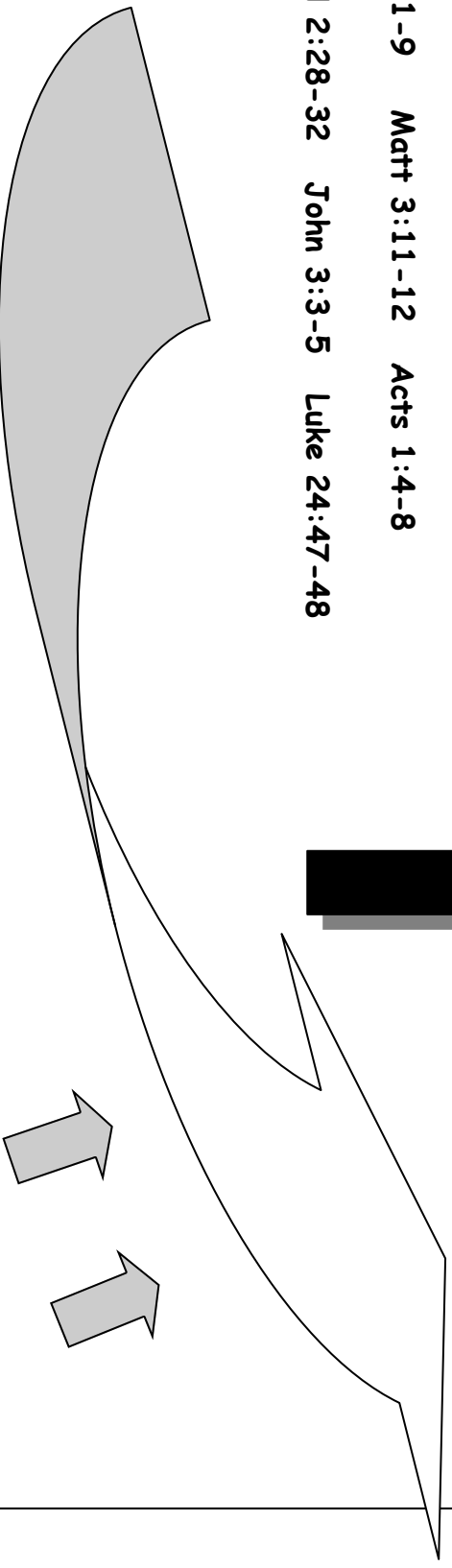


Jer 31:31-34 Mal 3:1 Mark 9:1 John 20:23

Ezek 37:13-14 John 7:39 John 17:20

Isa 42:1-9 Matt 3:11-12 Acts 1:4-8

Joel 2:28-32 John 3:3-5 Luke 24:47-48



Col 2:14-17

Heb 9:15-17

CHAPTER SEVEN

ANSWERING MODERN DAY QUESTIONS ABOUT SALVATION

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'When, Where And How Can I Become A Part Of It?' 143

SATAN

'UNDERSTANDING WHO THE ENEMY IS'

Eph 6:12

12 For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

NASU

1 Peter 5:8-9a

8 Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. 9 Resist him, standing firm in the faith ...

NIV

If you are going into battle, you want to make sure you know who the enemy is, right? Anyone living in this world should know that Satan is out to rob them of the good things that God has for us. My friend Ed Wharton always refers to Satan as 'old scratch'. Satan took his best swipe at Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden (**Gen 3**), and he hasn't slowed down any with us today. Look how Jesus refers to the Devil...

John 8:44

44 You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

NIV

I wish that every person on this earth would consider the first murder story of the Bible before their feet hit the floor in the morning. It is the story of Genesis chapter three, where Satan murdered Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve could no longer be in the garden of Eden with God. Satan murdered their relationship with God (**Gen 3:24**). Satan is wanting no less for us. Nothing would make Satan happier than to deprive us of the forgiveness that we can have through Jesus. Thus, killing any chance of gaining back that relationship we could have with God and murdering our chance of eternal life!

But we should have a major advantage in this battle if we understand Jesus' warnings well enough. Satan uses the same weapon he did in the garden. **Satan uses a lie!** God told Adam and Eve that if they would eat of the tree in the middle of the garden, they would die (Gen 2:17). Satan came along and told them just the opposite, telling them that they would not die (Gen 3:4). Jesus is about to tell us how we can protect ourselves from the lies that Satan wants to destroy us with ...

John 8:31-32

31 So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, "If you continue in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine; 32 and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."

NASU

John 17:17

17 Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.

NKJV

John 1:1-2

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning.

NIV

John 12:47-50

47 "As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save it. 48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that very word which I spoke will condemn him at the last day. 49 For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say."

NIV

The Lord wants us to know where the **truth** can be found. It is only found in Jesus' words, which are the words of the Bible. If we hold to the words of Jesus, then we will be set free, free from the bondage of sin. And when it comes to that final day of judgment, deciding where we are to spend eternity, it will only be the word of God that we will be judged against. That makes the word of God, **the most important words on the planet**.

Just opposite of the truth of Jesus' words, are the lies of Satan! Satan wants to kill any chances of any of us being saved from our sins and living with Jesus for eternity! And how does he do that in our 21st century? By twisting, complicating, and trying to throw man into total confusion on how one can be set free from our sins through the Gospel message.

That is why I put this chapter together. To see if what man is teaching today on salvation matches up with God's word. Don't take my word for it, I am just a man. Test everything written in this book by the word of God, because **only the truth will set us free**.

I pray that this chapter will help.

THE SINNERS PRAYER

'MAN'S TRADITION OR GOD'S?'

Religious traditions have come and gone over the years since the time that Jesus established His church. Some traditions are good and others can be bad. Let's look at an example from scripture of a **good tradition** ...

1 Cor 11:2

2 Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and **keep the traditions just as I delivered them to you.**

NKJV

Paul is praising the church in Corinth for holding on to the traditions that He had passed on to them. Why is this an example of a good tradition? Because it comes from the teachings of Paul! Paul is an inspired apostle. That means that when he passes instructions on to people, they are instructions from God. We can clearly see that from what the apostle Peter wrote ...

2 Peter 1:19-21

20 Above all, you must understand that **no prophecy of** Scripture came about by the prophet's own interpretation. **21** For **prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**

NIV

Peter is also an inspired apostle and prophet of God. Peter's words are not his own opinions or interpretation. His instructions are from God. That makes the traditions and teachings of any inspired apostle or prophet, the teachings and traditions of God. Thus, a tradition based on the inspired word of God is a good, solid tradition because it is based on the truth of God's word!

Now let's let the Bible give us a description of a **bad tradition** ...

Matt 15:1-9

15:1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, **2** "Why do your disciples break **the tradition of the elders?** They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

3 Jesus replied, "**And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition?** **4** For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' **5** But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift

devoted to God,' 6 he is not to `honor his father' with it. **Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition.** 7 You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. 9 They worship me in vain; **their teachings are but rules taught by men.**"

NIV

When a religious **man-made tradition** overrides the truth of God's word, it is a bad tradition! Thus, these kinds of traditions are not the traditions of God. Look at what Paul told the young preacher Timothy in view of false teachings and doctrines...

1 Tim 1:3

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach **false doctrines** any longer

NIV

2 Tim 2:15

15 Be diligent to present yourself **approved to God** as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, **accurately handling the word of truth.**

NASU

1 Tim 4:16

16 **Watch your** life and **doctrine closely.** Persevere in them, because if you do, you will save both yourself and your hearers.

NIV

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE SINNER'S PRAYER

I am told that about 300 years ago there arose a theory that was thought to have been based on scripture. This theory has since become a very strong tradition and is widely taught in our world today. It is called '**The Sinner's Prayer**'. Other phrases that accompany this kind of thinking are '**Pray Jesus Into Your Heart**' and '**Accept Jesus As Your Personal Savior**'. The sinner's prayer became most popular during the days of the big evangelistic revivals in the mid-to-late 1900's. Today, you could watch almost any T.V. evangelist, and when they give the invitation at the end of their lesson, they give people the opportunity to come forward and pray a form of this prayer. After praying this prayer, these evangelists inform the people that they are now saved from their sins and have become a child of God, believing that they now have prayed Jesus into their hearts and accepted Him as their personal Savior.

Here is my question, and the question that we are going to answer from the Bible in this study. Is the tradition of the 'sinners prayer', a man-made tradition, or a tradition based on God's word? Only God's word can give us the answer...

DOES THE SINNER'S PRAYER COME FROM THE BIBLE?

People today teach that as soon as you pray the sinner's prayer, you become saved from your sins and are now a child of God. If you look back to the first conversion into Christ, **Acts 2, page 83**, you will notice that nowhere in **Acts 2** did these people ever pray a prayer to get into Jesus. In fact these people asked the inspired apostles, what must they do? And at no point were they ever told to pray ...

Acts 2:37-41

37 Now when they heard this, they were pierced to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brethren, **what shall we do?**"

38 Peter said to them, "**Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.**

39 "**For the promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, as many as the Lord our God will call to Himself.**"

40 And with many other words he solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, "**Be saved from this perverse generation!**"

41 So then, **those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls.** NASU

Where is the 'sinners prayer' in this chapter? If you must pray 'the sinner's prayer' or 'pray Jesus into your heart' to enter into Christ and be saved from your sins, **then why didn't the apostles tell these people to do that?** Forgiveness of sins, receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit, salvation, and addition to the family of God all took place in Acts chapter two. All these things are vital for the saving of our souls! But I must ask the question again, **where is the prayer?** Did the apostles forget to tell them about this prayer? Maybe it is just not mentioned here in this story of conversion, but is found mentioned in other conversion accounts. That could be a possibility? It just so happens that I have printed all of the conversion accounts into Christ found in our New Testament on **pages 99-105**. Out of the twenty-five conversion accounts found in our New Testament, there is not one word about prayer. Read it for yourself. When these people were being converted into Christ, it never says anywhere in our New Testament that they did that by means of a prayer. Yet that is just what many in our world today are teaching.

WHY?

WHERE DID THIS THINKING COME FROM?

There are three main sections of scriptures that people have used to base the tradition of the sinner's prayer on. Let's take a look at them and see if they were used correctly.

Revelation 3:19-20

Rev 3:19-20

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Therefore be zealous and repent. 20 Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me.

NKJV

It is from these verses above that people get the idea of 'praying Jesus in their heart'. What kind of people is the sinner's prayer designed for? A lost person, right? They pray the prayer in hopes of gaining access into Christ. But look at the context of the verses above. This is Jesus talking to the church in Laodicea. If they are in the church, they are already Christians (**Acts 2:47 NKJV**). Here Jesus is rebuking these **Christians** to get back on the right path with Him. And how is that accomplished? By a prayer? NO! It is by being **zealous for God** and **repenting**. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action. God doesn't want a prayer here, he wants a changed life. So if people use these verses to justify teaching **lost people** to pray Jesus into their hearts, they have taken these verses out of context and made them into something they were never intended to say.

John 1:10-13

John 1:10-13

10 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. NIV

It is from these verses that people get the idea of 'receiving Jesus as their personal Savior'. The question then is this, how does one receive Jesus? Let's go back to the first conversion story under the New Covenant, **Acts 2**, and see how these people received Jesus ...

Acts 2:41

41 So then, those who had received his word were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls. NASU

They were saved by accepting the inspired message from the apostles and responding to that message with obedience. Was the instructions to pray or to be baptized? Our world has taken baptism out of the plan of salvation and injected a prayer. Yet the Bible never said to pray! **If we are to receive Jesus, we are to receive Him on His terms, not ours!**

ROMANS 10:5-13

Rom 10:5-13

5 Moses describes in this way the righteousness that is by the law: "The man who does these things will live by them." 6 But the righteousness that is by faith says: "Do not say in your heart, 'Who will ascend into heaven?'" (that is, to bring Christ down) 7 "or 'Who will descend into the deep?'" (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: 9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile — the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

NIV

If there was ever a section of scripture that was used to justify the 'sinners prayer', this is it! The first thing we need to do to properly understand these verses, is to look at where they originated. They are a mixture of quotes from the book of Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. Look at the setting and overall message in Deuteronomy ...

Deut 30:11-18

11 Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you or beyond your reach. 12 It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, so that you have to ask, "Who will cross the sea to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" 14 No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.

15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the LORD your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

NIV

If we want to understand the message of Roman's chapter ten, then we need to put it in context from where it originated. That context is **a life of obedience**, which is the same context that the book of Roman's was written. **See chart on the next page ...**

1. (Rom 1:5) - The obedience that comes from faith.
2. (Rom 6:2-6) - They died to sin when they were baptized. (Obedient)
3. (Rom 6:16) - Obedience leads to righteousness.
4. (Rom 6:17-18) - They were set free from sin when they wholeheartedly obeyed that form of teaching that was passed down to them.
5. (Rom 10:21) - Do not be disobedient like Israel was.
6. (Rom 16:26) - Believe and Obey.

Other places of the Bible keep that same theme of obedience ...

Matt 7:21

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.

NKJV

Luke 6:46

46 "Why do you call Me, "Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?"

NASU

You must obey God's will!

Acts 22:16

And now why do you wait? Rise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on his name.'

ESV

He Obeyed

So what does it mean to confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord in both the context of Romans and the rest of the Bible? Is it a one time prayer that causes one to be instantly saved? Nowhere does the Bible teach that! A person can say all day long that Jesus is Lord with their mouth, but if they do not **obey** Jesus' commands, it gains them nothing! Paul reminded these Christians at Rome when they died to sin back in chapter six. It was when they were baptized (**Rom 6:2-8**). This is where they first became a saved child of God. Then in chapter ten Paul is telling these Christians how to stay saved by living a life in obedience toward God (**Rom 10:9-13**).

The real danger with the tradition of the sinner's prayer, is that it changes the Gospel message. Baptism is subtracted from the gospel message, and a man-made prayer is added. Paul warned that if anyone teaches a different Gospel than the one found in the Bible, that they should be eternally condemned (**Gal 1:6-10**).

No one in the Bible ever prayed the sinner's prayer. No one in the Bible was ever instructed to 'pray Jesus into their heart'. Nowhere is the phrase 'accept Jesus as your personal Savior', found in scripture. Yet all of these things are widely taught today. If they are not found in the Bible, then **they are a man-made tradition**. A tradition that changes the teachings of the Bible! Let's not make any traditions that God Himself has not made, especially when dealing with the subject of salvation!!!

THE SINNER'S PRAYER **'SEARCHING FOR THE PRAYER'**

If you are still having struggles with the subject of the sinner's prayer, then this study might help! In this section is printed all of the conversion stories of the New Testament. It will show us what people were taught to do to become Christians. See if you can find anything said about a prayer ...

1

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

NKJV

Acts 2:41

41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

NKJV

Acts 2:47

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved. NKJV

2

Acts 3:19-23

19 Repent therefore, and turn again, that your sins may be blotted out, **20** that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord, and that he may send the Christ appointed for you, Jesus, **21** whom heaven must receive until the time for restoring all the things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago. **22** Moses said, 'The Lord God will raise up for you a prophet like me from your brothers. You shall listen to him in whatever he tells you. **23** And it shall be that every soul who does not listen to that prophet shall be destroyed from the people.'

ESV

Acts 4:4

4 But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of the men came to about five thousand.

ESV

3

Acts 5:14

14 And all the more believers in the Lord, multitudes of men and women, were constantly added to their number,

NASU

4

Acts 6:7

7 Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith.

NKJV

5

Acts 8:12

12 But when they believed Philip preaching the good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were being baptized, men and women alike.

NASU

6

Acts 8:13

Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.

ESV

7

Acts 8:36-38

36 Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" 37 Then Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may." And he answered and said, "I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." 38 So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.

NKJV

8

Acts 9:18

18 Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized,
NIV

More details are given when Saul/Paul retells his conversion in chapter twenty two

Acts 22:16

16 And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.'
NKJV

9

Acts 9:35

And all the residents of Lydda and Sharon saw him, and they turned to the Lord.
ESV

10

Acts 10:47-48

47 "Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" 48 And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days.
NKJV

More details are given when Peter reports back to the Jews in chapter eleven.

Acts 11:14-18

14 He will bring you a message through which you and all your household will be saved.'

15 "As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit came on them as he had come on us at the beginning. 16 Then I remembered what the Lord had said: `John baptized with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' 17 So if God gave them the same gift as he gave us, who believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I to think that I could oppose God?"

18 When they heard this, they had no further objections and praised God, saying, "So then, God has granted even the Gentiles repentance unto life."
NIV

11

Acts 11:21

21 And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord.

NKJV

12

Acts 11:24

24 for he was a good man, and full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And considerable numbers were brought to the Lord.

NASU

13

Acts 13:12

Then the proconsul believed, when he saw what had occurred, for he was astonished at the teaching of the Lord.

ESV

14

Acts 13:48

48 When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and honored the word of the Lord; and all who were appointed for eternal life believed.

NIV

#15

Acts 14:1

1 Now it happened in Iconium that they went together to the synagogue of the Jews, and so spoke that a great multitude both of the Jews and of the Greeks believed.

NKJV

16

Acts 14:21-24

21 And when they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, **22** strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, "We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God." **23** So when they had appointed elders in every church, and prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord in whom they had believed.
NKJV

17

Acts 16:14-15a

14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul. **15** And after she was baptized, and her household as well, ...
ESV

18

Acts 16:30-34

30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31** And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." **32** And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. **33** And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. **34** Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.
ESV

19

Acts 17:3-4

3 explaining and proving that it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." **4** And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a great many of the devout Greeks and not a few of the leading women.
ESV

20

Acts 17:11-12

11 Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men.

ESV

21

Acts 17:34

34 But some men joined him and believed, among whom also were Dionysius the Areopagite and a woman named Damaris and others with them.

NASU

22

Acts 18:8

8 Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized.

NASU

23

Acts 18:25-26

25 This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; 26 and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. NASU

24

Acts 19:1-5

19 And it happened that while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul passed through the inland country and came to Ephesus. There he found some disciples. 2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." 3 And he said, "Into what then were you baptized?" They said, "Into John's baptism." 4 And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, Jesus." 5 On hearing this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ESV

#25

Acts 19:18

18 Also many of those who were now believers came, confessing and divulging their practices. ESV

We have looked at every individual conversion into Christ in our New Testament, all of which are found in the book of Acts. We see that each of these conversions read a little differently. Here is a summary of what they did ...

They were taught (Acts 2:14, 3:19,6:7, 8:12, 8:37, 10:47, 13:12, 14:1, 14:21, 6:14, 16:32, 17:3, 17:11, 18:8, 18:26, 19:4, 22:16)

They believed (Acts 2:37, 4:4, 5:14, 8:12, 8:13, 8:37, 11:17, 11:21, 13:12, 13:48, 14:1, 16:15, 16:34, 17:34, 18:8, 19:18)

They repented (Acts 2:38, 3:19, 11:18, 16:33)

They were baptized (Acts 2:41, 8:12, 8:13, 8:38, 9:18, 10:48, 16:15, 16:33, 18:8, 19:15, 22:16)

They listened to Jesus (Acts 3:22)

They were obedient to the faith (Acts 6:7, 14:22)

They called on His name (Acts 2, 22:16)

They turned to the Lord (Acts 9:35, 11:21)

They honored the word of the Lord (Acts 13:48)

They were brought to the Lord (Acts 11:24)

They put their trust in the Lord (Acts 14:23)

They were persuaded and joined (Acts 17:4)

Just a quick observation. Did you notice that the word **prayer** is **never** mentioned in any conversion into Christ. Not one! What should that tell us for those that teach that for one to be saved today, that they must pray the 'sinner's prayer' or 'pray Jesus into our hearts'? **The Bible never teaches such a thing.** You have just seen the proof from God's word! You may be asking at this point, why does each conversion read a little differently? That is a fair question! Is God trying to confuse us in what to do to be saved? The Bible tells us that God is not like that, because God is not a God of confusion (**I Cor 14:33**). Then what is God trying to tell us through these conversion stories? **Psalms 119:160** says, "the '**sum**' of Your word is truth." That tells me that we need to look closely at all of these examples of conversion and put what they did all together. Acts records in summary that everyone heard the same thing, believed the same thing, and did the same thing to get the same thing. They received salvation from sin and entrance into the body of Christ, 'The Church.' Therefore, there is an obvious pattern of obedience for salvation in which teaching, belief, love, surrender, repentance, confession, and baptism are all an essential part in entering into Christ! Let's make sure that we leave none of these parts out so that we too can be converted into Christ and saved from our sins like they were!



REPENTANCE

‘MAKING THE DECISION TO CHANGE’

Now that we see what it takes to become a Christian, I would like to individually look at some of the components that it takes to be saved. The first one I want us to see is repentance. Let's allow the Bible to define this word for us ...

WHAT IS REPENTANCE?

Acts 26:19-20

"Therefore, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, [20] but declared first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all the region of Judea, and also to the Gentiles, **that they should repent and turn to God, performing deeds in keeping with their repentance.**

ESV

Repentance is a turning towards God. Repentance has to start in the mind. It's a changed mind, changed by the direction it takes. Prior to this change (repentance), we lived for ourselves. Now that repentance has taken place, our minds are going in a new direction, a direction towards God. The way that we can be confident that repentance has truly taken place is by the things we do. We no longer follow our own desires, but now our actions show that we are out to please God. Repentance is a change of mind that leads to a change of action.

Jonah 3:6-10

The word reached the king of Nineveh, and he arose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with sackcloth, and sat in ashes. [7] And he issued a proclamation and published through Nineveh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything. **Let them not feed or drink water,** [8] but let man and beast **be covered with sackcloth, and let them call out mightily to God. Let everyone turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands.** [9] Who knows? God may turn and relent and turn from his fierce anger, so that we may not perish."

[10] When God saw what they did, **how they turned from their evil way,** God relented of the disaster that he had said he would do to them, **and he did not do it.**

ESV

Here both the city of Nineveh and God repented. Nineveh repented by humbling themselves by not eating, wearing sackcloth, calling on God and changing from their

evil ways. God also repented in a way, by changing His mind and not destroying Nineveh. Both changed their minds which resulted in a change of action.

Luke 13:5-9

No, I tell you; but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish." [6] And he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it and found none. [7] And he said to the vinedresser, 'Look, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down. Why should it use up the ground?' [8] And he answered him, 'Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig around it and put on manure. [9] Then if it should bear fruit next year, well and good; but if not, you can cut it down.' "

ESV

2 Cor. 7:8-11

For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it—though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. [9] As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.

[10] For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death. [11] For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

ESV

Here in II Corinthians the word grief is used. Other translations use the word sorrow. Repentance is feeling sorry for something done wrong, but here is the catch. Some people feel sorry because they got caught. Others may feel grief for the penalty that they will have to pay for committing what they did. This worldly kind of sorrow has regret. It regrets that it got caught and if it had the chance to do it again, it would! The Bible here clarifies that this kind of sorrow is a worldly grief. This kind of repentance is not the kind that God is looking for.

The kind of repentance that God demands is a sorrow that has humility within it. It has deep sorrow in acknowledging that what I did is wrong and God's ways are truly better. Godly repentance wants to change and in the end will produce that change.

2 Chron 32:24-26

24 In those days Hezekiah became ill and was at the point of death. He prayed to the LORD, who answered him and gave him a miraculous sign. 25 But Hezekiah's heart was proud and he did not respond to the kindness shown him; therefore the LORD's wrath was on him and on Judah and Jerusalem. 26 Then Hezekiah repented of the pride of his heart, as did the people of Jerusalem; therefore the LORD's wrath did not come

upon them during the days of Hezekiah.

NIV

Here is another important point made in the area of repentance. It's the area of pride of the heart. Again repentance demands humility. We must humble ourselves before God and self-pride is the only thing that stands in the way. Before we can have a heart of repentance, pride must go out the window.

Biblical repentance is a turning towards God. It starts in the mind, becomes imbedded in the heart, and ends with a change of action.

WHEN SHOULD ONE REPENT?

When Becoming A Christian

Acts 2:38

And Peter said to them, "**Repent** and be baptized **every one of you** in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

ESV

Before the basic step of belief in God can take place, there must be humility and a turning towards God (repentance). Repentance must take place prior to one becoming a Christian. If a person does not truly repent from the heart, they have no business being baptized into Christ, because without repentance, they can not be raised to walk a 'New Life' (**Rom 6:4**). An unrepentant person being baptized is only getting wet because there is no true desire to change their lives.

Everyday Of Our Christian Walk

Luke 13:3

No, I tell you; but **unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.**

ESV

Acts 17:30

The times of ignorance God overlooked, **but now he commands all people everywhere to repent,**

ESV

Repentance is a life style. It is something that we can never stop doing. May God help us all understand just how vital it is for all of us to truly repent from the heart!!!

BAPTISM

'DO I NEED TO BE BAPTIZED TO BE SAVED?'

I use to have a warehouse job before I went into the ministry. I listened to the radio each night while working and tuned into a Christian based program. Each night there was a man that answered peoples' questions about the Bible. The questions were all across the board. Yet over the years of listening, I found it interesting that the most often asked question was this; '**must I be baptized to be saved?**' This was the answer given by the gentleman each time the question was asked, 'NO!' Maybe you are asking that same question. Only the Bible can give us the true answer. We will start with the definition of the word first, and then move on to the scriptures for our answer. Let's see if the gentleman on the radio was using his Bible for his answer.

THE DEFINITION OF BAPTISM

Baptize - Baptizo in the Greek

The word baptize means to immerse, submerge, dip, plunge (get fully wet).

The word baptize **is not a translation of the word** from the Greek. When one translates a word from one language to another, they use a word that expresses its meaning. When the word baptism was translated from Greek to English, this was not done as you can plainly see. If it were, we would probably have translated the word '*immerse*', which would have done a much better job in expressing its true meaning. Instead we have **a transliteration of the word** which only resembles the way it sounded in the Greek.

Other words that people today confuse with the word baptize . . .

Sprinkle - Rhantizo in the Greek

This word was translated correctly and means to **sprinkle**.

To Pour - Cheo in the Greek

This word was also translated correctly and means to **pour**.

The word baptism never means to sprinkle or to pour! Both of these words are two entirely different words in the Greek and can never be interchanged with each other because their meanings are entirely different.

THE PURPOSE OF BAPTISM

Mark 16:16a

16 " He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved;

NASU

- 1) One must believe before being baptized. vs. 16a
- 2) Baptism is in direct connection with our salvation. vs. 16a

Matt 28:19

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

ESV

- 1) One must be a follower (disciple) of Jesus prior to being baptized. vs. 19a
- 2) The word "in" is the word . . . *eis* (*ice*); a primary preposition; to or into (indicating the point reached or entered), of place, time, or (figuratively) purpose (result, etc.); also in adverbial phrases: Thus a follower is not into the possession of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit until they are baptized. vs. 19b

Acts 2:38

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

NKJV

- 1) One must repent (turn towards God) prior to being baptized. vs. 38
- 2) One is baptized for the forgiveness of his/her sins. vs. 38
- 3) Once baptized, a person receives the gift of the Holy Spirit, signifying the seal of ownership and possession of God (Eph 1:13-14)

Acts 8:35-39

35 Then Philip began with that very passage of Scripture and told him the good news about Jesus.

36 As they traveled along the road, they came to some water and the eunuch said, "Look, here is water. Why shouldn't I be baptized?" 38 And he gave orders to stop the chariot. Then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him.

39 When they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord suddenly took Philip away, and the eunuch did not see him again, but went on his way rejoicing.

NIV

- 1) Baptism is included as part of the good news message of Jesus. **vs. 35**
- 2) You have to go down into the water to be baptized.
(Signifying a burial or fully covered in water) **vs. 38**
- 3) Rejoicing is followed after baptism, not before. **vs. 39**

Acts 10:48

And **he commanded them to be baptized** in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days. **ESV**

Baptism is an order or command. It is not an option. **vs. 48**

Acts 16:30-34

30 He then brought them out and asked, "**Sirs, what must I do to be saved?**"
31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." **32** Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house.
33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; **then immediately he and all his family were baptized.** **34** The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; **he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-he and his whole family.** **NIV**

- 1) One is always taught prior to being baptized. **vs. 32**
- 2) Repentance must take place prior to baptism. **vs. 33**
- 3) Baptism is always done immediately. It is never something put off. **vs. 33**
- 4) Being baptized is part of the process of one coming to believe in the Lord.
vs. 34
- 5) Baptism plays a part in one being saved. **vs. 30, 34**

Acts 19:2-5

2 And he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?" And they said, "No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit." **3** And he said, "**Into what then were you baptized?**" They said, "**Into John's baptism.**" **4** And Paul said, "John baptized with the baptism of repentance, telling the people to believe in the one who was to come after him, that is, **Jesus.**" **5** On hearing this, **they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.**

ESV

- 1) Baptism into Christ puts us in contact with the Holy Spirit. **vs. 2 & 5**
John's baptism could not do this (**John 7:39**).
- 2) Baptism is done in the name of Jesus. **vs. 5**

Acts 22:16

16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.'

NIV

- 1) Baptism is something that one should not wait on. **vs. 16**
- 2) Baptism is where one's sins are washed away. **vs. 16**
- 3) When one is baptized they are calling on the name of the Lord. **vs. 16**

Rom 6:1-8

What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? **2** Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? **3** Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? **4** Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

5 For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, certainly we also shall be in the likeness of His resurrection, **6** knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him, that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin. **7** For he who has died has been freed from sin. **8** Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him,

NKJV

- 1) At baptism we die to sin. **vs. 3 & 4**
- 2) At baptism we are baptized into Christ's death. **vs. 3 & 5**
- 3) Baptism is a burial. **vs. 4**
- 4) At baptism we are raised to walk a new life. **vs. 4**
- 5) At baptism our old selves are crucified with Christ so that the body of sin is done away with. **vs. 6**
- 6) At baptism we are freed from sin **vs. 7**
- 7) After baptism we begin to live with Christ, not before! **vs. 8**

1 Cor 12:13

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.

NIV

When one is baptized, we are baptized into the one body of Christ. **vs. 13**

1 Cor 15:29

29 Now if there is no resurrection, what will those do who are baptized for the dead? If the dead are not raised at all, why are people baptized for them?

NIV

This shows us that one is dead prior to being baptized (dead in their sins). Only dead people are buried and Biblical baptism is a burial. **vs. 29** Thus one could never be alive (spiritually) in Christ prior to baptism!

Gal 3:26-27

26 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. **27** For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

NASU

- 1) Baptism is based on or done by faith. **vs. 26**
- 2) When one is baptized, they are clothed with Christ, not before! **vs. 27**

Eph 4:4-6

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; **5** one Lord, one faith, one baptism, **6** one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

NASU

- 1) There is only one baptism. **vs. 5**
- 2) The New Covenant, put into place (**Acts 2**), shows there is only one baptism, which is based on one faith, which gives us just one hope, that places us into that one body (the church, **Eph 1:22-23**). **vs. 4, 5, 6**

1 Peter 3:21

21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,

NIV

- 1) Baptism is done through water. **vs. 21**
- 2) Baptism plays a part in our salvation. **vs. 21**
- 3) Once a person is baptized, they can now have a clear conscience, because now they are in Christ and their sins are forgiven. **vs. 21**

Col. 2:9-12

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, [10] and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. [11] In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, [12] having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. [13] And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses,

ESV

- 1) A person can not have fullness in Christ until they are baptized. **vs. 9 & 12**
- 2) When one is baptized, their sinful flesh is cut away. **vs. 11 & 12**
- 3) It is not the person being baptized that cuts their sins away, but it is done by Christ. It is a spiritual cutting away, not physical. **vs. 11** Thus baptism can not be a work of man. It is a work of God. **vs. 12 & 13**
- 4) Baptism is a burial. **vs. 12**
- 5) Baptism is done by faith. **vs. 12**
- 6) Prior to being baptized, we are dead in our sins. **vs. 13**
- 7) Once we are baptized, we are made alive with Christ. God forgives all our sins. **vs. 13**

Can you see just how important it is to be baptized? So many of these verses on baptism connect to salvation, forgiveness of sins, the receiving of the Holy Spirit, a good conscience, clothing one's self with Christ, and being raised to walk a new life with God. **How could anyone teach from the Bible that a person does not need to be baptized to be saved???** **That kind of teaching does not come from the Bible.** I pray that you have been baptized into Christ for the same reasons the people of the Bible were, so that you too can be saved from your sins!

BAPTISM

'IS BAPTISM A WORK?'

I have spent a lot of time with people in the area of evangelism. When I have a personal study with someone and we reach the subject of baptism in the Bible and see that a person needs to be baptized to be saved, the person I am studying with more times than not brings up an objection. They tell me that they have been taught that baptism is a work. Since the Bible teaches that we are not saved by works (**Eph 2:8**), they go on to explain to me that my thinking on baptism being connected with salvation must be incorrect, despite the fact that so many verses in the Bible connect salvation and baptism. This therefore causes a great amount of confusion. Let's see if we can't put some sense to all of this ...

OUR WORKS DO NOT SAVE US!

Eph 2:8-10

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **9 not of works**, lest anyone should boast. **10** For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

NKJV

What kind of works is God talking about here? Is He talking about works of merit, or works of faith? As we will discover, there is a difference. God wants us to understand that salvation is not something that we can earn or merit. It is not something that we ourselves can do based on our wonderful performance. Sometimes we like to think more of ourselves than we should. The Jews were no different. The apostle Paul being a Jew, gives a good description of how he thought about himself before he became a Christian. It's a prideful example of how we can sometimes think of ourselves ...

Phil 3:4-6

If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: **5** circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; **6** as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness, under the law blameless.

ESV



Paul gives us a good example here of how a normal Jew might see himself in relationship to God. Thinking that; 'I have a right to God and His salvation based on who

I am and what I have accomplished'. The problem is that there are too many 'I's' here. This is a selfish way of thinking. When we come to Christ, we are to come broken and empty, realizing that we have consciously and willingly broken God's laws again and again. All of our pride should be gone, knowing that we deserve nothing. Understanding that it is only by the sacrifice of Jesus and His payment of His life in our stead, that any of us can have any hope of forgiveness. Yet when Paul describes himself before becoming a Christian, he says, 'as to righteousness, under the law blameless'. Paul was matching himself up against God's law and thought to himself, "I have done a pretty good job." He thought of himself as righteous. This is the point of Ephesians chapter two verse eight. We are not and cannot save ourselves based on our works of merit. The only thing we have earned is death due to our sin (**Rom 6:23**).

TWO TYPES OF WORKS

But what about works of faith? Do they play a part of our salvation? Is a work of faith different than a work of merit? Is a work of faith different than a work of what I have earned for myself? We need to understand that it is impossible to please God without faith (**Heb 11:6**). Faith in the Bible is always an action word (**James 2:14-17**). So that means that if I have faith, I will be doing something, right! In fact, the only kind of faith the Bible teaches is an active and obedient faith (**Rom 6:17**).

IS IT GRACE OR FAITH THAT SAVES US?

You might be asking at this point, 'then what is it that saves us?' Is it our active and obedient faith or is it Jesus and His payment for my life on the cross? The answer is found in Ephesians chapter two, verse eight ...

Eph 2:8-9

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, **9** not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

ESV

The Bible is clear. Our salvation is not of our doing. It is a gift of God. That gift speaks of the cross of Christ. This is called grace, which translates as 'unmerited favor'.

SAVED BY GRACE (Eph 2:8a)!

But hang on, that is only half of the story. We cannot access that saving grace without faith, which the Bible teaches is active and obedient. Faith does not save us. Faith is only a response to God's saving grace. But it is a response that God requires of us, so that salvation can take place (**Heb 11:6**)!

THROUGH FAITH (Eph 2:8b)!

JESUS DOES THE SAVING / WE DO THE BELIEVING

Think about Noah and the great flood. God told Noah to build an ark, load the animals and food, and then get on. Was Noah saved because he stepped foot on the ark or was it because God's awesome power and protection that got Noah and his family to dry ground? The only thing that kept this family alive for over a year on that open water was the awesome power of God. So God gets all the credit for saving Noah! But Noah still had to do his part. He had to get on the ark. Getting on the ark is an act of faith. Being baptized is also an act of faith. We step into the water and God does the saving (**Col 2:11-12**).

So whose work is baptism, ours or God's? It's God's work! Christ does the removing of sins (**Col 2:11**). But for that work of God to take place, man must respond to God through an obedient faith, being baptized into Him (**Col 2:12**). That is called a **work of faith**. See how the two parts **work** together? Both are needed for salvation to occur!!! Only God can take away our sins. It is not something we do! But God will not do it until we respond with an obedient faith! You have to get in the ark!

Therefore baptism does play a vital role in our salvation!

When someone teaches you that you do not need to be baptized to be saved, tell them, that would be like trying to tell Noah not to get on the ark. We know how that would have turned out! He would have drowned with the rest of the world.

I pray I did a good job in explaining this!

BAPTISM

‘IS BAPTISM AN OUTWARD SIGN OF AN INWARD GRACE?’

Some people today teach that baptism is ‘**an outward sign of an inward grace**’. Meaning that a person is saved before they are baptized and then at some point in the future that person is baptized as a sign to the world of their salvation. As we have already seen in our study on baptism thus far, baptism is only for lost (dead) people, not for saved (alive) people (**I Cor 15:29 & Col 2:12-13**). We also see that nowhere in the New Testament is baptism referred to as a sign, only the Holy Spirit is (**Eph 1:13-14**). Yet a person does not receive the Spirit until one is baptized (**Acts 2:38, 5:32**). So where does this kind of thinking come from that baptism is a sign to the world of their salvation that already took place prior to being baptized?

It comes out of the Old Testament story of Abraham. Watch the progression of things with Abraham ...

Gen 15:6

6 Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness. NIV

Look what happens two chapters later ...

Gen 17:11

11 You are to undergo circumcision, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and you. NIV

Rom 4:11

11 And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness that he had by faith while he was still uncircumcised. NIV

See Abraham was made righteous first, and then he was given the sign of the covenant that God made with him later. People falsely teach this same progression with salvation in the New Testament. They teach you pray the sinner’s prayer (which is also **not** found anywhere in the N/T) and then you are saved and made righteous before God. Then later, like Abraham, you are given the sign of that agreement in baptism. ‘An outward sign of an inward grace’?

The question is, is circumcision of the Old Testament the same as baptism in the New Testament? To answer that question, let’s see the similarities and the non-similarities between circumcision and baptism on the chart on the next page. You will discover that baptism of the N/T is not the circumcision of the O/T. **Thus baptism is not a “an outward sign of an inward grace”**. This is a false teaching and should be rejected!!!

HOW CIRCUMCISION RELATES TO BAPTISM

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CIRCUMCISION</u></p> <p>Was to be done on the 8th day of life. (Gen 17:12)</p> <p>Was only for the male child. (Gen 17:10)</p> <p>Was to cut away the foreskin. (Gen 4:25)</p> <p>Is a sign or seal of the covenant! (Gen 17:11, Rom 4:11)</p> <p>Is done on the parent's faith, not something done by the child's faith! (Ex 4:25)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>BAPTISM</u></p> <p>Done when a person is old enough to be taught and chooses to do it. (Acts 2:41, 8:36-38, 22:16)</p> <p>Is for both men & women. (Acts 2:38)</p> <p>Is to cut away sin. (Col 2:11-13, Acts 22:16)</p> <p>The Holy Spirit is the Christian's seal (Eph 1:13-14)</p> <p>Is done by the individual's faith. (Gal 3:26-27, Col 2:12, Acts 2:41, Acts 8:36-38, Acts 22:16)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Similar Or Not Similar ?</u></p> <p>NOT SIMILAR</p> <p>NOT SIMILAR</p> <p>NOT SIMILAR</p> <p>SIMILAR</p> <p>NOT SIMILAR</p> <p>NOT SIMILAR</p>

BAPTISM

‘SHOULD BABIES BE BAPTIZED?’

Some of our good religious friends today teach and practice the tradition of infant baptism. We must ask if this kind of thinking fits within the teachings of the Bible. Let's look at some verses on baptism and see if an infant can fit into these verses...

Matt 28:18-20

18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19** Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20** teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen.

NKJV

According to the words of Jesus here, the only people we are to baptize are **‘disciples’**. The definition of a disciple is **“one that follows someone’s teachings’**. In this case that would be following the teaching’s of Jesus. Here is my question, ‘can an infant, just out of the womb be made a disciple or follower of Jesus?’ No!

Acts 2:38

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

ESV

According to the words of Peter, a person must **repent** prior to being baptized. Repentance is a **‘changing of the mind that leads to a change of direction’**. Let me ask you a question, ‘can an infant just out of the womb, change their thinking and direction in the way that they have been living for God’? No!

Mark 16:15-16

15 And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation. **16** "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."

NASU

According to the words of Jesus, a person must **believe** before they are to be baptized. One thing that must take place prior to belief, is teaching (**Rom 10:17**). That is why the verse says to 'go into all the world and **preach the gospel**'. A person must be taught before they can believe. Two questions: Can you teach an infant just out of the womb about Jesus? No! Second question: Can an infant make a decision to believe what they have been taught about Jesus? No!

1 Peter 3:21

21 and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also-not the removal of dirt from the body **but the pledge of a good conscience toward God**. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ,
NIV

According to the words of Peter the apostle, once a person is baptized, they now have a **good conscience** towards God. Here is the question: Can a child right out of the womb, have a guilty conscience because of the things they have done wrong against God? No!

Romans 6:2-4

By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? **[3]** Do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** were baptized into his death? **[4]** We were **buried** therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, **we too might walk in newness of life**.
ESV

According to the apostle Paul, when one is baptized, they are buried with Christ. The word baptism in the Greek means to immerse or submerge. Today when babies are baptized, they are sprinkled. **See more on the definition of baptism on page 115**

Also, according to the apostle Paul, when a person is baptized, they are '**raised to walk in newness of life**'. Here is my question, can an infant just out of the womb, change his direction and start walking in newness of life, a life now lived for God? No!

Acts 22:16

16 And now why are you waiting? **Arise and be baptized**, and **wash away your sins**, calling on the name of the Lord.'
NKJV

When the apostle Paul was converted into Christ, he was baptized so that **his sins would be washed away by Jesus**. Here is my question, does an infant just out of the womb have any sins to wash away? No!

For more detail on this subject of original sin, see pages 47-52

Acts 16:30-34

30 He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." 32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-he and his whole family.

NIV

The jailor asks 'what must I do to be saved?' vs.30. The answer, 'believe in the Lord Jesus, you and your family' vs. 31. If we go to the book of Romans, what is the only way one can believe? It is to hear the word of God. This is by teaching (Rom 10:17). So before anyone can be saved in this household, they must first hear the word of God. This is just what happened, 'he spoke it to all the others in his house' Vs. 32. Then they repented by washing Paul and Silas` wounds. At that moment they all were baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of their sins, vs. 33. This whole process defines what biblical belief is - hearing, repenting and being baptized. After that process, the text says that they (his whole family) 'had come to believe in God' vs. 34. Babies cannot be taught these things and then in turn obey them. Conclusion, there were no babies belonging to the jailors household. They all had to be old enough to have personal sin and respond with personal faith!

The plan of faith for salvation only applies to those who need it, only those who have personally sinned! Babies, children, and the mentally impaired are lacking two things: the understanding to break God's laws and the understanding to have the faith to right those wrongs through faith in Christ. Sin is personal, faith is personal, and our accountability towards both are personal!

We have looked at seven major sections of scripture that teach us about baptism, and at no point could you fit a small child, infant, or mentally impaired person into these stories. In fact, I would challenge you to find just one verse anywhere in scripture that teaches that babies, young children, or mentally impaired people could be baptized. According to what we have already seen from these scriptures, baptism was never intended for babies, and here is why...

- Babies cannot be taught about Jesus
- Babies cannot believe or have faith in Jesus
- Babies cannot be made followers or disciples of Jesus
- Babies cannot repent of their ways
- Babies do not have a guilty conscience due to sin
- Babies cannot make the decision to walk in a new direction toward Jesus

All of these things listed are a must for baptism to fulfill its intended purpose by God. The obvious conclusion is that God never intended for babies, children, and mentally impaired people to be baptized.

One last problem to consider with infant baptism is this, try submerging an infant into water, it could definitely have some problems!

If you still are questioning some things on this subject, please read...

How Does Sin Work **Pages 47-52**

Grace Working Through Faith **Pages 55-60**

Baptism: Do I Need To Be Baptized To Be Saved? **Pages 111-116**

Baptism: Is Baptism An Outward Sign Of An Inward Grace? **Pages 121-122**

I pray that this study has helped!

BAPTISM

'THE THIEF ON THE CROSS'

We, as Christians teach people from the Bible that before a person can be saved from their sins under the New Covenant, they must first be baptized into Christ. As we know, there is a lot of resistance to this kind of teaching, even though the Bible is clear on this subject. Yet one of the most common responses against baptism is the subject of 'the thief on the cross.' The argument is raised by people, 'that if I need to be baptized, then what about the thief on the cross.' He wasn't baptized, and yet Jesus said to him, "today you will be with me in paradise **Luke 23:43**." Before we make our conclusion, let's look deeper into this subject ...

EVERYTHING WE KNOW ABOUT THE THIEF

I want us to see every verse in the Bible that connects to the thief on the cross.

Matt 27:38

38 Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left.

NKJV

Matt 27:44

44 The robbers who had been crucified with Him were also insulting Him with the same words.

NASU

Mark 15:27

27 With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left.

NKJV

Luke 23:39-43

39 One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at Him, saying, "Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!" **40** But the other answered, and rebuking him said, "Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? **41** "And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong." **42** And he was saying, "Jesus, remember me when You come in Your kingdom!" **43** And He said to him, "Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise." NASU

John 19:18

18 where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center.

NKJV

John 19:32

32 Then the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him.

NKJV

As you can see, there is not a lot said about this thief. But here is what we do know. . .

- 1) He was a robber (**Matt 27:38**).
- 2) He admitted to his guilt (**Luke 23:41**).
- 3) He feared God (**Luke 23:40**).
- 4) He believed that his punishment was justified (**Luke 23:41**).
- 5) He believed that Jesus had done no wrong (**Luke 23:41**).
- 6) He knew about Jesus` Kingdom (**Luke 23:42**).
- 7) This thief would be with Jesus in paradise that day (**Luke 23:43**).

So here is the question: If you have to be baptized into Jesus Christ to be saved from your sins, then how did this thief make it to heaven without being baptized into Jesus? Here are three biblical reason why the thief would not and could not have been baptized into Christ.

1) THE THIEF LIVED AND DIED UNDER THE OLD COVENANT

Before anyone can use the story of the thief on the cross as an example to justify why a person does not need to be baptized under the New Covenant. We first need to establish what covenant the thief lived and died under! The New Covenant can not be put into place until the one who made it has died, which in this case would be Jesus (**Heb 9:16-22**). Covenants can only be put into place with blood. Jesus was still alive at the point of telling the thief that he would be in paradise with him that day.

Secondly, we need to realize that Jesus did not give instructions on being baptized into Himself until after His death, burial and resurrection (**Matt 28:18-20, Mark 16:16**). Jesus did make some reference to baptism in **John 3:3-5** prior to his death, but no real detail was given people until after Jesus resurrection. When a covenant or testament is put into place, a will needs to be read first. Giving those that are under that covenant instructions on what is expected from them so that they can receive the blessings. These instructions were not given until 53 days after this thief died (**Acts 2**).

We today do not live under the Old Covenant (**Col 2:14-17**) as this thief did! So if we are looking to be saved under the same conditions of that of the thief, we are looking in the wrong place. The thief on the cross lived and died under a different dispensation than we do. For this reason, it would be wrong to use the example of the thief on the cross to try to prove that we who live under the New Covenant do not need to be baptized to be saved!

2) THE THIEF COULD HAVE BEEN BAPTIZED UNDER JOHN'S BAPTISM?

Something else to keep in mind when thinking of the thief, is that it is possible that this thief could have been baptized under John baptism (**Matt 3:6**). As we have already seen, this thief must have been taught something about Jesus (**Luke 23:39-43**). He felt guilt for his wrong's (**Luke 23:41**). He showed repentance (**Luke 23:41**). He had a faith in God (**Luke 23:40**). He had to know something about Jesus character, believing that Jesus had done no wrong (**Luke 23:41**). He also knew about Jesus kingdom (**Luke 23:42**). The question is, how did the thief know all these things? We see from scripture that John the Baptist was teaching many of the people about Jesus and His kingdom (**Matt 3:5**). We also see that John was preaching a **baptism** of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (**Mark 1:4**). Therefore it is very possible that this thief could have heard these teachings and been baptized under John's baptism, which was an introduction to Christ's baptism. **We can not say for sure that this baptism took place, but it is a very real possibility.** The fact still remains, this man did know about Jesus and His kingdom. This thief may have been led to Jesus through John's teachings, and thus sat at Jesus` feet while He taught about His kingdom (**Mark 1:15**). So for those that say that the thief was not baptized, may be misled in their thinking.

We today, do not live under John's baptism, therefore this would not apply to us today. Read **Acts 19:1-6** on the difference between John's & Jesus` baptism. The baptism of John, was an introduction to our baptism into Jesus. Go through the next study in this chapter to better understand the difference between John's baptism and Jesus` baptism. **Page 131**

3) JESUS CAN FORGIVE WHOMEVER HE WANTS

There is a interesting story in Luke chapter five about Jesus and a man who could not walk. In this story we see that Jesus is trying to make a point about Himself. Proving to the people that He is no ordinary man. He accomplishes this in two ways. One by healing this man. The second by telling this man he is forgiven of his sins. Here is the story ...

Luke 5:17-26

17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, 19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. 20 And when he saw their faith, he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 22 When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." 25 And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today."

ESV

Jesus just proved that he was God! How did he do it? By healing this man. He also showed that He can grant forgiveness to anyone He wants, because He is God. Now getting back to the thief on the cross. Jesus told the thief that he would be in paradise with Him that day. We have to conclude that the thief's sins were forgiven. How could this come about? God must have known things about this thief that we don't fully know. The bottom line is this. If Jesus says your forgiven, then that all there is to it. Your forgiven. Now let us think about ourselves for a minute. Do we have Jesus standing in a room and telling us personally that we are forgiven? No! Have we hung next to Jesus and have Him tell us that we will be with Him in paradise that day? No! Yet we do have Jesus tell us under the New Covenant (the New Testament), what we need to do to have our sins forgiven. And one of those things is to be baptized into Him for the forgiveness of sins (**Acts 2:28, 22:16, I Peter 3:21**) etc ...

Trying to use the story of the thief on the cross to convince people that they do not need to be baptized into Jesus so that they can be saved, is not a good place to go. It's a bad argument and should not be used. The thief did not live under the New Covenant that all of us are under today. It is a very real possibility that the thief could have been baptized under John's baptism, which does not apply to us today. Last of all, none of us had Jesus hanging next to us and personally tell us that we would be in paradise with Him that day.

I pray that this study has helped our understanding of this subject!

BAPTISM

JOHN'S BAPTISM AND JESUS' BAPTISM 'UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENCE'

When studying **baptism** in the New Testament, one starts to discover that there are a couple of different baptisms being done. This can be confusing at first glance by any first time Bible student. The hope of this study, combined with a chart on **page 135**, is to help put the subject in order.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

Let's first take a look at John the Baptist and his purpose. John is the forerunner for Jesus. John is foretold about in **Isaiah 40:3-5** and **Mal 3:1, 4:5-6** in the Old Testament. John had a very important job to do in the coming of the Messiah (Jesus). John was to prepare the people of Israel, so that they would accept Jesus. John did this with a baptism of repentance ...

Mark 1:2-4

2 As it is written in Isaiah the prophet:

"BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY;

3 THE VOICE OF ONE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS,
'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD,
MAKE HIS PATHS STRAIGHT.'"

4 John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.

NASU

The way that John would prepare the people for Jesus was through repentance, specifically a baptism of repentance. If the people would repent, then they would understand who Jesus was. If they refused to repent, they would never get it. It is just that simple.

There is nothing new about repentance. It is a concept that is taught from end to end of the Bible. Not so with baptism. Baptism (immersion) is something new and it is not found in our Old Testament. I am told it took place when one was converted to Judaism just prior to New Testament times. It became a practice of tradition outside the Bible. It's clear that God told John to use this tradition in his teaching of repentance, "a baptism of repentance". When the Jews who came out to hear John turned

towards God in repentance and were baptized, God forgave their sins.

There is something that was going on in both John's and Jesus' time that many of us fail to realize. Covenants were being changed at Jesus' arrival. That means that all the things that the Jews were used to doing through the law were about to change! Could you imagine how hard that would have been to the Jewish people to undergo such a drastic change? The only way to make things smoother was for God to somehow bridge that gap! That is just what He did through John and Jesus. John is in what I would call "an introductory period", an in-between stage. John has to gradually lead the people into some new concepts that Jesus will bring to completion through Himself. One of those concepts is baptism.

WHAT WAS JOHN'S BAPTISM?

As we saw earlier, John's baptism was a baptism of repentance, turning the people towards God in humbleness. A humble person will see Jesus better than a prideful person. John's baptism is also a baptism for forgiveness of sins. Repentance towards God is an act of faith. By following the prophet's command, "repenting and being baptized," shows an obedient faith. Thus forgiveness follows.

"A Baptism Of Repentance"

But what John's baptism was not, is just as important. You could not receive the Holy Spirit through John's baptism. This is clearly seen in Acts chapter 19 ...

Acts 19:1-7

1 And it happened, while Apollos was at Corinth, that Paul, having passed through the upper regions, came to Ephesus. And finding some disciples **2** he said to them, "Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?"

So they said to him, "We have not so much as heard whether there is a Holy Spirit."

3 And he said to them, "Into what then were you baptized?" So they said, "Into John's baptism." **4** Then Paul said, "John indeed baptized with a baptism of repentance, saying to the people that they should believe on Him who would come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus."

5 When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. **6** And when Paul had laid hands on them, the Holy Spirit came upon them, and they spoke with tongues and prophesied. **7** Now the men were about twelve in all.

NKJV

One of the things that a person could not receive through the baptism of John was the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is important when it comes to the New Covenant. One of the things that could not happen before Jesus returns to heaven is the giving of the Spirit to mankind. Yes the Spirit worked in people prior to the cross, but He was not poured out until after the cross so that the Spirit could indwell people or seal them as God's possession. This is clearly seen in the following verses ...

John 7:39

39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

NIV

Eph 1:13-14

13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession-to the praise of his glory.

NIV

See how important it is to have the Holy Spirit seal you as a guarantee under the New Covenant! That causes us to leave John's baptism behind under that introductory period and move toward Jesus' baptism.

JESUS' BAPTISM

When we look back at **Acts 19**, we see that baptism in Jesus and the receiving of the Holy Spirit go hand in hand. Here are three other verses that show the connection ...

Matt 28:19

19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

NKJV

Acts 2:38

38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." ESV

1 Cor 12:13

13 For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body— Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

ESV

One can not receive the seal of ownership of the Spirit until one is baptized into Jesus under the New Covenant. This is why John's baptism no longer applies today! John's baptism was an introduction into the baptism into Christ. John's baptism was sufficient for the people during the introductory period, but once Jesus comes

John's baptism fades away. The Book of John makes this very clear in the following verses ...

John 3:27-30

27 John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven. 28 You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' 29 The one who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is now complete. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

ESV

↗
Jesus

↖
John

Thus, there is only **ONE BAPTISM** today (**Eph 4:5**). John's baptism is gone and now only Jesus' baptism remains, 'See chart on page 135'. Have you been baptized into Jesus? You can't have God's seal of ownership (the Holy Spirit) and forgiveness of sins until you do (**Acts 2:38**)!

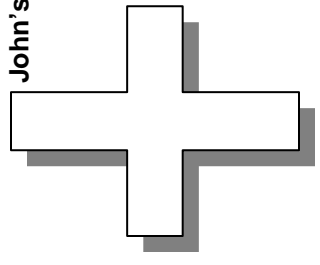
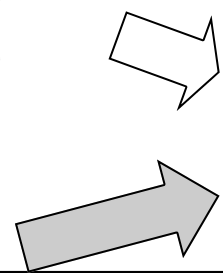
THE BAPTISM OF JOHN VS. THE BAPTISM INTO CHRIST

***Day Of
Pentecost***

John's Baptism
Begins

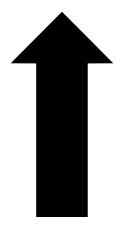
Jesus Is Baptized
Jesus' Ministry Begins

John's Baptism Ends Jesus' Baptism Begins



3 1/2 Years

53 Days



Baptism Into Jesus
Still Continues Today

BAPTISM

‘FINDING THE ONE BAPTISM’

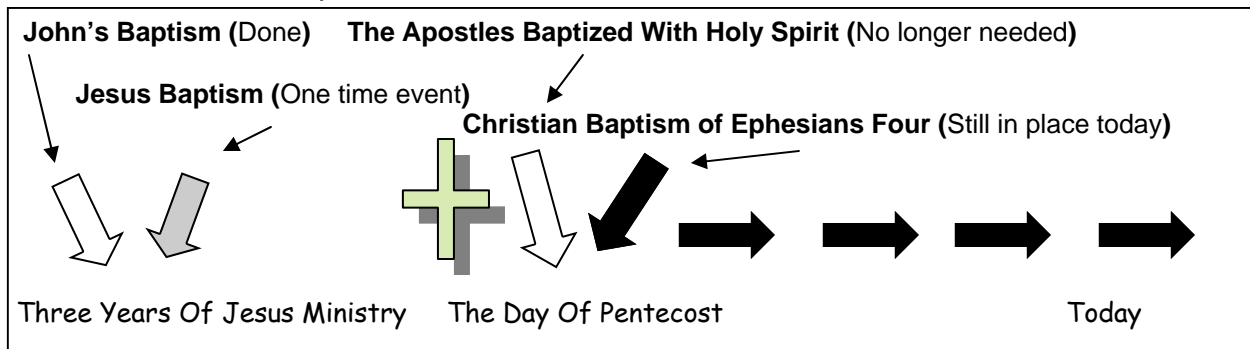
Eph 4:4-6

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

NKJV

The Bible here clearly teaches that there is only one baptism. Yet when we study our Bibles, we start to discover more than one baptism. There was the baptism of John (**Mk 1:4**). Jesus was baptized (**Matt 3:13-17**). The apostles were also told that they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit (**Acts 1:5**). There is also the believers baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (**Acts 2:38**). How can we have just one baptism in view of this? Good question! The only way to make any sense of this is to view this subject chronologically.

By the time the book of Ephesians had been written, all these other baptisms had served their purposes and were no longer needed. The only baptism that remained, was Christian baptism into Christ for the forgiveness of sins (**Acts 2:38**). Hopefully this time line chart will help.



Let's talk about our world today. Is the one baptism that we read about in our New Testament being taught today, or are there others? Unfortunately there are more. Since God through His Word only says there is one, that means that anything else being taught today is not baptism. I will discuss the three main baptisms taught in our world today. I will illustrate this in three charts **pages 138, 139 & 140**.

What I am asking each of us who believes that they have been baptized in the past, to read these charts carefully. Find that baptism that most describes the baptism you had. Then match that baptism up with the Bible. If the baptism you received did not match up, then ask yourself if you had the one baptism taught in our New Testament. If not, don't you think you should be baptized for the right reasons? According to God's word, **it makes a difference (Eph 4:5)!**

WHICH BAPTISM DID YOU RECEIVE?

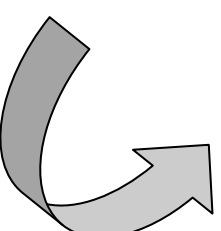
1

Baptized as a baby → Sins forgiven, saved, child of God,
in Christ, in God's kingdom,
By sprinkling of water → receive the Holy Spirit, God's possession

Under this baptism the baby being baptized has no faith. Yet baptism is always done through the faith of the one being baptized (**Mk 16:16, Gal 3:26-27, Col 2:12**). A baby can not be taught about God, yet before one can have faith, he must be taught (**Rom 10:17**). Baptism is for spiritually dead people due to sin, yet the baby has no sin to be washed away **See chapter three 'Understanding How Sin Works'**. A baby can not repent and turn to God, yet one must repent prior to being baptized (**Acts 2:38**). After one is baptized, they are raised to walk a new life (**Rom 6:4**). This is impossible for a baby! Sprinkling or pouring is not the N/T way to baptize **See chapter six 'Word Study On Baptism'**, yet this is how babies are baptized today. Baptism is a burial in water, it means to immerse (**Rom 6:3-4 & Col 2:12**).

Is this the one baptism of **Eph 4:5**? Is this the baptism that the Bible teaches?

NO!



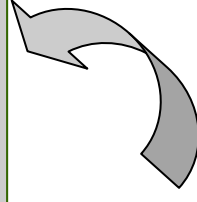
Is this the baptism you received? If so, you need to be baptized the biblical way.

2

WHICH BAPTISM DID YOU RECEIVE?

You were taught You believed Prayed 'the sinners prayer' Accepted Jesus as personal Savior	→	Sins washed away, saved, child of God, received H/S, raised to walk a new life, in God's kingdom, in Christ	→	Days, weeks, months later you were baptized buried in water as an outward sign of an inward grace
---	---	--	---	---

Under this baptism, you were not baptized to have your sins washed away, because you thought your sins were already taken away when you prayed the prayer. Biblically, a person's sins are not washed away until he is baptized (**Acts 2:38, 22:16, Col 2:12-13**) You were not baptized into Christ under this baptism, because when you prayed, you thought you entered into Christ. Yet the Bible teaches a person is not in Christ until they are baptized (**Gal 3:27 & Matt 28:19**). You were not raised to walk a new life under this baptism, because you thought you were already walking a new life after praying the prayer. **Rom 6:4** teaches it's not until one is baptized, that one starts to walk a new life, not before. Where does the Bible teach that baptism is a sign of a person being a Christian? Only the Holy Spirit is referred to as the seal or sign of God's possession (**Eph 1:13-14**). It is only after one is baptized that one receives the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38, 5:32**). Under this baptism, you are burying a person thought to be alive (saved) not a dead one (lost). Yet the Bible teaches that one is dead prior to baptism (**Rom 6:4, Col 2:12-13, I Cor 15:29**). Only dead people are baptized '**buried**'!



Is this the one baptism that is taught in **Eph 4:5**? Is this the baptism the Bible teaches? **NO!**

Is this the baptism you received? If so, you need to be baptized the biblical way!!!

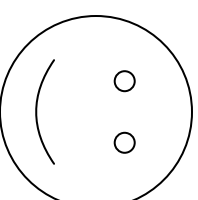
WHICH BAPTISM DID YOU RECEIVE?

3

You were taught
You believed
You confessed Christ
You repented
You were **baptized** Immediately
Immersed in water



Your sins were washed away (**Acts 22:16**)
Having a clear conscience before God (**I Peter 3:21**)
Raised to walk a new life (**Rom 6:4**),
Died To Sin (**Rom 6:2-6**),
Now in the possession of the God Head (**Matt 28:19**)
Clothed with Christ (**Gal 3:27**)
Saved from your sin (**I Peter 3:21 & Mark 16:16**)
Received the Holy Spirit (**Acts 2:38**)
Called on His name (**Acts 2:21-47, 22:16**)
Added to the church (His body) (**Acts 2:41, 47**)



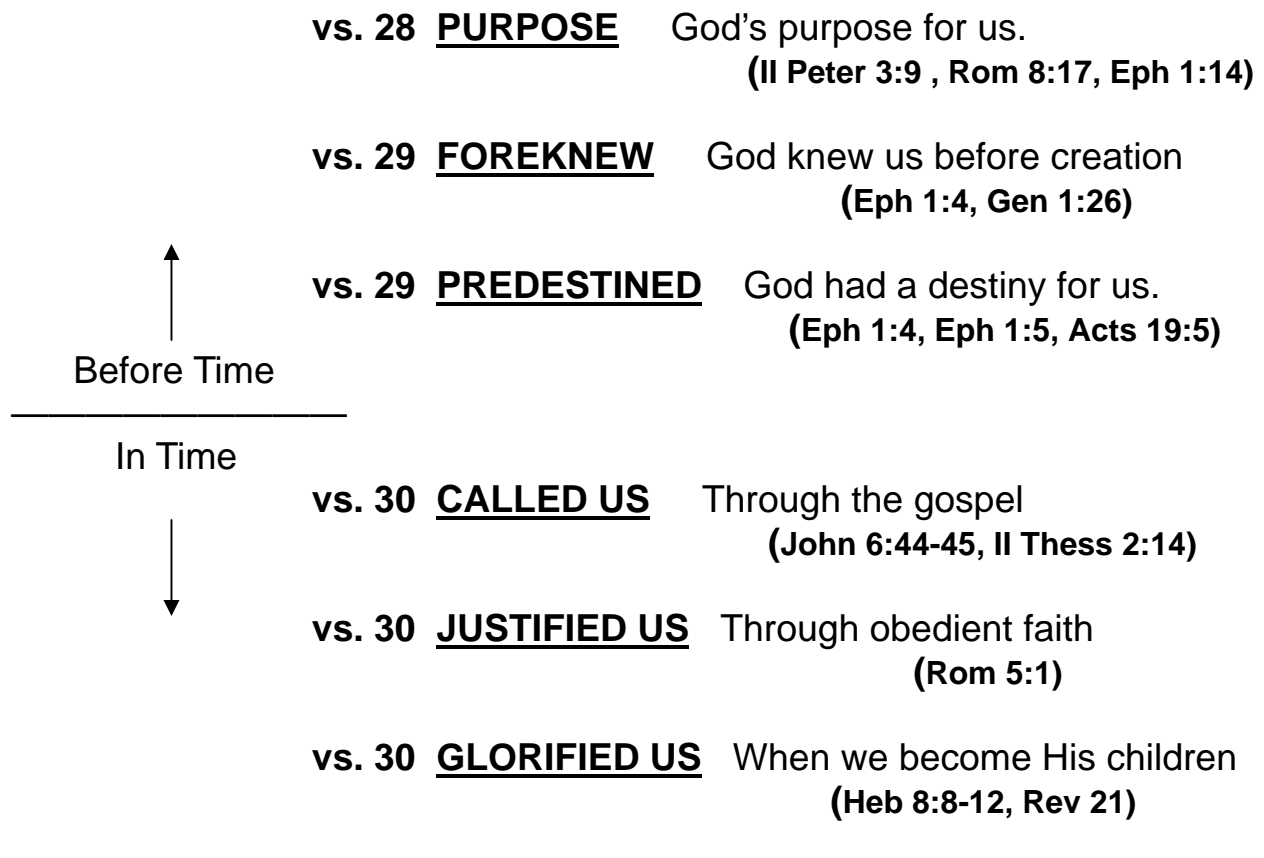
Is this the one baptism that **Eph 4:5** is referring to? Is this the baptism the Bible teaches? **YES!**

Is this the baptism you received? If not, you need to be baptized the biblical way.

HOW DID GOD PREDESTINE US?

Rom 8:28-30

28 And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. NIV



All Based On Our Response Toward God

vs. 28 Those Who LOVE Him We love Him by obeying Him
(I John 2:5)

- ~ We make the choice to love Him
- ~ God will not violate that choice

I want to thank my good friend Gerald Paden for teaching me this.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD

WHEN, WHERE & HOW CAN I BE A PART OF IT?

None of us want to fail to be a part of God's kingdom. Unfortunately there is some confusion on when, where and how a person gets into it. Some people today believe that Jesus will return to this earth someday and set up His kingdom; returning to Jerusalem and reigning from the resurrected temple from Old Testament times. This reign is believed to last 1,000 years. Some of these same people believe that when Jesus returns, He will bring with Him all the people that have ever died, allowing them one last chance to choose to follow Him or not.

Since this subject has to do with our salvation, I believe that it is important to understand the truth about it. Let's see what the Bible says about God's kingdom, it's arrival and our access into it ...

When we think about the prophecies found in the Bible, Jesus most often comes to mind; His virgin birth, His death, His resurrection, and His return to take us to heaven. Yet one major prophecy that is overlooked by many today has to do with Jesus' kingdom. In the book of Daniel. Daniel is in the nation of Babylon during the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar. This King had a dream that bothered him so much that he needed someone to interpret it for him. So he turned to his aides but no one could tell him the dream and its meaning. Daniel, one of the Jewish captors, told the king that God had given him the ability to tell him the dream and its meaning. Here is that dream ...

THE KINGDOM FORETOLD

Dan 2:31-35

31 "You, O king, were watching; and behold, a great image! This great image, whose splendor was excellent, stood before you; and its form was awesome. **32** This image's head was of fine gold, its chest and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, **33** its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. **34** You watched while a stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces. **35** Then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold were crushed together, and became like chaff from the summer threshing floors; the wind carried them away so that no trace of them was found. And the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. NKJV

What the king saw in his dream was a great statue, it was made up of four distinct parts. The first was a **head of gold**, the second a **chest and arms of silver**, the

third a **belly and thighs of bronze** and the fourth part was **legs of iron and feet of iron and baked clay**. Then along comes a rock that is not cut out by human hands, indicating that this is something spiritual. This rock smashes the statue to pieces. Then this rock grows into a great mountain and fills the whole earth. That is the dream. Here is its interpretation ...

Dan 2:37-40

37 You, O king, are a king of kings. For the God of heaven has given you a kingdom, power, strength, and glory; **38** and wherever the children of men dwell, or the beasts of the field and the birds of the heaven, He has given them into your hand, and has made you ruler over them all — you are this head of gold. **39** But after you shall arise another kingdom inferior to yours; then another, a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. **40** And the fourth kingdom shall be as strong as iron, inasmuch as iron breaks in pieces and shatters everything; and like iron that crushes, that kingdom will break in pieces and crush all the others. NKJV

This is where history comes in. During the time of King Nebuchadnezzar, Babylon was the major ruling power of its time. The Bible says that the head of gold is Babylon, the first kingdom. After Babylon came another nation that devoured Babylon, the Medo-Persian empire. This is the second kingdom in the dream, the chest & arms of silver. After the Medes and Persians came, the Grecian empire was established, being ruled by Alexander the Great. The Grecians took over a lot of the known world at that time. This is the belly and thighs of bronze, the third kingdom. Then comes the fourth kingdom, Rome. Rome took over everything. This is the legs of iron and feet of iron and baked clay. You can pick up any history book and you would see that these four major kingdoms reigned one after the other, all starting with Babylon in the late seventh century B.C. Why did the king have this dream? What is the importance of this being in God's word? I am glad you asked. This will bring us to the heart of the story.

The fourth kingdom (Rome)

Dan 2:44-45

44 And in the days of these kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. **45** Inasmuch as you saw that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold — the great God has made known to the king what will come to pass after this. The dream is certain, and its interpretation is sure."

NKJV

When we reach the **fourth Kingdom**, which is **Rome**, God says during the time of **their kings** (Roman Caesars), God will set up a Kingdom that will never be destroyed. Think about this; every kingdom that has ever been on this earth has come to an end! Where is the great Egypt of the past? The British empire that ruled much of the world including our very own country? The Third Reich of Hitler and its supposed

1,000 year reign? What about the Assyrian, Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman empires of Bible times? They are all gone! Every kingdom on this earth eventually comes to an end; but not so with the kingdom foretold about in the book of Daniel. **This kingdom will never come to an end!** In fact, it will grow into a great mountain and fill the entire earth. Now don't forget when it will happen, according to Daniel! It will be established during the fourth kingdom, during the time of the kings of that fourth kingdom which is the Roman empire. That is the prophecy. Now let's look to see if we can't find its fulfillment ...

PROPHECY FULFILLED

We are going to skip about 600 years forward from Daniel's prophecy, to the time of our New Testament and come to about the year 4 B.C. This so happens to be the time of the Roman empire and the time of its kings ...

Luke 2:1-2

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. [2] This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.
ESV

Caesar Augustus was an emperor of the Roman Empire. If you read the rest of Luke chapter two, you will discover that Luke is telling us about the birth of Jesus. Jesus was born during that fourth kingdom that Daniel foretold about, the kingdom of Rome. Now let's look at what Jesus tells us that He will build during this time ...

Matthew 16:16-19

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock **I will build my church**, and **the gates of hell shall not prevail against it**. [19] **I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven**, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
ESV

Jesus tells Peter here that He will build His church. In the next verse Jesus tells Peter that He will give him the keys to the kingdom of heaven. Notice that the church and the kingdom are side by side in these verses. The question is, when will this church / kingdom be established? Jesus is about to tell us ...

Mark 9:1

And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they **see the kingdom of God after it has come with power**."
ESV

Jesus is talking with His apostles / disciples. He tells them that some of them will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power. This means that the kingdom will come during the apostle's lifetime. When did the apostles live? During the Roman empire, the fourth kingdom of Daniel. Daniel foretold about this kingdom and now Jesus is fulfilling that prophecy by telling us that He will be the one that sets up that kingdom which will never end. Remember that, Judas the apostle, will never see that kingdom come with power. Judas will hang himself before its establishment (**Matt 27:5**).

Remember how Peter was given the keys to the kingdom of heaven (**Matt 16:19**)? What do you do with keys? You open things, right? Peter has the keys to the kingdom. Watch for the power; the keys to open that door and the people walking through that door and into the kingdom ...

THE POWER

The apostles

Acts 2:1-4

When the day of Pentecost arrived, they were all together in one place. **2** And suddenly there came from heaven a sound like a mighty rushing wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. **3** And divided tongues as of fire appeared to them and rested on each one of them. **4** And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance.

ESV

THE KEYS

Peter has the keys

Acts 2:38-39

38 And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. **39** For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

ESV

STEPPING THROUGH THE DOOR

Acts 2:41

41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.

ESV

Acts 2:47

47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

NKJV

Did you see all the things that Jesus predicted about His church / kingdom being fulfilled in Acts chapter two? Peter turned the key and opened the door to the kingdom when he told the people to repent and be baptized into Jesus. When they responded with an obedient faith, the Lord added them to His church / His kingdom. When was this kingdom established? During the time of the kings of the Roman empire, just like the book of Daniel told us it would. The kingdom of God has already been made available to us and the people of Acts chapter two were added to it by God! Here is more proof that access into God's kingdom is already here ...

Heb 12:22-24

22 But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, 23 to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

NIV

The verses above are written in the present perfect tense. This means that when the writer of the book of Hebrews wrote these verses, these Christians were already a part of where God reigns. This fulfills the prophecy's of Daniel, which we saw earlier. The church, the kingdom of Christ, mount Zion, the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God, and the new Jerusalem are all descriptions of where God reigns and His people dwell. If you are in Jesus, you are where He dwells! Can you see that this is not something that is in the future? The Bible is very plain in telling us that God's Kingdom and access into it is already here. **Every person living today can get into the Lord's kingdom and have full citizenship now!**

WHERE DOES THIS KIND OF THINKING COME FROM?

Before we end this study, I believe it is important to address where this idea of an earthly kingdom comes from. Most of this thinking comes from a misunderstanding of Revelation chapter twenty and an overall view of the book as a whole. If there was ever a book of the Bible that has been taken out of context, it has to be the book of Revelation. Most of the problem comes from people trying to read the book with 21st century thinking instead of first century thinking. The book was written by the apostle John while he was being persecuted on the prison island of Patmos (**Rev 1:9**). The book is written to the seven churches of Asia, who are also being persecuted under Roman rule (**Rev 1:4, 9**). God is warning these churches that things are going to get worse (**Rev 2:10**), but at the same time he wants to encourage them to stay faithful and that He will one day destroy their enemy (**Rev 18 & 19**). To make sure that this letter gets to them safely, John has to write in a code in a sense; one that the Christians of the first century would have understood. God uses colors, animals and numbers to illustrate His message. A book written figuratively, not literally.

That brings us to Revelation chapter twenty. In chapter twenty, God states that Satan would be bound for 1,000 years (**Rev 20:2**). A little further down this chapter He tells His readers that those who had been beheaded for the testimony for Jesus came back to life and reigned with Jesus for 1,000 years (**Rev 20:4**).

The key to understanding this 1,000 years is to look how God uses numbers throughout the Bible to convey His message to man. Let us look at how He uses the number 1,000 ... God tells us that He owns cattle on a thousand hills (**Ps 50:10**). He also tells us that He keeps His covenant and loving kindness to those that love and obey Him for a thousand generations (**Deut 7:9**). God gave His commandments to a thousand generations (**I Chron 16:15, Ps 105:8**). Then we see a picture of God's mounted troops (probably angels) carrying out His wrath on Rome and those that follow the beast numbering 'twice ten thousand times ten thousand' (**Rev 9:16**). Do you see a pattern here? In all cases we see the number 1,000 meaning bigness, completeness and totality. When dealing with the cattle, God says I own them all! When dealing with His blessing to man, God says my faithfulness has no limits!. When dealing with His judgment on Rome and those that do not follow Him, God says it's total and complete!

Now back to Revelation chapter twenty. Satan has been using Rome and their false worship of their gods and Caesar's to persecute the seven churches of Asia. In Revelation chapter eighteen, Rome has been destroyed. Then in chapter twenty, the 1,000 year binding of Satan means that he has been **completely bound in his use of Rome and their false religion**. When dealing with the saints that have been killed because of their faithfulness to God, they will reign with God for 1,000 years. This speaks of **their perfect and total victory and triumph**. As Jim McGuiggan states 'the 1,000 years does not speak of a period of time at all'. It speaks of a state of affairs, a condition of things. This is plain if we stay with the context of the book of Revelation.

To get the idea that Jesus is going to return to this earth someday and reign for a 1,000 years from the city of Jerusalem and resurrect the temple and it's sacrificial system is to totally leave the context of the book of Revelation!!! As we have seen, God's kingdom and access into it was established on the day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two (**A.D. 29**). The question is this, 'are you a part of it?'

Rev 22:14-15

14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates.

ESV

The Kingdom of God is accessible now! Don't pass up the opportunity that the Lord has given you to be saved and enter His possession so that when this life is over we can live with God eternally in Heaven! You only get one chance, this life!

May God bless you!

CHAPTER EIGHT

HOW ONE STAYS A CHRISTIAN

Salvation: **'Can A Christian Lose It?'** 151

Love: **'God Commanded It'** 155

Worship: **'Is It Just For Sunday's?'** 157

Keep Walking: **'The Book of 1st John'** 159

Suffering: **'Can Anything Good Come From It?'**
163

SALVATION

'CAN A CHRISTIAN LOSE IT?'

Now that you have become a Christian, you want to make sure that you stay in that saved state with God. In our world today some teach or believe that once you become saved, you can never lose that standing with God. There is a lot said on this matter of losing one's salvation in our Bible, but we will only look at two books of the Bible to make the point - the book of Hebrews and the book of Revelation ...

When I do a study of any book in the Bible, I always look for what I would call '**purpose statements**.' These will tell us why the letter that we are studying was written. The book of Hebrews has several of these '**purpose statements**' within its pages ...

Hebrews 2:1

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

ESV

Hebrews 3:6

6 but Christ was faithful as a Son over His house -- whose house we are, if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end.

NASU

Hebrews 3:12

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.

ESV

Hebrews 4:1

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

ESV

Hebrews 4:14

14 Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

NIV

Hebrews 6:11-12

And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, [12] so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

ESV

Hebrews 10:25

not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

ESV

Hebrews 10:35-39

Therefore do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. [36] For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised. [37] For,

"Yet a little while,
and the coming one will come and will not delay;
[38] but my righteous one shall live by faith,
and if he shrinks back,
my soul has no pleasure in him."

[39] But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and preserve their souls.

ESV

Hebrews 11:13

13 All these people were still living by faith when they died. They did not receive the things promised; they only saw them and welcomed them from a distance. And they admitted that they were aliens and strangers on earth.

NIV

Hebrews 12:2-3

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

[3] Consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted.

ESV

Hebrews 12:25

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him

who warns from heaven.

ESV

Hebrews 13:9

Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them.
ESV

This letter was written to Christians. Can you see what can happen to a Christian? They can lose their salvation and this letter of Hebrews gives strong warning to that danger!

Jesus defeated Satan on the cross. What we need to understand is that Satan, even though defeated, has not been destroyed, at least not yet. He is like a dog on a chain. He has his limits set by God. Yet he still has a mean bark! That bark is temptation and the temptation that I see Satan use again and again is the temptation to leave Jesus and His church. Please don't ever think that Satan will stop using that temptation against God's children. That is why we must remain faithful to Jesus and never leave His protection. This is clearly stated to the 'Seven Churches of Asia', in the book of Revelation ...

Rev. 2:7

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.'

ESV

Rev. 2:10-11

Do not fear what you are about to suffer. Behold, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and for ten days you will have tribulation. Be faithful unto death, and I will give you the crown of life. [11] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. The one who conquers will not be hurt by the second death.'

ESV

Rev. 2:17

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will give some of the hidden manna, and I will give him a white stone, with a new name written on the stone that no one knows except the one who receives it.'

ESV

Rev. 2:26

The one who conquers and who keeps my works until the end, to him I will give authority over the nations, ESV

Rev. 3:5-6

The one who conquers will be clothed thus in white garments, and I will never blot his name out of the book of life. I will confess his name before my Father and before his angels. [6] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

ESV

Rev. 3:11-13

I am coming soon. Hold fast what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. [12] The one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple of my God. Never shall he go out of it, and I will write on him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. [13] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.'

ESV

Rev. 3:21-22

The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. [22] He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.' "

ESV

Then John wraps up the book with this ...

Rev. 21:7-8

The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son. [8] But as for the cowardly, the faithless, the detestable, as for murderers, the sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars, their portion will be in the lake that burns with fire and sulfur, which is the second death."

ESV

Did you see in vs. 8 what kind of people do not make it to heaven? The first one on the list is the '**cowardly**'! If you leave Jesus and His church, God sees that as being a coward! God is not asking us to be perfect, all He asks us is not to give up! Please do not let Satan convince you to leave Jesus. If we leave Jesus, there is nothing left to save us from our sins. Without Jesus, we are on our own!

Please do not ever make the mistake of trying to go it on your own! If we show up on judgment day without Jesus and His saving Grace, we are doomed!

LOVE

'THE KIND GOD COMMANDED'

Matthew 22:37-40

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. [38] This is the great and first commandment. [39] And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. [40] On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

ESV

These two commands are said to be the greatest commands that are given by God for man to keep. This is not just a New Testament principle, but it goes back to the Law of Moses (**Lev 19:18, Deut 6:5**).

When coming to our New Testament, Jesus steps up that command with this addition ...

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

ESV

You may be asking yourself, "what is the addition?" What makes what Jesus said in Matthew any different from what He said in John? We need to understand that God has always desired for man to love God with all that we have inside of us and then for us to show that love to those around us. This desire has never changed with God since creation. The problem is that man uses the wrong kind of love in trying to accomplish this. There are about four different ways to define the word love in the Greek New Testament. Without getting too deep in the definitions, let's just look at two basic ways to love. One is based on feelings and emotions and the other is based on a decision of the will. One way to love is based on merit and the other way is based on something that we decide from the heart and mind.

It's easy to love someone you like, someone that has a personality like yours, a person that does things that make you happy or feel good inside. This is what is known as a 'feelings love' or an 'emotional love.' This kind of love is never commanded by God for us to have or show to others. The kind of love that God commands us to have is the same kind of love that God has for us and that is the point that Jesus is trying to make!

John 13:34-35

A new commandment I give to you, that you **love one another: just as I have loved you**, you also are to love one another. [35] By this all people will know that you are my disciples, **if you have love for one another.**"

ESV

We are commanded to love God and those around us like Jesus loves us. Here are two good examples of how God loves us. You may know one of them! ...

John 3:16

"For **God so loved the world**, that **he gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

ESV

Romans 5:8

but **God shows his love for us** in that **while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**

ESV

This kind of love is not based on merit or the good things that we do for God. God loves us when we are doing bad things, sinning and breaking our Father's heart. King David says it well ... "Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight (**Ps 51:4**) ESV. When we sin, we sin against God. Yet while we are doing these things against God, He loves us anyway! We are not making God feel good inside by our sinful actions. Yet despite that fact, God loves us! It was a decision of the will. God chose to love us and gave Himself up for us based, not on the good things we do for Him, but on the wonderful love He has for us. Man usually does not love this way. Yet God commands it!

What will keep me faithful as a Christian? So many Christians tell me that they do not feel like going to church and worshipping God. They may say things like, "I can't forgive that person who hurt me so badly." Yet God commands us to love beyond our feelings, beyond what others are doing to us and beyond our circumstances in life! Loving God only when everything in our lives is going great is not the love God is commanding here! Christians walk away from God for all kinds of reasons. Yet when they do, they are failing to love God. God stayed in there for us through all of our sins. Jesus looked down from the cross as He watched them gambling for His clothes, hurling insults at Him and caring less that He was dying for them! If Jesus would have had a feeling-based love for them at that moment, He would have called the angels and this world would have been lost forever. Because Jesus sacrificed for us, He has the right to demand that we sacrifice ourselves for Him.

Will you love God the way He loves you?

Your decision will determine where you spend eternity!

WORSHIP

'IS IT JUST FOR SUNDAYS?'

For any Christian trying to live a life pleasing to God, it is important to understand our obligations towards our Lord and to know and understand what He expects from us. One of the ways to know what pleases God, is found in the understanding of the word 'worship.' There are about five different words used in our New Testament for worship. We will only look at the two main words in the Greek used for this word . . .

1) Proskuneo - In The Greek

This word is mainly used as a **specific 'act' of worship**. For example, when we pray, sing, give, and eat of the Lord's Supper on a Sunday morning as the body of Christ, these are acts of worship. The word here means to 'kiss towards'. Every time we do a specific act of worship to the Lord, it is as though we are giving Him a kiss of affection. This shows that our worship together on a Sunday towards God should be serious and filled with our love for Him! **For more detail on this word, see chapter nine on 'The church' and specifically its worship.**

2) Latreuo - In The Greek

As important as it is for us to worship the Lord as a unified body of believers on a Sunday, it is just as important to understand that our obligation towards God does not end there. That is where this second word for worship comes in. This word is mainly used as a **life of 'service' towards God**. It is worship that is lived out twenty-four hours a day. This is the kind of worship that we really need to get a hold of in this study!

EXAMPLES IN SCRIPTURE

Romans 12:1-2

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to **present your bodies as a living sacrifice**, holy and acceptable to God, which is your **spiritual worship**. [2] Do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. ESV

Romans chapter six tells us that as soon as we are baptized into Christ, 'we were raised to walk a new life.' Here in Romans chapter twelve we see that we are to be a '**living sacrifice**' toward God. Our minds are to be transformed into a spiritual way of thinking and to be holy and pleasing to our Father.

The Bible calls this ‘**spiritual worship.**’ This shows that we as Christians are always in a state of worship or service towards God! The way that we live out our everyday lives should be pleasing to God, such as how we treat others, our view towards sin, how we love our children, time spent in prayer and study, and our devotion to reaching lost souls for Jesus. This is a life lived in spiritual service toward our Lord.

Let’s look at a beautiful picture of the church. Watch how these new Christians live their lives for God. A changed life ...

Acts 2:42-47

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. [43] And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. [44] And all who believed were together and had all things in common. [45] And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. [46] And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, [47] praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.

ESV

That is a beautiful picture of what a true Christian’s life should look like! **May we all strive as Christians to be a changed people for God, all to His glory!**

There is one more section of scripture that I would like us to see. The word worship is not used here, but service and sacrifice is ...

Hebrews 13:15-16

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. [16] Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

ESV

The worship that God demands of each Christian is two-fold. The worship that we give God on a Sunday: prayers, singing, communion, giving, and study as a body of believers unified together, and the spiritual service of worship that we live out twenty-four hours a day. Both are commanded by God! God wants all of us, and that is what we must honor Him with. My prayer is that every Christian understand what God expects from them, a life lived in “**spiritual service towards God!**”

May we all as Christians live the way that Jesus expects us to!

KEEP WALKING

‘THE BOOK OF 1st JOHN’

The purpose of this chapter is to help a Christian stay in a saved relationship with Jesus. The book of 1 John is one of the best books in the New Testament to help Christians in this area.

It's important to understand that the book of 1 John is written exclusively to Christians (**2:1,7, 18, 28, 3:1-2,10, 18, 21, 4:1, 4, 7, 11, 5:13**). The way that this book comes across to me is like a rollercoaster. John will take a Christian down in a sense, then bring him up high and repeat that process again and again throughout the book. But when the ride ends, you look back and understand how it all balances out in a very encouraging way. Let's take that ride and see where God leads us! ...

1 John 1:5-6

This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that *God is light, and in him is no darkness at all. [6] If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth.*

ESV

How does that sound to a Christian? There is no darkness in Jesus, none! Yet if I claim to have fellowship with Jesus, but walk in darkness, I am lying to myself! If any Christian is honest with themselves, they know that they still sin. They know that they still make mistakes. Does that mean that we're done and we are just lying to ourselves? Have we lost our fellowship with Jesus? This is what I meant about this book being like a rollercoaster in a sense. We are in a low spot at this point. But don't stop, we are about to go upwards!

1 John 1:7

But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

ESV

At first glance, it may sound like we are still at the bottom. Do any of us walk as Jesus walked? Jesus was sinless. Are we sinless? So maybe we don't have fellowship with God, because we still mess up as Christians! Let's look at these verses again. In the Greek, the concept of **a continual cleansing** is what the text is saying here. Now I have a question for you. 'How can the blood of Jesus continually cleanse us if there is nothing to continually cleanse us of?' The point is this, the only way that Jesus can continually cleanse us is because we are continuing to sin, sinning as a Christian. If you do not believe that, then please read the next verse ...

1 John 1:8

If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

ESV

Remember that John is writing to Christians. The key to **vs. 7** is that we continue to walk! As long as you keep walking (walking in the direction of God), Jesus will continually wash our sins away! Just don't stop walking. Faith is an action word and has to be alive. It must keep moving to stay in existence! Now we are at a high point on that rollercoaster! Let's see how we keep that faith actively walking ...

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and **to cleanse us from all unrighteousness**.

ESV

Continuing to walk with Jesus must be accompanied with a high dose of humility. As Christians we must never become arrogant and forget about our sinfulness. We must always be checking ourselves with the holy word of God. If we do, we will always see our frailness and failures. Thus, we will always be admitting to ourselves, those around us, and to our God that we still sin. As long as we continue to admit or confess our sins, God calls that 'walking in the light.' If we are walking in the light with this honest humility towards God, then we have fellowship with God and our sins are continuously being cleansed! You can't get any higher on the rollercoaster than that!!! But John isn't done with us, the ride is not complete! ...

1 John 3:7-9

7 Dear children, do not let anyone lead you astray. He who does what is right is righteous, just as he is righteous. 8 **He who does what is sinful is of the devil**, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. 9 **No one who is born of God will continue to sin**, because God's seed remains in him; **he cannot go on sinning**, because he has been born of God.

NIV

It sounds like we are taking the rollercoaster ride back down the hill again, but this is not John's intent here. It's just the way we are reading it! When reading these verses in most translations of the Bible, it sounds that if a Christian continues to sin, they have no part with God. The NAS, NASU & ESV versions of the Bible, better translate these verses. See if you can't catch the difference!

1 John 3:7-9

Little children, let no one deceive you. Whoever practices righteousness is righteous, as he is righteous. [8] **Whoever makes a practice of sinning is of the devil**, for the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil. [9] No one born of God **makes a practice of sinning**, for

God's seed abides in him, and he cannot keep on sinning because he has been born of God.

ESV

Did you catch the difference? The difference is '**continuing to sin**' vs. '**practicing sin.**' All Christians continue to sin. We saw that in chapter one! But John is clear here that if it is a Christian's practice to sin, then that person is not a part of God. He has neither seen Him nor has he known Him. Is it our intent as Christians to sin? Do we have an attitude to do anything we want? If we do, then we are not in fellowship with God! Again the Christian must have the attitude to rid his life of sin as much as possible! We should not go looking for sin! Sin should be the last thing that we want to do as a child of God!

Now, let's jump to the last chapter of the book and see how John will bring it all together!

1 John 5:16-17

If anyone sees his brother committing a sin not leading to death, he shall ask, and God will give him life—to those who commit sins that do not lead to death. There is sin that leads to death; I do not say that one should pray for that. [17] All wrongdoing is sin, but there is sin that does not lead to death.

ESV

This book is written to Christians, thus you have two Christians sinning here. One Christian sins and his sin does not lead to death. The other Christian sins and his sin does lead to death. One Christian sinner will be forgiven and the other Christian sinner will not be forgiven! What is the difference? One Christian sins while walking in the light and the other Christian sins while walking out of the light. One Christian is trying to live for Jesus and the other Christian does not care what he does. One Christian practices sin and the other occasionally slips up. We need to understand that sin can only go two places when we commit them. They can either go on Jesus' account or they can go on our account. If they go on Jesus' account, then my sins are paid in full! If they go on my account, I am spiritually dead! I have no hope! A baptized believer in Christ or not, if I do not have Jesus to take away my sins, I am lost, and separated from God. So the key to the book of first John is this, '**KEEP WALKING WITH JESUS!**' Don't ever leave Him as a Christian! If by chance you, as a Christian, have fallen away, all you have to do is walk back to Jesus in repentance and then keep faithfully walking with Him the rest of the days of your life!

Isn't it refreshing to know that we don't have to be perfect! All we have to do is stay close to Jesus' side with an obedient, repentant, humble faith and God will take care of the rest!



THAT IS THE GREATEST NEWS ON THE PLANET!



SUFFERING

‘CAN ANYTHING GOOD COME FROM IT?’

Why do we suffer? Every human has asked that question from the beginning of time. The question even gets harder in view of an Almighty God! If there is a God, then why does He allow man to suffer like He does? The question gets even deeper when asked about Christians. Why would God allow His very own children to suffer? It's not easy to answer. In fact I don't even know if we will ever know the real answer to these questions this side of heaven! Yet because so many are asking questions like these, I'll do my best, in view of the Bible, to give a response!

WHEN DID SUFFERING START?

Suffering shows up for the first time in the Garden of Eden. It is not until after Adam & Eve broke God's law (sin), that we see the first signs of suffering.

An increase of pain in child bearing (**Gen 3:16**)

Possible struggle between man & woman (**Gen 3:12 and 16**)

The ground is cursed (**Gen 3:17**)

Sweat and pain caused from hard work (**Gen 3:17-19**)

People will eventually die (**Gen 3:19**)

When sin was ushered into this world, it brought the consequences of suffering with it. The best that I can tell, before sin came along, suffering did not exist on this earth. Unfortunately, we are born into a world drenched in sin and because of that we can not escape the grips of pain and suffering. Sin always produces bad consequences. If it didn't we might fall in love with it too much!

STORIES OF SUFFERING IN THE BIBLE

One of the things that you will discover about the Bible is that it tells it like it is about the people that are written within it. Nothing is hidden or prettied up. God is up front with their failures, mistakes, sin, and even their pain. When dealing with suffering, not even Jesus could escape it. Let's look at some examples of suffering within the pages of the Bible ...

We can't talk about pain without bringing up a man named Job. Job was known as a man who feared God and shunned evil (**Job 1:1**). Satan shows up on the scene and tells God that the only reason that Job serves you, is because you have

protected him so well. Satan is convinced that if God was to strike down Job and the things that mean the most to him, that Job would no longer serve God. So God gives Satan permission to cause Job some problems! Job's oxen and donkeys were carried off by raiders and his servants that cared for them were killed (**Job 1:13-15**). Next, fire fell from the sky and burned up all of Job's sheep and those taking care of them (**Job 1:16**). Then raiders took away all of Job's camels and killed the servants that watched over them (**Job 1:17**). If that were not enough, all of Job's children were killed due to a mighty wind collapsing the house that they were meeting in (**Job 1:18-19**). Job then broke out with great sores all over his body (**Job 2:7-8**). A man of God greatly suffered!

The Lord's prophet, Jeremiah, after doing all that God had asked him to do was beaten and put into stocks in the temple courts (**Jer 20**). After years of persecution, he was beaten again and thrown into a dungeon in a hole under a man's house and left there for a long time (**Jer 37**). Shortly after that, he was placed into a muddy cistern in the court of the guard and left there to die (**Jer 38**). God's prophet is suffering!

Another example of suffering is found with the early church. One of the best evangelists and preachers of the church was stoned to death (**Acts 7:57-60**). Then such a great persecution broke out against the church that all the Christians had to flee Jerusalem for their lives (**Acts 8:1-3**). Not long after, the apostle James had his head cut off by King Herod (**Acts 12:1-2**). Other Christians were imprisoned, while some were killed! The Lord's church was suffering!

Even Jesus prior to going to the cross, sat all alone in the garden because His apostles could not stay awake with Him. Jesus knew that in a few short hours, all the world would be against Him, including one of His own (Judas). His apostles would all abandon Him in His weakest moment. He would be beaten, spit upon, flogged, ridiculed, hated, crucified, and then have His side torn with a spear. Jesus asked His Father why (**Matt 27:46**)? Even the Son of God suffered!

WHY DO GOD'S FAITHFUL SUFFER?

I can almost understand why the ungodly suffer. Sin is a powerful negative in our world and it carries with it a lot of painful results! But what about Christians? Why do God's people suffer?

Isaiah 55:8-11

For my thoughts are not your thoughts,
neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord.

[9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
so are my ways higher than your ways
and my thoughts than your thoughts.

[10] "For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven

and do not return there but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
[11] so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.

ESV

God's ways are not ours, and our thoughts are not His! God has a plan and a purpose for us. He wants some things achieved so that His purpose can be reached! Here is what He wants accomplished in our lives ...

James 1:2-4

Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, [3] for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. [4] And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

ESV

God wants His children to become mature and complete! How is that achieved? **Through trials and the testing of our faith!** God says there is no way around it, it just has to work that way. Yet how can God expect us to have joy in the midst of our painful trials? The best way that I can explain it is that joy does not come at the beginning, but it comes as a result of our trials. A mother's face is not filled with joy during the pain of childbirth. But when the finished product is in her arms, despite all the struggle and pain, nothing but joy comes to her face as she looks into the eyes of that beautiful baby!

Through pain of suffering, there is a growth that takes place that can not be achieved in any other way. The things that we learn along the path of these trials can not be achieved if we are surrounded by lollypops and fuzzy little puppy dogs running through our hair all day long. Trials, suffering, and pain produce faith, hope, and trust. Suffering, pain, and struggles are God's finest hour! This is where man comes closest to seeing and understanding the heart of God!

THE END RESULTS

If God can use this sinful world and its trials for His good purpose, then we should be able to see some final results that achieve what God is after. Let's see the end results ...

Job 42:5

I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but **now my eye sees you;** ESV

Although Job was a God fearing, upright man, through the trials that he endured he reached a closeness to God that he had not seen prior to his suffering. God then blessed Job with more children, money, and riches. **God's purpose was fulfilled!**

Jeremiah 40:1-6

The word that came to Jeremiah from the Lord after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon. [2] The captain of the guard took Jeremiah and said to him, "The Lord your God pronounced this disaster against this place. [3] The Lord has brought it about, and has done as he said. Because you sinned against the Lord and did not obey his voice, this thing has come upon you. [4] Now, behold, I release you today from the chains on your hands. If it seems good to you to come with me to Babylon, come, and I will look after you well, but if it seems wrong to you to come with me to Babylon, do not come. See, the whole land is before you; go wherever you think it good and right to go. [5] If you remain, then return to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, son of Shaphan, whom the king of Babylon appointed governor of the cities of Judah, and dwell with him among the people. Or go wherever you think it right to go." So the captain of the guard gave him an allowance of food and a present, and let him go. [6] Then Jeremiah went to Gedaliah the son of Ahikam, at Mizpah, and lived with him among the people who were left in the land.

ESV

While all of Judah was being hauled away in slavery to Babylon, God blessed Jeremiah through the Babylonian general and allowed Jeremiah to remain in Jerusalem. He blessed him with food and a present. Jeremiah saw God's power and blessings fulfilled in his life. **God's purpose was fulfilled!**

Acts 8:4

4 Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went.

NIV

The first century church had not fulfilled the commission that God had given them to take the Gospel message to the whole world. They were stagnant and remained in Jerusalem. Due to the persecution that they endured, it forced the church out into the rest of the world and the message of God's grace went with them. As for the great preachers and apostles that lost their lives, God raised up more to fill their shoes. The church grew and matured through its trials. **God's purpose was fulfilled!**

Hebrews 5:7-9

In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. [8] Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered.

[9] And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,

ESV

Hebrews 12:2

looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

ESV

I don't know how you would teach anything to the Son of God, yet Jesus learned obedience through the things He suffered. Without Jesus being obedient, there would be no cross and resurrection. We should all fall on our knees and praise God for Jesus' obedience! We need to understand that Jesus only learned it through suffering. Jesus taught us what it is to trust the Father. He also taught us the meaning of hope, which was founded in the resurrection! Jesus perfects and completes our faith! Jesus was faithful unto death! **God's purpose was fulfilled!**

Let's conclude with this from the apostle Paul ...

2 Cor. 4:7-9

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. [8] We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; [9] persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed;

ESV

2 Cor. 4:13-14

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, [14] knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence.

ESV

2 Cor. 4:16-18

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. [17] For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, [18] as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

ESV

I don't know exactly what God is going to do with each of us on an individual level, but think of it like this. We are a dirty, smelly lump of clay on a potter's wheel. Nothing much to look at, at least not at first. God is the potter. He starts to mold and shape us, taking the bad spots out and throwing them to the floor. He pulls and pushes on us. It hurts and we ask Him to stop, yet He keeps on going through the months and years. Then one day the wheel stops and the Creator steps back. What does He find, but a beauty that shines like the stars of heaven, made in the image of our Creator!

God has a plan for all of us! That plan is to grow and mature us. God has to get us ready for our fight against Satan. He needs people to set a good example in this world for Him. We need to be that light that reflects the light of Jesus in this dark and lonely world! God is preparing His people for glory, His glory!

Do I understand it all? No! Do I have questions? Yes! I will leave you with two verses that help me get through on those tough days ...

1 Peter 4:19

Therefore let those who suffer according to God's will entrust their souls to a faithful Creator while doing good.

ESV

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

ESV

I look at it this way. If God is okay with me suffering, then it's okay with me! I know that I am not just spinning around out here and what ever happens, happens. My Lord is involved with my life and He assures me that no matter what happens, it will work out for the good according to His purpose! I am okay with that!

I hoped it helped!

Always remember ...

“We are one day closer to heaven, than we were yesterday!”

Stay Faithful!



CHAPTER NINE

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE CHURCH

The Church **'A Vital Part Of Every Christian's Life!'** 170

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'Recognizing The Body Of Christ' 176



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THE CHURCH

‘A VITAL PART OF EVERY CHRISTIANS LIFE’

Once a person becomes a Christian, the Lord adds that person to the church (**Acts 2:47 NKJV**). In this study we will look at the importance of the church and why it is vital to one’s salvation to be a part of the church. Let’s see what God has to say about the church through His word...

What Is The Church?

We must first discover what the church is. The word church comes from the Greek word EKKLESIA, which is made up of two words.

EKK / LESIA – IN THE GREEK = CHURCH
/ \
Out of Called

The church is a called out people that belongs to God (**I Peter 2:9**). A people that have been called through the gospel message (**II Thess 2:14**). That call came when we heard the gospel message and responded to it in faith when we were baptized into Christ. At that moment the Lord added us to His church (**Acts 2:38-39,41,47**). In the Greek, the word ‘CHURCH’ also carries the idea of an ‘Assembly’ Thus, **the church is a called out assembly of people**. Called out of one realm and placed into another (transferred from darkness into light, (**Col 1:12-13**).

The church is neither a building nor a place people go. **The church is God’s people!** So if you have responded to the gospel message with an obedient faith and were baptized into Jesus, you have become a part of the Lord’s church (**Acts 2:38-47**).

WHO DOES THE CHURCH BELONG TO?

Matthew 16:16-18

Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." [17] And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. [18] And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

ESV


From these verses, we can clearly see that the church belongs to Jesus. He and


He alone is the designer of the church. You might also notice that Jesus did not build 'churches', but that He built one church, singular! Therefore, there is only one church and it belongs to Jesus and Jesus alone.

Some of my very good friends tell me that they have their own church. I try to explain to them that the church does not belong to them. The church belongs to Jesus. Man does not have the right to make the church whatever we want. Since the church belongs to Jesus and He built and established it, we must humble ourselves before Him and allow Jesus to direct us on how the church should be through His word. When people tell me that they are looking for a church, I always tell them to find the church that Jesus built!

DO CHRISTIANS HAVE TO BE A PART OF THE CHURCH?

Sometimes Christians tell me that they do not need to 'go to church' or 'be a part of the church.' Christians sometimes think that they can separate themselves from the church and still have a good relationship with God. These next couple of verses should destroy this kind of thinking. Look at the close connection between Jesus and the church.

Col. 1:18  **Jesus**
And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.
ESV

Eph 1:22-23  **Jesus**
22 And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, **23** which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way.
NIV

As you can see, you cannot separate Jesus and the church. The two come as a package. You cannot have one without the other! **If you leave the church, you have left Jesus.** This is the message that the writer of the book of Hebrews is trying to convey to it's readers. The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were walking away from Jesus; thus about to lose their salvation. Look at the strong warning given to these Christians...

Hebrews 10:25
not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. ESV

Apparently, these Christians had stopped meeting together. We today would call

that “not going to church”. This will lead them to the point of losing their salvation, which is stated just a few verses down in this same chapter of Hebrews...

Heb 10:35-39

35 So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. **36** You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. **37** For in just a very little while,

"He who is coming will come and will not delay.

38 But my righteous one will live by faith.

And if he shrinks back,

I will not be pleased with him."

39 But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.

NIV

To leave the church, is to leave Jesus! And to leave Jesus is to leave the only means by which God can save us (**Acts 4:12 & John 14:6**).

THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH

So why would God want us to ‘go to church’ and be an active part of it? Is He just trying to keep us busy? Is it like when we go to work and punch our time card, giving record of us being there so that we can get paid? As we are about to see, this kind of thinking is so far from the truth!

To state it simply, **God is trying to save our souls!** He understands how we are built and the temptations we deal with everyday. Because of this, He knows what it will take to help us stay on that narrow path. The church was designed for our benefit. God’s original plan was for the church to serve as a tool to bring us closer to God through worship, teaching, and also supplying an extra crutch to lean on through the help of other Christians and leaders of the church. See if you can see some of the benefits that God designed for us that come from being a part of His church ...

The Church Fellowshipped Together

The body of believers (the church), were together. They met on the first day of the week (Sunday) for worship (**Acts 20:7, I Cor 16:1-2**). They also met together daily in the temple courts (**Acts 2:46**), being among the community. The church also met together in their homes, sharing meals together (**Acts 2:46**). It didn’t take long for Adam to figure out that it is not good for man to be alone (**Gen 2:18-24**). We can gain a lot of strength and encouragement from other believers that are liked-minded to help us make it through this life. Christians need and belong to other Christians (**Rom 12:4-5**). They are the family of God.

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

To better understand God's purpose in the church is to look at the church's worship. There are two basic words for worship in our New Testament ...

1) **Latreuo** - In The Greek

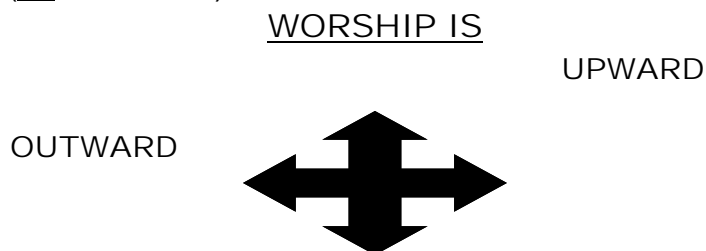
This word is mainly used as a **life of 'service' towards God (Rom 12:1-2)**. It is worship that is lived out twenty-four hours a day. **For a better understanding of this kind of worship see page 157.**

2) **Proskuneo** - In The Greek

This word is mainly used as a **specific 'act' of worship**. For example, when we pray, sing, give, are encouraged through the teaching from God's word and partake of the Lord's Supper on a Sunday morning, as the body of Christ; these are acts of worship. The word here means to **'Kiss Towards'**. Every time we do a specific act of worship to the Lord, it is as though we are giving Him a kiss of affection. This shows that our worship together on a Sunday, towards God, should be serious and filled with our love for Him! Let's look at these acts of worship in more detail ...

The Church Prayed Together

One of the things that the church did when they came together for worship was to pray (**Acts 2:42, Acts 13:1-3 & I Co 14**). All forms of worship go upwards (to God) and outwards (for each other).



Prayer is important to believers in that this gives us an avenue to talk directly to God; to present to Him our most inner feelings, needs and requests. Prayer is also important because we pray for each other.

The Church Sang Songs Together

Another thing that we see the early church do as a part of their worship is the singing of songs to God and to each other (**I Cor 14:26, Eph 5:19**). Singing encourages and uplifts people. Through singing we can express our feelings of love for God and each other. Singing is good for the soul. Singing songs together can also be used to teach and admonish one another (**Col 3:16**). Under the New Covenant, there is no mention of playing instruments, just singing with our voices,

(See **Worship & Instruments on Page 191.**) To worship Him, God wants all Christians to sing, using the instrument He gave each of us, which is our voice.

The Church Ate The Lord's Supper Together

One of the things that the first century church did when they came together on the first day of the week was to partake of the Lord's Supper (**Acts 2:42, Acts 20:7, I Cor 11:23-34**). The Lord instituted this remembrance of His death during the last Passover meal that He ate with His apostles (**Matt 26:26-29**). Here, Jesus singled out from this meal, the unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine as symbols of remembrance of His body and blood that He sacrificed for mankind. The church is to partake of this Supper each first day of the week to remember Christ's death and examine themselves to see how they could live better for Jesus than they did the week before (**I Cor 11:23-34**).

The Church Gave Of Their Income Together

Another act of worship that the early church did on the first day of the week was to give as the Lord had prospered them (**I Cor 16:1-3**). Giving does two things. One, it helps us rely on God, knowing that all things come from Him and that He and He alone will get us through. It helps to develop our faith and trust in Him. Two, giving also helps us to help others. All giving is to be for the growth of God's kingdom; from helping someone with food, to sending a missionary to a foreign field to reach the lost. Now under the Old Covenant, Israel was commanded to give ten percent of everything back to God (**Mal 3:6-12**). Under the New Covenant, no specific amount is specified. It only says give as you have been prospered (**I Cor 16:1-2**). The amount of your giving must be determined by each individual Christian.

The Church Were Taught The Word Of God Together

The first century church also preached from God's word when they assembled as a body on the first day of the week (**Acts 20:7-12, I Cor 14, I & II Timothy**). This was for encouragement and reflection; to spur the body on to the final goal of Heaven.

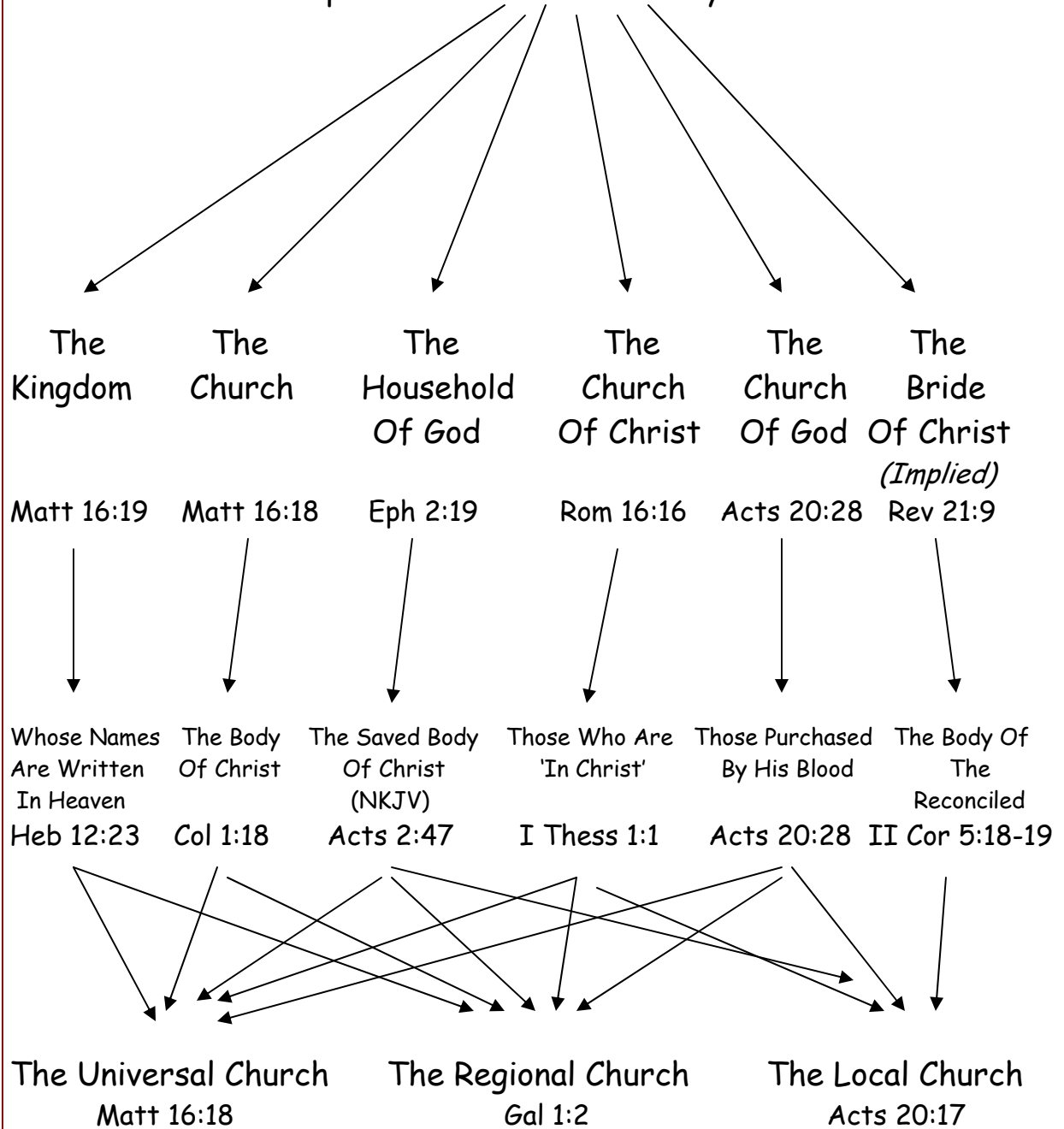
Are you starting to see why the church is so vitally important to Christians and why we need to be an active part of it? Without it we would never make it through this world that is so influenced by Satan. God knows just what we need and that is why God designed the church in the way He did. I pray that now that you have become a Christian, that you never separate yourself from the church. Always remember that Jesus and the church go hand in hand. You can't have one without the other.

Thank you Lord for your church!

RECOGNIZING THE BODY OF CHRIST

Eph 1:22-23 The Church Is Christ's Body

Eph 4:4 There Is One Body





THE STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

'The Sheep And Their Protection'

When we became saved children of God, the Lord added us to His church (**Acts 2:47 NKJV**). I believe that it is vitally important for every Christian to understand how the Lord set up His church so that it will function in the way He designed it. There are several different pieces of the church. I would like to look at all of them in this study.

As we look at these pieces, try to picture in your mind a sheep pen. In the first century, shepherds would herd their sheep into a makeshift sheep pen in the open fields of Palestine. Some of these sheep pens are still in place today. These sheep pens are square in shape and stand about four feet off the ground. They were made out of rocks, dirt, clay and twigs. On one side of the pen, there would be an opening. This was the only place that the sheep could enter or exit. Once the sheep were in the protective walls of the pen, the shepherd would lay in the opening, acting as the gate. No enemy would get in and no sheep would escape without first going through the shepherd. The Lord uses this analogy of the sheep, the shepherds, the pen and our enemy Satan as He paints the picture of His church throughout the New Testament. Try to keep this picture in mind as we think about the church and its structure. (**Refer to the chart on page 180**).

THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE (Jesus)

Matt 16:13-19

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" **14** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." **15** He said to them, "**But who do you say that I am?**" **16** Simon Peter answered, "**You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.**" **17** And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. **18** "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. **19** "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."

NASU

Jesus is the first and most important piece of the structure of the church. He is the builder and designer. Therefore the church belongs to Jesus. Yet there are some that deduct from these verses that Jesus is building the church upon Peter. The reasoning behind this comes from the fact that Peter's names means rock. If we had a New

Testament written in Greek in front of us, it would put to rest this kind of thinking. The word for Peter here in the Greek is Petros; meaning **piece of rock**. The word for the rock that Jesus is building the church on is a different word in the Greek. This word is Petra; meaning **a mass of rock**. So instead of us thinking that Jesus is building the church on Peter, we need to better understand that it is not on Peter himself that the church is being built, but upon what Peter said. When asked by Jesus who do you say I am, Peter responded with 'you are the Christ, the Son of God'. On that Rock the church is to be built. That Rock is Jesus. Jesus is what the church is built upon and it is Jesus in whom the church belongs. He is the first and most important piece in the structure of the church.

Eph 2:19-22

19 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, **20** built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, **21** in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. **22** In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

ESV

THE FOUNDATION (The Apostles & N/T Prophets)

The next important piece in the structure of the church is the apostles and New Testament prophets (**Eph 2:20**). These are the men that wrote our New Testament. These men give the church its direction (**I Tim 3:14-15**) and that direction comes from God (**II Peter 1:16-21**). This is why these men play such an important role in the structure of the church (**I Cor 4:17, 7:17, 11:2, 11:16 & 14:33**).

THE GATE (Shepherds, Elders & Overseers)

Another important part in the structure of the church is the shepherds. There are six different English words (depending on your translation), that describe these men. From these names we can see a good description of what these men do in the church; elders and presbyter's (older, wiser and more experienced **Acts 20:17**); overseer's or bishops (over seeing the work of the church **I Peter 5:3**); shepherd's and pastors (they shepherd, protect and care for the Christian's **Acts 20:28, Eph 2:11**). All of these men carry out the same function in the church (**Acts 20:17-28 & I Peter 5:1-3**). Jesus refers to himself as the gate of the sheep pen (**John 10:7**). Shepherds of the church are to imagine Jesus in their role as shepherds of the sheep (**Heb 13:17-20**). They are to act as the gate. No sheep escapes and no enemy gets in unless they first cross the shepherds of the church. There is always to be a plurality of elders; there must be more than one. They and their wives have special qualities they must meet (**I Tim 3:1-7, 11, Titus 1:5-9**).

MINISTERS OF THE SHEEP (Preachers & Evangelists)

Another part of the structure is the ministers. There are four different names that describe these men in our New Testament. From these names we can see a description of what these men do within the church. Preachers (proclaim God's word **II Tim 2:4**). Evangelists (reach out to the lost **II Tim 4:5**). Ministers (minister to the church and their needs **I Tim 4:6**). Teachers (do a lot of the teaching within the church **Titus 2:1**). That basically gives us a good biblical description of these men and their functions in the church. For more detail of these men, read I & II Timothy and Titus.

SERVANTS OF THE SHEEP (Deacons)

Another part of the church is the deacons. The word deacon comes from the word servant. All Christians are to be servants, but these men serve in more specific areas of the church (**Acts 6:1-7**). For example: missions, community outreach, building and grounds, education, widows programs and so on. These men and their wives have special qualities they must meet (**I Tim 3:8-12**).

THE SHEEP (All Christians)

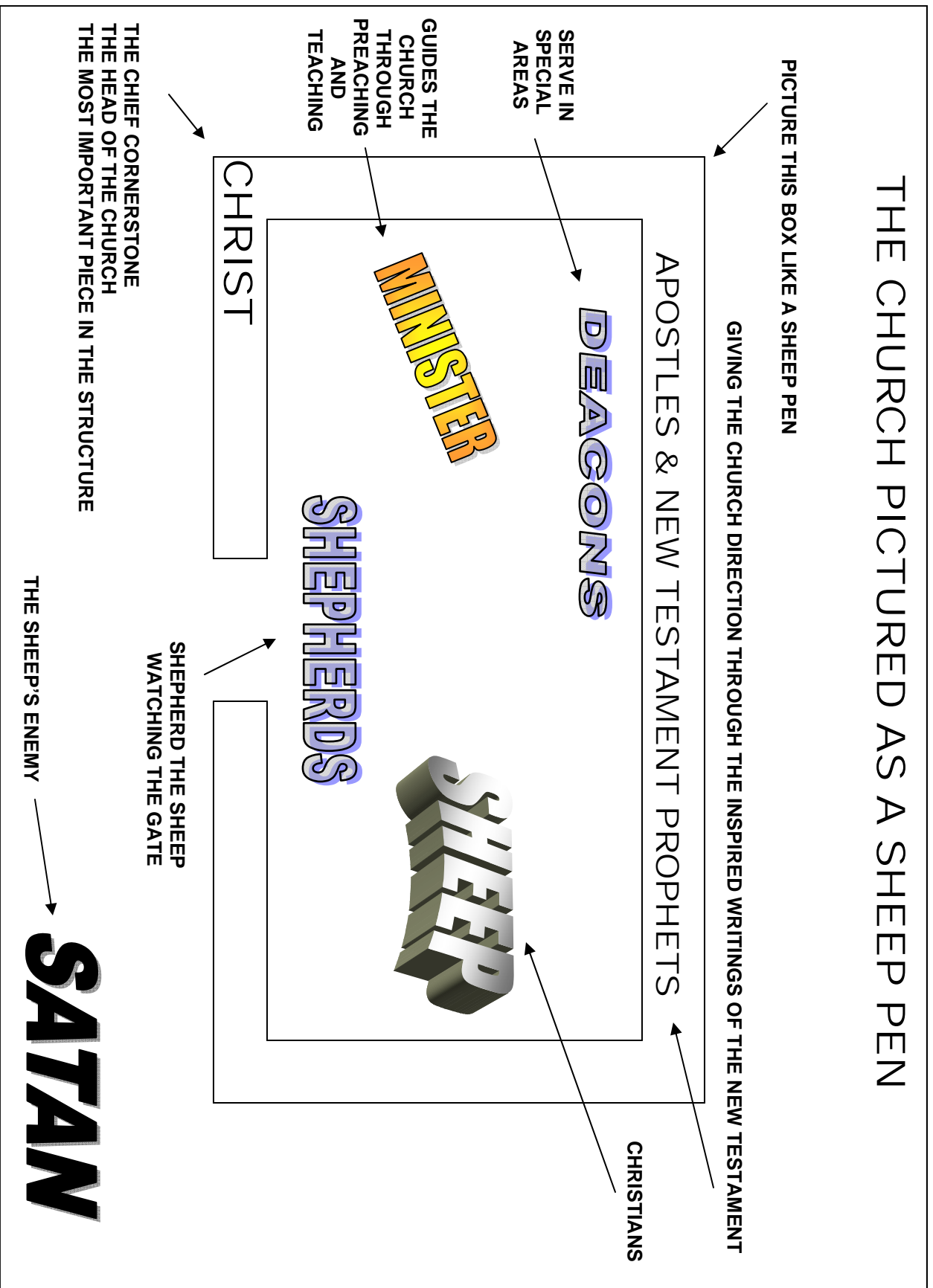
The sheep are the ones that are pictured as being within the walls of the sheep pen (the church). Each Christian also has a responsibility to be an active member within the body of Christ. The church must never be thought of as an organization (like a company), rather it should be seen as an organism. Each part has a purpose. No one is to be left out (**Rom 12:3-8 & I Cor 12**).

THE ENEMY OF THE SHEEP (Satan)

Unfortunately, there is someone who wants to destroy the church. His name is Satan. He is pictured as a roaring lion, looking to devour every Christian (**I Peter 5:8-9**). This is why God has put all of these safeguards into place for us. If each portion of the structure of the church is allowed to do its job, we have nothing to worry about. Just make sure you do not leave God's protective walls (the church) **Revelation chapter 21**. It can get scary out there all by yourself.

I pray that this study of the structure of the church and how Jesus designed it to work will help us better understand God's design for His body. Just remember that God's ways are best. Let's make sure we follow His blue print (His Word).

THE CHURCH PICTURED AS A SHEEP PEN



THE NEW TESTAMENT PATTERN

Many people wonder why there are so many different churches in our world today. These churches go by different names. They split into different denominations, and they all teach different things. Yet as we have already seen, the Lord built only one church (**Matt 16:17**) and He wanted His people in that church unified (**John 17:21-23**). Paul warned strongly against division (**I Cor 1 & 3**), and he also told us not to believe in a different gospel than the one found in the New Testament (**Gal 1:6-10**).

The New Testament shows us that there is a pattern to follow. That there is a form of teaching that is laid out that we must hold to. The Bible teaches us that we are to follow the examples of the early church. Yet because this concept has been neglected over the centuries, we have a mess in our world today. Whenever someone comes to me and tells me that they are looking for a church to join, **I always tell them to find the church that Jesus built**. I encourage them to find the church that is seen in our New Testament, one that holds to the pattern of the Bible!

THE PATTERN

tupos (too'-pos) In the Greek ; a die (as struck), i.e. (by implication) a stamp or scar; (by analogy), a shape, i.e. a statue, (figuratively) style or resemblance; specifically, a sampler ("type"), i.e. a model (for imitation) or instance (for warning):

Here are some examples of the word TUPOS being used in the New Testament ...

Acts 7:44

44 "Our forefathers had the tabernacle of the Testimony with them in the desert. It had been made as God directed Moses, according to the pattern he had seen.

NIV

Rom 6:16-18

16 Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone 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? **17** 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 entrusted. **18** You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

NIV

Eph 1:9-12

9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10** to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment-to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. **11** In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, **12** in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.

NIV

Phil 3:17

17 Join with others in following my example, brothers, and take note of those who live according to the pattern we gave you.

NIV

1 Tim 4:12-13

12 Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity. **13** Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.

NIV

2 Tim 1:13-14

13 What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus. **14** Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.

NIV

TAUGHT THE SAME PATTERN IN EACH CHURCH

1 Cor 4:17

17 For this reason I am sending to you Timothy, my son whom I love, who is faithful in the Lord. He will remind you of my way of life in Christ Jesus, which agrees with what I teach everywhere in every church.

NIV

1 Cor 7:17

17 Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches.

NIV

1 Cor. 11:2

Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

ESV

1 Cor 11:16

16 If anyone wants to be contentious about this, we have no other practice-nor do the churches of God.

NIV

1 Cor 14:33

33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, . . .

NIV

1 Cor 11:23

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: . . .

NIV

1 Cor 14:36-38

36 Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? **37** If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you is the Lord's command. **38** If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.

NIV

1 Cor 15:3

3 For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: . . .

NIV

1 Tim 3:14-15

14 Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, **15** if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.

NIV

As you can see, the apostle Paul did not go around from congregation to congregation teaching different things. Paul taught the same thing in every church. He urged his listeners to hold to the teachings that he passed on to them, showing that his teachings are the Lord's commands. If man would hold to the teachings of the Bible only, every church would be teaching and looking the same!!!

HOLD TO THESE TEACHINGS

1 Cor 4:6

6 Now, brothers, I have applied these things to myself and Apollos for your benefit, so that you may learn from us the meaning of the saying, "Do not go beyond what is written." Then you will not take pride in one man over against another.

NIV

2 Thess 2:15

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.

NASU

1 Tim 1:3

3 As I urged you when I went into Macedonia--remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

NKJV

As we have seen, there is a clear pattern set forth for the things that God wants us to do within the body of Christ. If man could just set aside his ideas and opinions and just get back to the pattern that Jesus has laid out for us in the New Testament, then there would not be so much confusion over all the different churches we have today. I plead with you as you look for a church, to look for the church. If you walk in a so-called church and it does not teach or believe the pattern taught in your New Testament, then keep looking because what you have found is not the church that Jesus built and purchased with His blood.

WHAT ABOUT WOMEN? 'THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF WOMEN IN THE CHURCH'

Phil 4:2-3

2 I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. **3** Yes, I ask you also, true companion, help these women, who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life.

ESV

The reason I put this workbook together was to give biblical answers to the most asked questions that people are asking today. One of those questions has to do with the role of women in the church. People are asking why, when the Bible addresses elders, preachers and deacons in the church, does it always address them in the male gender. Some of the answers that are given today are that this had more to do with their culture at the time and no longer applies to us today. This is why so many of the religious groups of today are filling these positions with women. Others believe that maybe the reason for this is because Eve sinned first and women, in a sense, lost some of their standing with God and this is why God only allows men to hold the leadership positions in the church. Still others wonder if maybe God has something against women; that maybe God thinks less of women than men. Since our present world is giving so many mixed answers to these questions, I feel it is important to see what the Bible says about this subject.

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY?

Since we are under the New Covenant, let's look at our New Testament and see what God has to say about women and their role within the church ...

1 Cor 14:33-35

33 For God is not a God of disorder but of peace. As in all the congregations of the saints, **34** women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says. **35** If they want to inquire about something, they should ask their own husbands at home; for it is disgraceful for a woman to speak in the church.

NIV

1 Tim 2:11-15

11 A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. 12 I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. 13 For Adam was formed first, then Eve. 14 And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. 15 But women will be saved through childbearing — if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

NIV

As we saw from Philippians chapter four, women of the church were a big help to Paul and his ministry. Yet this same apostle instructs the church on two occasions that women are to be **silent** within the church. They are not to teach or have authority over a man. Let's see if we can't better understand the balance of these verses.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE SILENT?

If women are to be silent within **the church**, then we must first establish what the church is! The church is not a building; it is God's people (**Acts 2:47 NKJV**). So wherever you have God's people, you have the church.

Let's go back to the context of one of the verses where Paul gives the church instruction to women to be silent. In chapter fourteen of I Corinthians, you have three groups of people addressed ...

Those That Speak In Tongues (Group One)

1 Cor 14:26-28

26 What is the outcome then, brethren? **When you assemble**, each one has a psalm, has a teaching, has a revelation, has a tongue, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. **27** If anyone **speaks** in a tongue, it should be by two or at the most three, **and each in turn**, and one must interpret; **28** but if there is no interpreter, he must **keep silent in the church**; and let him speak to himself and to God.

NASU

Notice that when these people with spiritual gifts speak when the church is assembled, they only are to speak one at a time. This shows that those that who are speaking are in the **lead!** (To better understand the purpose of what speaking in tongues is, see chapter ten on the Holy Spirit.)

Those That Prophecy (Group Two)

1 Cor 14:29-32

29 Let two or three **prophets speak**, and let the others pass judgment. **30** But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must **keep silent**. **31** For you

can all prophesy **one by one**, so that all may learn and all may be exhorted: NASU

We see the same thing with those who prophecy when the church is assembled (another spiritual gift): that only one at a time should speak. This again shows that whoever was doing the speaking would be in the **lead!** (To better understand the purpose of the spiritual gift of prophecy, see chapter ten on the Holy Spirit.)

The Women (Group Three)

1 Cor 14:34

34 The women are to **keep silent** in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak NASU

When the church comes together, all three groups are told when to speak. But when you come to this last group (women), **they are never to speak.** What does this mean?

I hear women speak at many different times when the church is together. They sing when we worship together. They sometimes say 'amen' at the end of a prayer. When the preacher says good morning to everyone at the beginning of his lesson, women respond back with 'good morning'. I hear women whisper to their husbands, children and those sitting next to them during worship or Bible study. I hear women speak up at Bible studies and make comments to questions. Is this wrong? Does this speaking violate these verses?

Let us go back to the context of I Corinthians chapter fourteen. What does the silence mean? **It means that women are never to be in the lead when men are present as the church is assembled!** They are never to **teach** or **have authority over a man** within the church (**I Tim 2:11**). Women are never to be in a leadership role. Just because a women says 'amen' at the end of a prayer or whispers to her children during a church service, does not mean she has taken the lead over a man.

IS THIS CULTURAL?

Many today believe that the belief that women are not to be in the lead within the church was a cultural thing of the first century and no longer applies to us today. For those that believe this I would beg to ask them to consider these next verses ...

1 Cor 14:36-38

36 Did the word of God originate with you? Or are you the only people it has reached? **37** If anybody thinks he is a prophet or spiritually gifted, let him acknowledge that what I am writing to you **is the Lord's command.** **38 If he ignores this, he himself will be ignored.**

NIV

Does this sound like it was cultural to you? These are the Lord's commands. We have no authority from God's words to undo this teaching. God still wants men today to be in the lead within His church!

DOES GOD HAVE A PURPOSE?

I have always believed that God has a purpose in everything He does. I also believe that God does **not always** gives us the reason for why He does the things that He does (**Deut 29:29**). When dealing with the subject of men leading in the church, I find this pattern within the pages of the Bible. This may give us some insight of why God wants men to be in the lead within the church!

ADAM

Gen 3:6

6 So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some to her husband **who was with her**, and he ate.

ESV

This is the story of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden. Satan has just tempted Eve with the fruit of the tree that she was forbidden by God to eat. After contemplating things, she decides to eat the fruit. Did you notice where Adam was? He was right there with her. The man was created first. He has been around longer than Eve and he should have been the leader here. But yet what does he do? Nothing! He did not say a word. **Adam did not take the lead!**

MOSES

Ex 4:24-26

24 At a lodging place on the way **the Lord met him and sought to put him to death**. 25 Then Zipporah took a flint and cut off her son's foreskin and touched Moses' feet with it and said, "Surely you are a bridegroom of blood to me!" 26 **So he let him alone**. It was then that she said, "A bridegroom of blood," because of the circumcision.

ESV

This is the story of Moses just after God met with him through the burning bush on Mt. Sinai. God wanted Moses to return back to Egypt and tell Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves free. If you remember, Moses did not want to go at first. But after some persuasion, Moses goes. He is now on his way to Egypt, doing as the Lord had instructed him. Yet, seemingly out of nowhere, God is about to put Moses to death! Why would God want to kill Moses? Here are my thoughts, staying with the text ...

Moses is a Hebrew by descent. All the Jews were commanded by God to circum-

cise their male children on the 8th day of life (**Gen 17:11-12**). Moses wife Zipporah is from the land of Midian. The only probable way that she would have any knowledge of this Jewish practice would have been through Moses. Yet who do we find carrying out this practice of circumcision on this child? The husband of Jewish descent or the wife of Midian descent? It's Zipporah, the Midian wife. **Here we have another example of a husband not stepping up and taking the lead as he should**, and God was about to put him to death because of it!

BARAK

Judg 4:4-9

4 Now Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, was judging Israel at that time. **5** And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in the mountains of Ephraim. And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment. **6** Then she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam from Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, "Has not the Lord God of Israel commanded, 'Go and deploy troops at Mount Tabor; take with you ten thousand men of the sons of Naphtali and of the sons of Zebulun; **7** and against you I will deploy Sisera, the commander of Jabin's army, with his chariots and his multitude at the River Kishon; and I will deliver him into your hand'?"

8 And Barak said to her, "**If you will go with me, then I will go;** but if you will not go with me, **I will not go!**"

9 So she said, "I will surely go with you; nevertheless **there will be no glory for you** in the journey you are taking, **for the Lord will sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.**" Then Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh.

NKJV

All through the book of Judges, we see men as judges leading Israel, until you come to chapter four. Here in chapter four we find a woman named Deborah leading Israel. Deborah is also a prophetess. She gives Barak instructions from God, telling him to take his army and fight Sisera. Yet Barak's response is, "only if Deborah comes with him". Here is the problem with that statement. God never told Barak to take Deborah with him. **Again we see a man not wanting to lead as he should.** So God tells Barak that because of this, He will give the glory of Sisera's defeat to a woman.

Do you see a pattern here? God designed the men to lead, yet most often men do not want to (as we have just seen). Are women incapable of teaching and leading the church? NO! As we just witnessed, Deborah was more than capable in leading Israel. This isn't about God thinking that women are somehow less than men. It has more to do with God forcing the men to step up and take the lead. I believe without this extra push from God, that the men would just sit back and do little-to-nothing. Allowing the women to do the leading would do harm to the man and disable his God-given role to be a spiritual leader as God designed. If we force our desire for women to lead (however good we think these ideas are), it un-does God's perfect plan. God is clear. He wants the men to lead, He commanded it! If you are a Christian woman, then you

must humble yourself and allow and support the men of the church to lead. If you are a Christian man, you also must humble yourself enough to step up and lead. By doing this, we will all bring glory to our Father in heaven, acknowledging that His ways are best!

WHAT ARE WOMEN TO DO IN THE CHURCH?

That leaves us with one question. What can a woman do in the church, biblically? Lots! Women are just as important in the church as men are. Look at the instructions that Paul gives Titus to pass on to the women of the church ...

Titus 2:3-5

3 Older women likewise are to be reverent in their behavior, not malicious gossips nor enslaved to much wine, **teaching what is good**, **4** so that **they may encourage the young women** to love their husbands, to love their children, **5** to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored.

NASU

The older women are to teach the younger women of the church. This is so vitally needed today within the church. With the divorce rate going off the scales and homes being broken and divided, there is a lot of pressure placed on women today. We need the maturity, experience and spiritual guidance of the older women of the church to pass this on to our younger women.

Women are also to teach the children (**Titus 2:4**). They are to support their husbands in the role of leadership within the church (**I Tim 3:11**). Women are also to evangelize (**Acts 18:26**). Women are a vital part of the church! Always remember that the church is not an organization (not to be run like a company). It is an organism. It is referred to as a body in scripture (**Rom 12, I Cor 12**) and just like the physical body is made up of many parts, so is the body of Christ. God has a place for all of us! May we all be humble enough to serve in the places that God has assigned for us, whether male or female!

WORSHIP AND INSTRUMENTS

The main purpose of the church when they gather together is to worship the true and living God. Thus, as Christians our highest concern must be that our worship is pleasing to God. The history of God's people, both in the Old Testament and New Testament times, has shown that there is no area which is more prone to corruption than in the area of worship. When man starts putting his own ideas into worship, their fall is not far off!

The Bible makes it clear that God has not left His worship open to the ideas of men. God alone is the one who decides how He should be worshipped. He alone has the right to determine what things should be present in the public worship of His people. The main concern of worship should not be what men find pleasing to themselves, but what God desires for us. The only way we will find out what He wants in this area of worship is to see what His instruction manual, the Bible, tells us. Only by bringing out those elements commanded in the scriptures, can we be certain that our worship is acceptable and pleasing to God!

That is what this study will accomplish. We will look at the Bible to see if the church has the authority to use musical instruments in its worship under the New Covenant. We will look at the Bible as a whole in reaching the answer. We will begin in the Old Testament ...

OLD TESTAMENT USE OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

How specific was God in the directions He gave under the Old Testament in the area of worship? Especially in the area of musical instruments ...

Israel In The Wilderness / Tent Of Meeting 1,400 B.C.

Numbers 10:1-10

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [2] "Make two silver trumpets. Of hammered work you shall make them, and you shall use them for summoning the congregation and for breaking camp. [3] And when both are blown, all the congregation shall gather themselves to you at the entrance of the tent of meeting. [4] But if they blow only one, then the chiefs, the heads of the tribes of Israel, shall gather themselves to you. [5] When you blow an alarm, the camps that are on the east side shall set out. [6] And when

you blow an alarm the second time, the camps that are on the south side shall set out. An alarm is to be blown whenever they are to set out. [7] But when the assembly is to be gathered together, you shall blow a long blast, but you shall not sound an alarm. [8] **And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow the trumpets.** The trumpets shall be to you for a perpetual statute throughout your generations. [9] And when you go to war in your land against the adversary who oppresses you, then you shall sound an alarm with the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Lord your God, and you shall be saved from your enemies. [10] **On the day of your gladness also, and at your appointed feasts and at the beginnings of your months, you shall blow the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace offerings.** They shall be a reminder of you before your God: I am the Lord your God."

ESV

We see some specifics here, namely the commands of God. 1) Moses was to have the instruments made. 2) Two in number. 3) Trumpets only. 4) They were to be made of silver. 5) Only the Priests were to blow them. 6) These trumpets were to be used only at the tent of meeting. 7) They were to be played or sounded for commands, alarms, and during feasts as they worshipped. **God was very detailed here!**

Leviticus 23:23-25

And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, [24] "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a day of solemn rest, a memorial proclaimed **with blast of trumpets, a holy convocation.** [25] You shall not do any ordinary work, and you shall present a food offering to the Lord."

ESV

In The Promised Land Under King David / Tent Of Meeting 1,000 B.C.

1 Chron. 16:1-6

And they brought in the ark of God and set it inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God. [2] And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord [3] and distributed to all Israel, both men and women, to each a loaf of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins.

[4] Then he appointed some of the **Levites** as ministers before the ark of the Lord, to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord, the God of Israel. [5] Asaph was the chief, and second to him were Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemira-moth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel, **who were to play harps and lyres; Asaph was to sound the cymbals,** [6] and Benaiah and Jahaziel **the priests were to blow trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God.**

ESV

Again you see that there are specifics here. **1)** The location was at the tent of meeting. **2)** The people who were to play were the Levites. **3)** The instruments that were to be played were lyres, harps, and cymbals. **4)** The Priests were to blow the trumpets. Again very detailed and laid out by God.

1 Chron. 23:1-5

When David was old and full of days, he made Solomon his son king over Israel.

[2] David assembled all the leaders of Israel and the priests and the Levites. **[3]** The Levites, thirty years old and upward, were numbered, and the total was 38,000 men. **[4]** "Twenty-four thousand of these," David said, "shall have charge of the work in the house of the Lord, 6,000 shall be officers and judges, **[5]** 4,000 gatekeepers, and 4,000 shall offer praises to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise."

ESV

1 Chron. 16:42

Heman and Jeduthun had trumpets and cymbals for the music and instruments for sacred song. The sons of Jeduthun were appointed to the gate.

ESV

King Solomon / Temple 900 B.C.

2 Chron. 7:6

The priests stood at their posts; the Levites also, with the instruments for music to the Lord that King David had made for giving thanks to the Lord— for his steadfast love endures forever—whenever David offered praises by their ministry; opposite them the priests sounded trumpets, and all Israel stood.

ESV

2 Chron. 8:14

According to the ruling of David his father, he appointed the divisions of the priests for their service, and the Levites for their offices of praise and ministry before the priests as the duty of each day required, and the gatekeepers in their divisions at each gate, for so David the man of God had commanded.

ESV

The question is this: What gives David and Solomon the right to make these decisions on having instruments in public worship at the tent of meeting and at the temple? Did they do this because this is something they liked or did God play a hand in this decision? The answer is plain. God is giving the commands here through His prophet David. Thus, man is not left to his own on these decisions, **these are God's commands.**

Restoration Under King Jehoiada 790 B.C.

2 Chron. 23:18-19

And Jehoiada posted watchmen for the house of the Lord under the direction of the Levitical priests and the Levites whom David had organized to be in charge of the house of the Lord, to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, as it is written in the Law of Moses, with rejoicing and with singing, according to the order of David. [19] He stationed the gatekeepers at the gates of the house of the Lord so that no one should enter who was in any way unclean.

ESV

Restoration Under King Hezekiah 700 B.C.

2 Chron. 29:25-28

And he stationed the Levites in the house of the Lord with cymbals, harps, and lyres, according to the commandment of David and of Gad the king's seer and of Nathan the prophet, for the commandment was from the Lord through his prophets. [26] The Levites stood with the instruments of David, and the priests with the trumpets. [27] Then Hezekiah commanded that the burnt offering be offered on the altar. And when the burnt offering began, the song to the Lord began also, and the trumpets, accompanied by the instruments of David king of Israel. [28] The whole assembly worshiped, and the singers sang and the trumpeters sounded. All this continued until the burnt offering was finished.

ESV

We see here that David was commanded by God to institute these instruments for worship. David is God's prophet, thus David's command is God's command.

Restoration Under King Josiah 640 B.C.

2 Chron. 35:15

The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the command of David, and Asaph, and Heman, and Jeduthun the king's seer; and the gatekeepers were at each gate. They did not need to depart from their service, for their brothers the Levites prepared for them.

ESV

Restoration Under Ezra 516 B.C.

Ezra 3:10-11

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the LORD, according to the directions of David king of Israel. [11]

And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the LORD,

"For he is good,

for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel."

And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.

ESV

Restoration Under Nehemiah 480 B.C.

Neh. 12:24

And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers who stood opposite them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch by watch.

ESV

Neh. 12:35-36

and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets: Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; [36] and his relatives, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them.

ESV

Do you see a pattern here? Whenever restoration takes place in the Old Testament, it is done by the authority of the prophets Moses, David, and Nathan. As we saw before, Moses, David, and Nathan received their authority from the Lord!

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now that we have looked at the Old Testament, we have seen a clear pattern why these people under the Old Covenant used instruments for worship. **It was because their prophets were directed by God to use them.** These prophets told them who was to use them (Priest & Levites). They directed them when these instruments were to be used (feast days, temple worship and sacrifices). They commanded the people how these instruments were to be made and who was to make them. Then they gave the people clear direction on what kinds of instruments were to be used ...

(trumpets, harps, lyres, and cymbals). We also saw that every time there was restoration with the Old Testament worship, Jehoiada, Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah always looked back to the commands of these prophets for authorization before using these instruments in worship. Even the book of Maccabees (which is not an inspired book of the Bible), in chapter 4 follows this same pattern of restoration back to the original guidelines of these same prophets!

Now we come to the New Testament and we must ask if God has given that same authority? Do we have an example of the use of instrumental music in worship like the people of the Old Testament did? Do we have an apostle or prophet commanding its use? Do we have an example of them being played? Did the inspired writers of the New Testament tell us, like the prophets did in the Old Testament, who was supposed to use them, how we were to make them, which specific kind were to be used, and at what times and places were we to use them? Only these questions can be found in God's word in the New Testament. Let's see what the Bible says ...

THE CHANGING OF COVENANT

Before we can find the answer to these questions, we must first understand that there has been a change of covenant (agreement) from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant! **See chapter 5 for more detail on covenant**

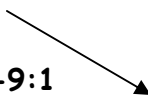
Heb 7:11-12

11 If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? **12** For when there is a change of the priesthood, **there must also be a change of the law.**

NIV

Not only did the Levitical priesthood change when Jesus came, but so did the law or covenant.

Heb 8:13-9:1



13 By calling this **covenant** "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon **disappear.**

9:1 Now the **first covenant had regulations for worship** and also an earthly sanctuary.

NIV

Here we see that there was to be a New Covenant. We today are under that 'New' Covenant (**Jer 31:31-34, Heb 8**). Under the Old Covenant, there were specific regulations for worship, as we have already seen. If we are under a New Covenant, then we are no longer under those regulations for worship. **They are obsolete!**

Heb 9:7-10

8 the Holy Spirit indicating this, that the way into the Holiest of All was not yet made manifest while the **first tabernacle** was still standing. **9** It was symbolic for the present time in which both gifts and sacrifices are offered which cannot make him who performed the service perfect in regard to the conscience-- **10** concerned only with foods and drinks, various washings, and **fleshly ordinances** imposed until **the time of reformation**.

NKJV

The Old Testament worship dealt with external or fleshly things. Temple, priest, robes, incense, washings, bowls, candlesticks, instrumental music, ceremonies, the Sabbath, etc... But when we come to the New Testament, we do not see these fleshly things used. Under the New Covenant, we see the physical go away and the spiritual come in. You can clearly see that in these next verses . . .

John 4:21-24

21 Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father **neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem**. **22** You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. **23** Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father **in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. **24** God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth."

NIV

Jesus is telling this woman that things are changing (covenant). The true worshipers of God under the New Covenant do not consist of the external pomp ceremonies and observances, but it is spiritual and simple, "For they shall worship the Father in Spirit and Truth."

Eph 2:14-15

14 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, **15 by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations**.

NIV

Under the Old Covenant, the Levites were separated by God from the rest of the people with special privileges of drawing near to Him in worship (**Num 8:14-16, 16:8-9, Deut 8:10**). It was based upon this distinction that they were later used for singing and the playing of the musical instruments in the temple (**I Chron 16:4, 23:1-5, II Chron 29:25-26, 35:3-10, Ezra 3:10, Neh 12:27, 44-47**). Under the New Covenant, no such distinction exists any longer. There is no designated group set apart from the rest of the people to sing and use musical instruments in worship. Yet this is precisely what happens in churches today when instrumental music is added to their worship.

In the New Testament we have all become priests (**I Peter 2:9, Rev 1:6, Heb 10:19**). Thus, we all participate in worship on an equal level. In the area of praising God, what command do we have that all the priests can participate in? **Singing (Col 3:16)**. Thus, we have no authorization to set apart any group of people for the playing of musical instruments in the church and its worship!

As we have seen in the Old Testament, God was very vocal in His commands and detailed in the use of instrumental music in their worship. But what do we find in the New Testament? Nothing but silence; not a word spoken! **The abundant detail of musical instruments throughout the Old Testament makes the silence of the New Testament all the more convincing in the fact that they were not present in the worship of the early church!** Are we to think that there were musical instruments in the churches just as were in the Temple, but the Holy Spirit has forgotten to tell us about them? The question must be asked, why is the Holy Spirit so silent in the New Testament about instrumental music? **The only logical answer is that God never intended for us under the New Covenant to use instrumental music in our worship!** If He did, don't you think He would have told us as He did with such great detail in the Old Testament?

As people who believe that we have a good understanding of the change of Covenant, let's take the Catholic church into consideration for a minute. Did you know that the plea of temple worship was the justification that was used by the Catholic church for many of its additions to their worship? Calvin accused the Catholic Church of reviving the temple worship within their religion and referred to them as the 'New Judaism.' The first problem here is all the innumerable ceremonies that they go through, of which God in His authority, had done away with for all time. They brought forward individual priests, when God called all Christians priests (**I Peter 2:9**). They brought forward the incense, but now we all have throne room access to God through the blood of Jesus (**book of Hebrews**). They brought forward the priests robes, and the gold and extravagance of their building which the temple had. Under the New Covenant the temple is within us as Christians (**I Cor 3**). Last of all, the Catholics were the first to bring instrumental music into their worship, all coming from the Old Testament / Old Covenant. If we do not have authority for any of these additions just mentioned, then the lack of Biblical authority makes them all wrong! Let's now see if that authority to use instrumental music exists for us under the New Covenant! . . .

COMMAND VERSES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Now that we are in the New Testament, we must search the scriptures and look for the authority in our use of instruments in worship ...

1 Cor 14:15

15 So what shall I do? I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my mind; I will **sing** with my spirit, but I will also **sing** with my mind. NIV

Eph 5:19-20

19 Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, **20** always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

NIV

Col 3:16

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

NIV

Hebrews 13:15

Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name.

ESV

James 5:13

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praise.

ESV

There is no command for playing an instrument, who is to play the instrument, what instrument was to be used, and when the instrument was to be played. Yet every one of those specific commands were given in the Old Testament with great detail when dealing with their worship at the temple. The only detail given in the New Testament is to **sing!** **Why do people feel it necessary to add something into the Christian worship that is not authorized by God?** Is it because we like it? Should we add hamburgers and coke to the Lord's supper because we like it better than unleavened bread and fruit of the vine? God never said we couldn't! Yet we know that this kind of thinking is wrong because we were given the example by Christ in what to use at His supper (**Matt 26:26-29, I Cor 11:23-27**). By giving us that example, it excludes everything else, including hamburgers and coke! It's the same way with instruments in our worship today. God gave us the command and example to sing. Why can't we just leave it at that?

The only thing that the instrument has done during our New Testament times, is to complicate the worship. It is dividing religious groups today. Some only want the organ and others want the big band. You will see on church billboards - 'traditional worship at 10:00 A.M. and contemporary worship at 11:00 A.M.' Those that like the organ come earlier (usually the older people) and those who like the concert style come later (usually the younger ones). These people have divided their church over an instrument and they don't even realize they have done it! Sometimes the use of instruments gets so loud in worship that you cannot hear each other sing, which violates **Eph 5:19**, which is written in the imperative form - 'command': 'Speak to one another'.

It's hard to fulfill that command if you cannot hear the person singing next to you. The instrument also becomes a crutch to many people, because they allow the instrument to make the noise for them so they don't have to sing. Less people sing when the instrument is present, yet God told us to sing! We know for a fact that one of the main reasons that the Lord's church split, was due to bringing in instrument into worship between 1860 and 1906. Was it that important that we have it? Did it accomplish what we had hoped for? Did it help to fulfill the prayer of Jesus in **(John 17:20ff)**, that we be unified so that the world would know that we are His?

I have heard the argument used from **(Col 3:16)**, that because the text tells us to sing psalms, that gives us the right to use instrumental music today. If you were to go back into the Old Testament, you will see that sometimes when psalms were sung, they were sung with the accompaniment of instruments. That is very true. Let's go back to the Lord's Supper for a minute. It tells us to specifically use unleavened bread and fruit of the vine. How do I know what God wants me to do with the bread? Do I stand on it? Hold it in the air? The way I know what God wants me to do with the bread is by what he told us. He said to 'eat' it! Now let's look at the verse in **(Col 3:16)** again on the subject of the psalms. How do I know what He wants me to do with the psalm? It is by what He told us. He told us to 'sing' it. Not to 'play' it. There has never been a Bible anywhere that translated the word, 'play'. All translators are in agreement, the word is 'sing'.

We should not end this topic without using history. In the first 1,000 years of the church, there are only two written documentations found that tell us that churches ever used musical instruments in their worship, and that was not until about 800 A.D. and beyond. The Catholic church was the first Christian based group to bring it in. As far as the other groups, it has only been their practice over the last 200 years. Two hundred years ago, instruments within worship was a thing unheard of, apart from the Catholic church. It is a fact of history that instruments are a recent addition to worship.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION

Let's look at three other verses in the New Testament that talk about instruments. They are all found in the book of Revelation ...

Rev 5:6-8

6 And I looked, and behold, in the midst of the throne and of the four living creatures, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as though it had been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent out into all the earth. **7** Then He came and took the scroll out of the right hand of Him who sat on the throne. **8** Now when He had taken the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

NKJV

Rev 14:1-3

14:1 Then I looked, and behold, a Lamb standing on Mount Zion, and with Him one hundred and forty-four thousand, having His Father's name written on their foreheads. **2** And I heard a voice from heaven, like the voice of many waters, and like the voice of loud thunder. And I heard the sound of harpists playing their harps. **3** They sang as it were a new song before the throne, before the four living creatures, and the elders; and no one could learn that song except the hundred and forty-four thousand who were redeemed from the earth.

NKJV

Rev 15:1-3a

15:1 Then I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvelous: seven angels having the seven last plagues, for in them the wrath of God is complete. **2** And I saw something like a sea of glass mingled with fire, and those who have the victory over the beast, over his image and over his mark and over the number of his name, standing on the sea of glass, having harps of God. **3** They sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb,

NKJV

Before one thinks that these three sections of scripture give us the right to bring instrumental music into the worship of the New Testament church, let's keep some things in mind first! When dealing with the book of Revelation, we need to remember that over eighty percent of the book's verses make reference to the Old Testament. Second of all, the book of Revelation is to be taken figuratively, not literally! Examples of that is the description of Jesus in both chapters one & five. In chapter one, Jesus is seen as wearing a robe and having eyes of fire. Over in chapter five He looks like a lamb that was slain. If this book is literal, which is He? In chapter twelve you have a dragon that sweeps a third of the stars out of the sky with his tail, literal? In chapter seventeen we have a picture of a prostitute sitting on seven hills. Literal? There are countless other examples throughout the book of Revelation like these. If you still choose to make the harps literal and we are to use them in our worship today, then we must stay consistent! Are we also to use bowls of incense (**Rev 5:8**) or sing the song of Moses (**Rev 15:3**)? This is all Old Testament wording, which is where the harps were played. The book of Revelation is not the place to go to justify using instrumental music in New Testament worship!

Let me conclude with this. Old Testament worship at the temple consisted of many physical things: robes, priest, garments, bowls, candles, sacrifices, gold etc... When we come to New Testament worship, what are we told that is needed? The word of God, some flat bread and grape juice, that's it! Let us just keep things simple! Every time we try to improve on Gods ways, they just end up complicating things. Let's let God tell us what He wants and lay aside our ideas and opinions. If we could all do that there would be more unity and less division.

Always remember who wants to divide us - Satan!!!

CHAPTER TEN

JESUS AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

Is Jesus Really God?

'Establishing The Authority Of Jesus' 205

The Holy Spirit 211

With Three Charts

'Time Line' 213

'God's Pouring Out Of His Spirit On All Flesh' 215

**'How The Holy Spirit Worked Through People
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IS JESUS REALLY GOD?

'ESTABLISHING THE AUTHORITY OF JESUS'

John 8:24

I told you that you would die in your sins, for unless you believe that I am he you will die in your sins."

ESV

Jesus is making a strong point here. He wants people to understand who He is. Remember the story with Moses as he talked to God through the burning bush on Mt. Sinai? Moses asked God a question. When I return to Egypt and the Israelites ask who sent me, 'what do I tell them your name is?' The Lord replied, 'Tell them that **I AM** sent you' (**Ex 3:13-14**). That same **I AM** that spoke to Moses on Mt. Sinai is the same **I AM** that is talking in **John 8:24**, which is Jesus. Jesus is telling the world that He is God! Jesus also tells us, that to have a misunderstanding of that fact could have devastating effects on where we spend eternity.

Why is it so important to understand that Jesus is God? I am glad you asked that question! Not understanding that Jesus is God could lead to a watered down view of the importance of what took place at the cross. First, we need to understand that Jesus is not like man with all of his imperfections. Jesus is different, way different! Jesus is sinless, and that qualifies Him and Him alone to be able to justly pay for the world's sins. Only a Jesus that is God could accomplish such a thing, even though He was in the flesh! Secondly, it could result in missing the significance of the resurrection and the power that Jesus had over the grave. Jesus decided when to die and when to raise. Only a Jesus that is God could have such power and control over life and death! Thirdly, it could also lead to a lack of respect for Jesus and the authority of His words. Jesus is referred to as the Word in **John 1:1-2**. That makes all the words of the Bible, Jesus' words. Those same words will judge us on the last day (**John 12:47-50**). If we do not have the respect for Jesus as God, it will diminish our view of God's word and will prevent us from obeying the gospel and continuing to walk faithfully with Jesus. As Jesus put it, 'we will die in our sins!' That is why this study is so important!

We will spend the next few pages, proving from the Bible, that Jesus is God ...

JESUS IS FROM THE BEGINNING

John 8:58

58 Jesus said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM
NKJV

John 17:4-5

4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

NKJV

Col. 1:16-19

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. [17] And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. [18] And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

ESV

John 1:1-5

1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. 5 The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

NASU

We can learn a lot of important things about Jesus from these verses. First we learn that Jesus was before creation. Everything that was created, was created through Him and by Him. Secondly, we see that Jesus is referred to as the ‘first born from the dead’. Some may take from this that Jesus was created or born, but this is not what this phrase is referring to. There have been others in the Bible that have been raised from the dead besides Jesus. But after their raising, they all died again. Not so with Jesus. Jesus is the ‘first’ one to raise from the dead, never to die again. Thus, He is the ‘first born from the dead’. For us who stay faithful to Jesus, we will follow behind Him because we will not die a second time either. But Jesus leads the way by being the first!

JESUS COMES TO EARTH

This is where most of the confusion comes from in our understanding that Jesus is God, and in His coming to earth and becoming flesh (man). When Jesus comes to earth, He, in a sense, takes on a different role. He becomes human. At the same time, He is still God. He gives up some things as you can see in these next few verses ...

Philip. 2:5-8

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, [8] he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

ESV

John 14:28

28 "You heard me say, 'I am going away and I am coming back to you.' If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.

NIV

When Jesus came to earth, He took on a humbling role, giving up His equality with God. He came to this earth to serve, not to be served. So when Jesus says that the Father is greater than He, He is referring to Himself in perspective of His servant role. That role came to an end when Jesus was raised from the grave and is seated at the right hand of the Father, receiving back the glory He once had before He left Heaven (**John 17:5**). This does not change the fact that Jesus is still God, even when He is in the flesh ...

Col 2:9-10

9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.

NKJV

JESUS ACCEPTS WORSHIP

When Peter arrives at Cornelius` house in **Acts chapter 10**, Cornelius tries to worship Peter. But Peter refuses to be worshipped, because he is just a man. In the last chapter of Revelation, the apostle John falls down at the feet of the angel and tries to worship him. But this angel is very clear that **only God is to be worshipped**, showing us that man and angels are never to be worshipped!

Acts 10:25-26

25 When Peter entered, Cornelius met him, and fell at his feet and worshiped him.
26 But Peter raised him up, saying, "Stand up; I too am just a man."

NASU

Rev 22:8-9

8 I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I had heard and seen them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who had been showing them to

to me. **9** But he said to me, "**Do not do it!** I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers the prophets and of all who keep the words of this book. **Worship God!**"

NIV

Yet, when people fall at the feet of Jesus, Jesus never tells them to get up. Jesus never tells them not to worship Him. This should show us that Jesus is God! Like the angel said, '**Worship God!**'!

Matt 14:32-33

32 And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. **33** Then those who were in the boat **worshiped him**, saying, "**Truly you are the Son of God.**"

NIV

Phil 2:10-11

10 that at the name of **Jesus every knee should bow**, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, **11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.

NKJV

Rev 5:13-14

13 Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing:

"To him who sits on the throne **and to the Lamb**
be praise and honor and glory and power,
for ever and ever!"

14 The four living creatures said, "Amen," and the elders fell down and **worshiped**.

NIV

THE BIBLE MAKES IT CLEAR

There are many other verses that tell us that Jesus is God. Here are just a few as we end our study ...

Isa 9:6

6 For a child will be born to us, **a son** will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called **Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,**
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.

NASU

Matt 1:22-23

22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: **23 "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL,"** which translated means, "**GOD WITH US.**"

NASU

Matt 28:18

18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "**All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.**"

NASU

Titus 2:13

13 looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great **God** and **Savior Jesus Christ**,

NKJV

2 Peter 1:1

1:1 Simon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ, To those who through the righteousness of our **God** and **Savior Jesus Christ** have received a faith as precious as ours:

NIV

1 John 5:20

And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true; and we are in him who is true, in **his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God** and eternal life.

ESV

John 20:27-29

27 Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." 28 And Thomas answered and said to Him, "**My Lord and my God!**" 29 Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, **you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.**"

NKJV

I don't claim to completely understand the depth of the relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, but I do know this. If the prophet Isaiah says that Jesus is God and four apostles (Paul, Peter, John and Thomas), tell us that He is God, then that should settle the matter for all of us!

Jesus is God!

THE HOLY SPIRIT

When it comes to the subject of the three persons of the God-Head, (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit), the Holy Spirit is probably the least understood or talked about. This is not because God has not given us enough information about the Holy Spirit. Eleven years ago, when I was at Sunset International Bible Institute in Lubbock, Texas learning to become a preacher, I was on Christmas break and decided to do a word study on the Holy Spirit. I started out by printing every verse in the Bible on the Holy Spirit and to my amazement, I had over 30 pages when I finished! What really helped me see the vastness and depth of the Spirit and His roles, was to see all the names that the Bible gives for the Spirit ...

the Spirit of God	(Job 33:4)
the Holy Spirit	(Acts 28:25)
the Spirit of your Father	(Matt 10:19-20)
the Spirit of the Lord	(Micah 3:8)
the Spirit of Jesus	(Phil 1:19)
God's Spirit	(I Cor 3:16)
the Spirit of the Sovereign Lord	(Isa 61:1)
the Counselor	(John 15:26-27)
One Spirit	(I Cor 12:13, Eph 4:4)
the Eternal Spirit	(Heb 9:13)
your Good Spirit	(Neh 9:20)
the Spirit of Truth	(John 14:17)
the promised Holy Spirit	(Acts 2:33)
the Spirit of Sonship	(Rom 8:15)
the Spirit of Wisdom	(Eph 1:17)
the Spirit of Life and Peace	(Rom 8:6)
the Spirit of Grace	(Heb 10:29)

That says a lot about who the Spirit is and what He does! Unfortunately we will not look at all that is taught about the Spirit of God in this study. The purpose of this study, is to answer from the Bible, the two most asked questions that people ask me about the Spirit. The first question is about how God works in people's lives today and the second is about modern day miracles. Both questions have direct ties to the Holy Spirit of God.

HOW THE SPIRIT WORKS THROUGH PEOPLE

To understand the Spirit, is to understand how He works through people. All through the Old Testament the Spirit was present. He was at creation (**Gen 1:2**). He helped people with special skills (**Ex 31:2-3**). He enabled man to prophesy

(Num 11:25). He gave man the word of God (Num 24:2-4). The Spirit also worked through people as a sign (Judges 14:6). Now when we come to the New Testament, we find all those same workings of the Holy Spirit. Yet there is something different, or should I say something new, that takes place in the New Testament in regards to the Spirit, that did not take place in the Old Testament!

John 7:39

39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.

NIV

Even though the Spirit was working in many different ways throughout the Bible prior to John chapter seven, the Spirit had not yet been given before Jesus is glorified. Jesus will be glorified when He returns to heaven and sits at the Father's right hand (John 17:4-5). Jesus promised that when that takes place, the Father would send the Holy Spirit (John 14:16-17, 26, Acts 1:4,8). To better understand the difference in how the Holy Spirit will operate at this point may be found in what Jesus told His apostles in John chapter fourteen ...

John 14:17-18

17 the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. 18 I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

NKJV

Prior to this verse, the Holy Spirit was with the apostles, giving them the ability to do miracles and speak the word of God (Matt 10:5-20). Yet despite this fact, the Holy Spirit was not yet 'in' them. **There lies the difference!** Something is going to change when Jesus returns to heaven and is glorified and the Spirit is poured forth on mankind. The Bible foretells of this event as far back as the book of Joel ...

Joel 2:28-32

"And it shall come to pass afterward,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh;
your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
your old men shall dream dreams,
and your young men shall see visions.

[29] Even on the male and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

[30] "And I will show wonders in the heavens and on the earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. [31] The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon to blood, before the great and awesome day of the Lord comes. [32] And it shall come to pass that everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in

Jerusalem there shall be those who escape, as the Lord has said, and among the survivors shall be those whom the Lord calls.

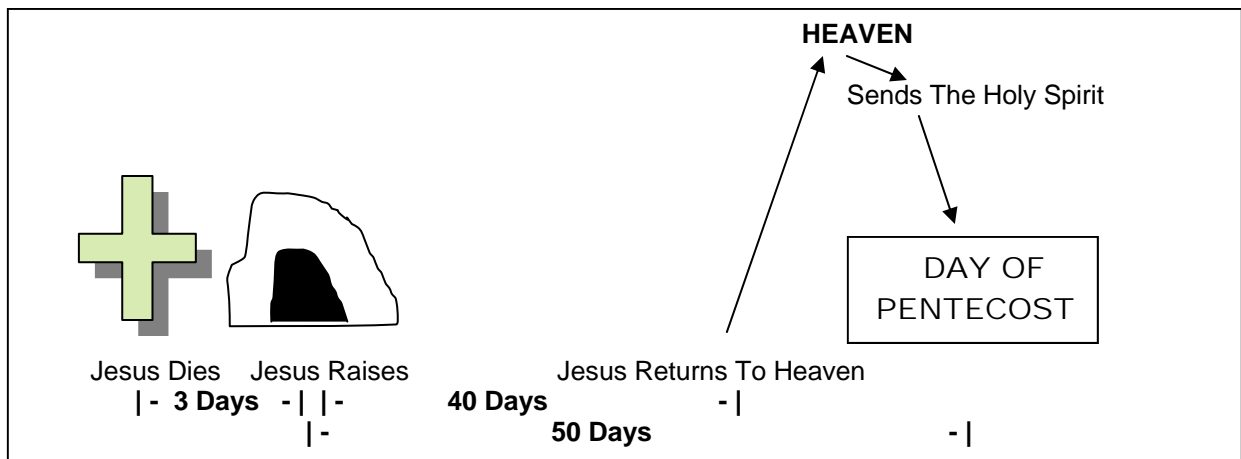
ESV

We know when this foretold event took place, it was on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**). The reason we know this is because when the apostle Peter was preaching to the crowds that day, he quoted these same verses out of Joel (**Acts 2:17-21**), equating that the prophecy of Joel had been fulfilled on that day! I believe that John the baptizer also prophesies about this day concerning the Spirit ...

Matt 3:11-12

11 "I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. 12 His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor, gathering his wheat into the barn and burning up the chaff with unquenchable fire."

NIV



When the Spirit is poured out in Acts chapter two, the Bible says that He is poured out on 'all' people (**Acts 2:17**). When Jesus says that He will baptize 'you' with the Holy Spirit, the 'you' is everyone that is listening to John the baptizer preach (Jerusalem, Judea and the region of the Jordon **Matt 3:11**). I believe that all of this is pointing to the Day of Pentecost in Acts chapter two. This is how the Spirit will be poured out on all people. It is by the word of God (preached through the apostles), and the confirmation of that word through the evidence of the miraculous signs (also done through the apostles by the working of the Spirit).

Two results will come from this outpouring of the Spirit, one positive and the other negative. People will either accept the message that is preached by the apostles or they will refuse it. If they accept the message with an obedient faith, the Lord will add them to His number, the church (**Acts 2:41**), which equates to what John the baptizer says, 'He will gather His wheat into His barn' (**Matt 3:12**).

If the people do not accept the message of the apostles, then they will not be added to God's number (The church). In the end they will be burned up with the chaff (**Matt 3:12**), because they rejected the pouring out of the Spirit. All of this happened on the day of Pentecost (**Acts 2**). Now here is where the Holy Spirit connects to people when they accept the message ...

The Message Preached

Acts 2:37-39

Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" [38] And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. [39] For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

ESV

If you accept the message preached by responding with repentance and baptism, then you will receive the promise, which is forgiveness of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both of these can now be given, because Jesus has now brought to completion God's redemptive plan through His death, burial and raising to life! Thanks to Jesus, sins can be forgiven and God can seal His faithful as His own possession ...

Eph 1:13-14

13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation -- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, **14** who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

NASU

Follow the charts on the next couple of pages, they may help you in your understanding this process a little better.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR A CHRISTIAN?

On the day of Pentecost, the Spirit will connect to Christians in two ways. I have chosen two different words to describe this, the Person of the Spirit and the Power of the Spirit. When people accept the gospel message with an obedient faith, as preached by the apostle Peter in Acts chapter two, people will receive the Person of the Spirit (**Acts 2:38, 5:32, Eph 1:13-14**).

Let's talk about the Person of the Spirit first. The question is this, 'what does that do to the Christian now that they have received the Person of the Spirit and are sealed with Him?' Does this mean that a Christian is forever locked into salvation, no matter what that Christian chooses to do? What if that Christian decides to leave Jesus?

GOD'S POURING OF HIS SPIRIT OUT ON ALL FLESH Joel 2 & Acts 2

Up to that time the Spirit had not been given,
 since Jesus had not been glorified
 John 7:39

HEAVEN

Jesus Is Glorified

Luke 24:48

Jesus Will Send The H/S

PENTECOST

H/S Poured Out On All People

A Great & Dreadful Day



John 14:17

Luke 3:16-17

Joel 2:28-32

Acts 1:5

Acts 1:8

John 7:37-39

Matt 3:11-12

EZEK 39:29

CHART # 1

The H/S "IN US"

John 14:17, Ezek 37:14,
 I Cor 6:19-20, Eph 2:22

Wheat In Barn / Chaff Burned Up

Will the Spirit automatically take over and force that Christian to remain faithful now that he/she is sealed? Before we answer this important question, let's keep some key verses in mind ...

- Christians can grieve the Holy Spirit. (Eph 4:30)
- Christians can insult the Spirit of Grace. (Heb 10:29)
- Christians can lie to the Holy Spirit. (Acts 5:3-4)
- Christians can test the Spirit of the Lord. (Acts 5:9)
- Christians can blaspheme the Holy Spirit. (Mk. 3:29)

These verses make it clear that a Christian, despite the fact that they have been baptized into Jesus and have received the Holy Spirit and sealed by Him, still have the choice to go against God. The book of Hebrews was written to Christians who were walking away from Jesus, thus losing their salvation if they did not change their course (Heb 10:38). Ananias and Sapphira (Christians) both lied to the Holy Spirit and fell dead at the apostles' feet (Acts 5:5,9). In Mark chapter three, Jesus tells us that anyone who blasphemes the Holy Spirit (meaning to speak against the Spirit with the way one lives, up to the point of their death), will never be forgiven. It is an eternal sin (Mk 3:29)! Thus, Christians are not automatically controlled by the Spirit, assuring them heaven. The Christian has to cooperate with the Spirit, faithfully walking with Jesus. We, as Christians must live in accordance with the Spirit, having our minds set on what the Spirit desires (Rom 8:5).

Christians

Rom 8:12-14

12 Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. 13 For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. 14 For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

NKJV

Salvation is not automatic (once saved, always saved). A Christian must continue to do their part. Thus, to be led by the Spirit, **is to be led by the Spirit's direction through the word of God.** If I, as a Christian, decide to go down to the local bank to get some money, I have a choice to make. I can either draw the money out of my account, or I can decide to rob that bank and take money that does not belong to me. If I am led by the Spirit through the direction of God's word, I will only draw out the money that belongs to me, because that is what God's word would tell me to do. But if I am **not led by the Spirit**, I may choose to take money that does not belong to me. What makes the difference? **It is the word of God.** If I have my head in the Bible, and allow the teaching of the Bible to direct my decisions, **then the Spirit is guiding me.** So to be led by the Spirit, is to actively be reading and living out God's word in our lives. People who claim to be led by God's Spirit apart from actively engaging in God's word, are not being led by the Spirit! **They are only fooling themselves!!!** So every Christian is sealed with the Person of the Holy Spirit when they are baptized. But remember, you must continue to do your part! **Follow the charts here ...**

How The Holy Spirit Worked Through People After The Cross

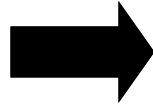
DAY OF PENTECOST

H/S The Power
Acts 2:1-4

H/S The Person
Acts 2:38

The darkened half of this chart came to an end after the apostles and those they passed the gift on to died.

I Cor 13:8 - 12



The apostles pass this gift on to others by laying their hands on others > > >

Apostles Acts 2:1-4	Cornelius & Family Acts 10:44-48, 11:15-17	Stephen Acts 6:6	Philip Acts 8:13	Samaritans Acts 8:17&18	12 Disciples Acts 19:6
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Results

Speak In Tongues Speak In Tongues Miraculous Signs Healed People Does Not Say? Spoke In Tongues & Prophesied

Purpose

A Sign For The Jews A Sign For The Jewish Nation A Sign For The Sanhedrin A Sign For The People In Samaria The Sorcerer People Of Ephesus

The H/S "IN US"

John 14:17, Ezek 37:14,
I Cor 6:19-20, Eph 2:22

CHART # 2

Still Continuing Today, When People Become Christians

WHAT ABOUT MODERN DAY MIRACLES?

Many people today are confused about the subject of modern day miracles. This will bring us to the Power of the Spirit. People love the thought of miracles: raising the dead, feeding the masses, healing the sick, and pulling your tax money out of the mouth of a fish! But the question is this, do they take place today? Let us first ask, 'why were miracles done in the Bible, and what were their purposes?'

John 14:11

11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. NIV

Acts 14:3

3 So Paul and Barnabas spent considerable time there, speaking boldly for the Lord, who confirmed the message of his grace by enabling them to do miraculous signs and wonders. NIV

Heb 2:3-4

3 how will we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, 4 God also testifying with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will.

NASU

It is clear, miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit were to confirm the message of Jesus, the apostles and the prophets. The apostles spoke in tongues (other languages **Acts 2:4**) and prophesied (inspired with the word of God **Acts 2:14ff**), on the day of Pentecost. That makes sense, since it was only the apostles doing the preaching that day. This is what I call the Power of the Holy Spirit. Their message was confirmed as being from God, based on the evidence of the miracles they did through the Spirit.

Acts 2:43

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles.

ESV

The Power of the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles on the day of Pentecost to help give confirmation to their message. But as time went on, the church grew and the Power of the Spirit was passed on to other Christians. The Bible seems to make a strong point in this area, showing that these miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit were passed on to other Christians **only by** the laying on of the apostle's hands (**Acts 6:6, 8:13, 17&18, 19:6**). We have no evidence from the Bible of these gifts being passed on from one Christian to another. It ended with the apostles and that first generation

of Christians in whom it was passed on to. Even some writings of history confirm that. We do have one exception of this in scripture, and that is with the story of Cornelius in Acts chapter ten ...

Acts 10:44-46

While Peter was still saying these things, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word. [45] And the believers from among the circumcised who had come with Peter were amazed, because the gift of the Holy Spirit was poured out even on the Gentiles. [46] For they were hearing them speaking in tongues and extolling God. Then Peter declared,
ESV

We know that this is the Power of the Holy Spirit, because it is shown through the immediate evidence of miracles (speaking in tongues). But here the apostles did not lay their hands on them for this to happen. The Spirit moved the same way He did on the day of Pentecost with the apostles; He just fell on them. Here is what I believe to be the reason for that in staying with the context of Acts chapter ten. It was a sign for the Jews. The Jews, including the apostle Peter, had a hard time understanding that Gentiles could be saved (**Acts 10 & Gal 2**). So the Spirit gives the Jews a sign, just like He did with the Jews in Acts chapter two. These Gentiles start to speak in tongues, giving Peter and the other Jews standing there confirmation that Gentiles could be saved. Once Peter sees this, he says to them ...

Acts 10:47-48

"Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" [48] And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. Then they asked him to remain for some days.
ESV

They received the Power of the Spirit as a sign from God to the Jews that Gentiles can be saved (**Acts 10:44-46**). They then received the Person of the Spirit as a seal of belonging to God for salvation when they were baptized (**Acts 10:48**). See how it works! The Person of the Holy Spirit is for a seal of salvation and the Power of the Holy Spirit is used as signs of confirmation to lead people to the gospel message for salvation! Both are from the Spirit and both have their place.

But what about miracles today? Are they still taking place? We know that the apostles are no longer with us today to place their hands on other Christians. Thus, no one can pass that gift on to others today. We also know that the message of God has already been confirmed by many different signs done through the Holy Spirit.

But doesn't God still want people drawn to the message so that people can be saved today? How can that be done today without miracles being done? What could God use today in the lives of Christians to help draw people to His word? I am glad you asked! ...

As much as we want miracles today, it does have its drawbacks. Think of the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt to the promised land. They witnessed countless miracles, yet it was never enough. They always wanted more! The Jews with Jesus in John chapter six were the same way. Jesus fed them one day, and the next day they wanted more. When they didn't get what they wanted from Jesus, they left Him (**John 6:66**). Miracles do have their place, but God has always intended for something even more powerful to draw men to Himself and His saving message, and that is why miracles had to come to an end ...

1 Cor 13:8-10

8 Love never fails. But where there are prophecies, they will cease; where there are tongues, they will be stilled; where there is knowledge, it will pass away. **9** For we know in part and we prophesy in part, **10 but when perfection comes, the imperfect disappears.** NIV

What is the perfection to come and what is the imperfect that goes away? I have heard many possibilities, but if you stay with the context of First Corinthians chapter thirteen, I believe that the answer is easy! What is First Corinthians chapter thirteen known for? **LOVE!** So what is the perfection being talked about here? I believe that it is **LOVE!** What was the first century church in Corinth lacking? **LOVE!** What does Paul want the church in Corinth to focus on? **LOVE!** What does the church in Corinth want to focus on? Who has the greater gifts (miracles **I Cor 12 & 14**). What does Jesus want the church to be known for, their miracles or their love? **THEIR LOVE!** What will go away when this love is practiced and shown to others? The miracles! What draws people to the message of God even better than any miracle?

LOVE!

Unfortunately it will take awhile for the first century church to grow up in love. The apostle John is a good example of that. Jesus called James and John 'sons of thunder', because they wanted to call down fire on a town because they would not listen to Jesus (**Mk 3:17, Luke 9:51-57**). But by the time we read I, II & III John, the apostle John who was once known as the 'son of thunder', has now become known as 'the apostle of love!' It takes awhile for a person to learn and grow in the love of Christ. The first century church was no different! Once the first century church grows up in love (perfection), then the imperfect (miracles) will fade away.

I know that all of us want miracles done through the hands of men today, but miracles do not save people's souls. The gospel message saves people's souls and that is why miracles were performed, to give confirmation to God's messengers and draw people to His saving message. Now that the message has been confirmed through the miracles of the first century, we no longer need them. All we need today is to show the wonderful, caring, sacrificial love of Jesus. I am convinced if we will do that, the world will take notice, seeing that we have been with Jesus and that His Spirit truly lives in us! **By showing people the love of Christ, they may just ask, 'what must I do to be saved (Acts 16:30)?'**

APPENDIX

<i>Resources, References and Suggested Study Aids</i>	<i>223</i>
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