

SERMONS

VOLUME 1

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Overcoming Temptation	Page 1
Survey of the Bible	Page 11
The Parable of the Seething Pot	Page 19
What Must I Do To Be Saved?	Page 26
Introduction to the Seven Letters	Page 34
Purpose of Worship	Page 45
Establishment of the Kingdom	Page 50
Where There is No Condemnation	Page 57
The Lord's Supper	Page 64
Music of the New Testament Church	Page 73
Growing Old Gracefully	Page 86
First and Second Adam	Page 92
How Does One Call on the Name of the Lord?	Page 102
Acts: Conversion Demonstrated	Page 106
Strong Drink	Page 112
What About Attendance?	Page 120
Where Are the Dead?	Page 125
We Are Not the Enemy	Page 135
Attitude Toward the Truth	Page 143
Gospel Preachers	Page 154
Seven Attributes of Sainthood	Page 162
The Great Design of the Gospel	Page 169
Prayer	Page 173
Principles and Precepts from Proverbs	Page 177
The Sin of Gambling	Page 185
How God Answers Prayers	Page 190
Counting the Cost of a Lost Soul	Page 203

Overcoming Temptation

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The world's greatest and ugliest problem is sin.

1. Sin contaminates every accountable person:
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:20: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not."
 - b. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
2. Sin is very broad in scope.
 - a. It includes anyone who violates God's word in some overt way.
 - 1) 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - 2) 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
 - b. It extends to words.
 - 1) Matthew 12:36-37: "But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
 - 2) Ephesians 4:29: "Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."
 - c. It includes evil thoughts and motives.
 - 1) Matthew 5:27-28: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."
 - 2) Matthew 15:18-20: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
 - d. An action that violates our conscience is sinful: "And he that doubteth is damned if he eat, because *he eateth* not of faith: for whatsoever *is* not of faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23).
 - e. And even religious tenets that are taught or practiced without divine approval is sinful.
 - 1) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 2) 2 John 1:9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - f. Sin is also done by an omission of our God-given duty.
 - 1) James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - 2) Ezekiel 3:17-19: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul."
 - 3) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - 4) John 9:41: "Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye should have no sin: but now ye say, We

- see; therefore your sin remaineth."
- 5) John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." [But what if they did not do those things?].
 - 6) John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin."
 - 7) James 3:1: "My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation."
3. Sin deceives.
 - a. Romans 7:11: "For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew *me*."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 11:3: "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtlety, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ."
 - c. 1 Timothy 2:14: "And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression."
 - d. Hebrews 3:13: "But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."
 4. Sin spreads.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 5:5-6: "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. Your glorying *is* not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?"
 - b. David's sin affected not only himself and Bathsheba, but Uriah, the infant, his family, and the nation of Israel (2 Kings 11-18).
 5. Sin has awful consequences on a nation that is afflicted with it.
 - a. Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."
 - b. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
 6. Sin has an awful penalty for those who die guilty of it.
 - a. Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - b. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - c. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - d. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
- B. The awfulness of sin exemplifies the gravity of our lesson on "Overcoming Temptation."
1. The best answer to sin is to avoid it completely, never to fall victim to it. But since this is impossible for accountable people, another response is needed.
 - a. The gospel is God's remedy for the guilt, the consequences, and the practice of sin.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 3) 2 Peter 1:3-11: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
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And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

- b. But to avoid future sin, one must learn to overcome temptations as they present themselves to us.
2. While none of us can live above sin, the gospel provides the guidance and help to conquer temptations.
 - a. Mark 14:38: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - b. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. To understand sin, we need to know the process by which sin is committed.

1. Sin is the transgression of God's law (1 John 3:4). Its definition is "to miss the mark." *Sin* was used originally to describe what an archer did when his arrow failed to hit the target.
2. James 1:13-15 gives the technical process by which sin is committed: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 - a. God is not the instigator of sin; rather the lust of man lies at the heart of every sin. Many of the appetites of our fleshly beings have God-given methods of gratification, but when they are appeased by unlawful means, or when they are given priority above spiritual requirements (Matt. 6:33), sin is the result. But many appetites we develop have no sinless means of satisfaction (gambling, drinking, killing, etc.).
 - b. Our lust is allowed to come to the forefront; it is enticed by some situation or development; when we succumb to the enticement, we transgress God's will; at that point, we are separated from God. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1,2).
 - c. When sin has run its ultimate course, and we die still in its grasp, we are consigned to the Devil's Hell, forever separated from God (Matt. 25:30-46; Rev. 20:12-15).
3. The key to overcoming temptation is to identify and subdue the lusts (the strong desires) of the mortal part of us. "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41).

B. To understand temptation, we need to know the paths by which it can come.

1. Temptations approach us through three different avenues: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (John 2:15-17).
 - a. They can come by means of the lust of the flesh. These are appeals made through the desires which arise from the evil appetites of the flesh, and find expression through the flesh. *Flesh* is

- used here, not in reference to skin, muscle, bone, and tissue, but to the lusts which are gratified by means of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5:19-21).
- b. They can come by means of the lust of the eyes. These are desires which are aroused through the appeal of objects by the way they look. We lust for them because they are very appealing to us in appearance.
 - c. They can come by means of the pride of life. These are evil desires for worldly honor; they appeal to our vanity. Evil actions are often produced because of our desire for the praise of men, to have something that will cause others to honor us or be jealous of us.
2. Eve was tempted through these very avenues: "And when the woman saw that the tree *was* good for food, and that it *was* pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6).
- a. She saw that the forbidden fruit was good for food, and she thought that she *just had to have it!* There was more than enough food in Eden to satisfy her hunger, and God had warned them against eating from this tree. Her hunger was not sinful, but her desire to eat this fruit certainly led her astray.
 - b. She was tempted through the lust of the eyes. She saw that the forbidden fruit was pleasant to the sight. Prohibited things often are pleasant to see. Beer commercials portray this "Beelzebub's Brew" as very desirable. They do not show the alcoholic in the gutter, the mangled bodies of the victims of a drunk driver, the shattered life of the imbiber, or the ruined homes of his innocent family.
 - c. She was tempted through the pride (vainglory) of life, the desire to be as wise as God. But what a lie the devil had told her!
3. Christ was tempted through these same three avenues (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 4:1-13).
- a. When the Lord completed his fasting, Satan enticed him to turn stones into bread. But he prefaced his directive with the doubt-inducing thought, "If thou be the Son of God..." To obey the command of Satan would be sinful; to misuse supernatural powers would be wrong; hence, Jesus reproved the injunction with a reference to Scripture. This was an appeal to the lust of the flesh, an appeal that could not be satisfied by the means propounded by the devil.
 - b. Satan then brought the Lord to a pinnacle of the temple, and directed him to cast himself down, for God had promised in the Scriptures that nothing untoward would happen to him. Christ replied that to tempt God (to put the Father to the test) was wrong, and cited the Old Testament reference to prove it. This was an appeal to the lust of the eyes, and could not be gratified without violating the will of God.
 - c. The Devil took him up into a high mountain, and showed him the kingdoms of the world, promising that he would give all these to the Lord if he would worship him. Christ replied that it was God who was to be worshipped and served, not Satan, and again cited the proper scriptural authority. This was an appeal to the pride of life, and could not be accomplished without committing sin.
- C. To meet temptation, we need to know the specific appeals to which it can be made.
1. One of the most common today is through appeals to our sexual appetites.
 - a. All sorts of sexual conduct (really, misconduct) is promoted by movies, songs, magazines, television programs, advertisements, television commercials, current fashions, and perhaps in a host of other ways.
 - b. Lustful desires must be controlled: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart" (Matt. 5:27-28).
 2. A desire for wealth and the things that money can buy is prominent in our worldly society. Money is required to provide the things essential to life and comfort, but contentment does not necessarily accompany a big bank account. The pitiful end of Howard Hughes clearly illustrates this fact. It has
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been reported that Hughes' grandfather was a gospel preacher.

- a. 2 Corinthians 12:10: "Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."
 - b. Philippians 4:11-13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
3. A craving for political or social influence and the power that comes thereby, can lead unsuspecting souls into sin and perdition. Seeking the praise of men or preeminence over men has been the cause for many to forfeit the glories of heaven.
- a. John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess *him*, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
 - b. 3 John 9-11: "I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth *them* out of the church. Beloved, follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doeth good is of God: but he that doeth evil hath not seen God."
4. Vainglory has led many of our brethren from the highway of holiness. Why is it that some want to have elaborate church buildings and boast about huge offerings and large gatherings? While we would not judge the motives of anyone, it is clear that pride is apt to be the motive of some. "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5).
- a. When preachers, elders, and Christians are willing to accept any kind of compromised "gospel" because their "numbers" will be enhanced thereby, we can know their real motive is not to please God and save souls; it is a means of self-gratification!
 - b. Many bulletins contain "great swelling words" of boasting about the size of their crowds, the dimensions of their buildings, the number of baptisms, and the amount of their contributions. Is this not self-aggrandizement?
 - c. Without the support of truth, such achievements are utterly without meaning, for the Moslems can put anybody to shame if only numbers and dollar signs are considered. God is glorified only if we follow his will!
 - d. By following God's requirement to develop and maintain humility, this evil disposition can be overcome.
 - 1) Matthew 5:3: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Philippians 2:3-8: "*Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."
 - 3) James 4:10: "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up."
 - e. Many are led astray from holiness by anger, malice, hatred, and resentment.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:26-27: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath:

- Neither give place to the devil."
- 2) Colossians 3:8: "But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:1-2: "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby."
5. Many fall victim to temptation because they have not learned to subdue their tongues (Jas. 3:1-12).
 6. Many fall into sin due to trials and hardships. The loss of a spouse can be devastating, especially in the case of decades-old marriage. Ill health, a severe or crippling injury, a fire, the death of a child, the loss of a job, or the traitorous work of a supposed friend, can be enough to overturn our spiritual equilibrium.
 - a. Hebrews 12:6: "For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth."
 - b. Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - c. Revelation 3:19: "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent."
 7. An evil habit can lead to a thoughtless practice of sin. The best solution is never to develop such a habit. But when one has fallen into the routine of drinking, smoking, using profanity, thinking evil thoughts, embellishing the truth, gossiping, backbiting, etc., it is with great difficulty that such a practice is broken; but with diligence on your part, the encouragement of your Christian friends, and with the help of God, you can beat it!
 - a. Romans 15:1-2: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification."
 - b. Ephesians 3:20-21: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:14: "Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men*."
- D. We need to know that temptations can be successfully met.
1. An understanding of the danger involved, if we are successfully tempted, will help us overcome enticement. Depending on the nature of the sin involved, we stand to lose our happiness, our health, our family, our spouse, our job, our friends, and our souls! Nothing is worth an eternity in Gehenna! No pleasure or earthly advantage is worth obtaining at the cost of heaven!
 - a. Psalms 16:11: "Thou wilt show me the path of life: in thy presence *is* fulness of joy; at thy right hand *there are* pleasures for evermore."
 - b. Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"
 - c. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - d. Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - e. Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."
 2. We must be able and willing to recognize temptation for what it is: an allurements of the devil to entice us away from our Savior. Temptation is presented in such a pretty package that we often fail to see it for what it is. Or in the heat of a moment of anger or passion, we act wickedly before we take thought.
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- a. Genesis 4:8: "And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him."
 - b. 2 Samuel 11:1-4: "And it came to pass, after the year was expired, at the time when kings go forth *to battle*, that David sent Joab, and his servants with him, and all Israel; and they destroyed the children of Ammon, and besieged Rabbah. But David tarried still at Jerusalem. And it came to pass in an eveningtide, that David arose from off his bed, and walked upon the roof of the king's house: and from the roof he saw a woman washing herself; and the woman *was* very beautiful to look upon. And David sent and inquired after the woman. And *one* said, *Is* not this Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam, the wife of Uriah the Hittite? And David sent messengers, and took her; and she came in unto him, and he lay with her; for she was purified from her uncleanness: and she returned unto her house."
 3. We must have a desire to overcome the temptation. We are not apt to defeat the devil's allurements accidentally. And it is certain that we cannot successfully meet a real temptation without wanting to overcome it.
 - a. Daniel 1:8: "But Daniel purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the portion of the king's meat, nor with the wine which he drank: therefore he requested of the prince of the eunuchs that he might not defile himself."
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 4. We must believe what God has said in his word. If we do not believe the Bible, we will think there is no reason to flee from temptation. In our mind, we would say there is no such thing as sin or the penalty for sin. "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences" (2 Cor. 5:10,11).
 5. We must know the Bible if we want to be fully equipped to defeat temptations. The Lord used the word of God to put Satan to flight (Matt. 4:1-11).
 - a. Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - b. 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous."
 6. We must pray with regularity to avoid temptation. How many of our troubles could have been eluded if more prayers had been offered? How many problems have been averted because we did pray?
 - a. Matthew 6:13: "And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen."
 - b. Mark 14:38: "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak."
 7. We need the support and encouragement of our fellow-saints to overcome many of our temptations. If we seek their company, and keep away from unsavory people, places, and situations as much as possible, much less temptation will befall us; and with the influence of our brethren to hearten us, we are more apt to remain loyal.
 8. We need to worship regularly with the saints, so that the greatest depth of strength may be developed within us. No one can worship God sincerely and scripturally, and not receive strength. The songs will build us up; studying God's word together will supply us with resources with which to do battle with Satan; giving will develop a spirit of sacrifice so that we are better prepared to forego some of the desires which could otherwise lead us into sin; in eating the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of his tremendous gift and our relative unworthiness, and thus inspire us to loyalty; and prayers to God cannot but help us.
 9. We need to trust God to live up to his promise to help us in temptation. "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to
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bear it" (1 Cor. 10:13).

- a. He reminds us that we are not the only one to face temptations. From the Garden of Eden to the end of time, Satan busily does his evil work! Christ faced every kind of temptation, and did not falter (Heb. 4:15). Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, Solomon, the prophets, the apostles, and all of the New Testament saints, faced temptations.
- b. God is faithful to his promises.
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
 - 2) Each person has his own special strengths and weaknesses, and we all have a breaking point. An aged person does not face the same temptations as a young person; ambition and sins of the flesh may assail the young, and the old may have to overcome cynicism, loneliness, and resentment. Satan will attack us at our weakest point. Often, our weak points are counter-balanced by strengths.
- c. God will make a way of escape. He does not say he will remove the temptation, but will make a way to escape. The escape might be through flight (2 Tim. 2:22); it might require fighting (Jas. 4:7); prayer will be needed (Matt. 6:13; 26:41).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. When we are overcome by temptation, God has provided the remedy.

1. For the alien sinner, one who has never known God, the requirements are plain.
 - a. Hear the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - 2) Acts 15:9: "And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith."
 - 3) Acts 16:32: "And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house."
 - 4) Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b. Believe the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 3) Acts 8:36-37: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 4) Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - c. Repent and turn from the practice of sin.
 - 1) Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 - 4) 2 Corinthians 7:10: "For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death."
 - 5) 2 Peter 3:9: "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."
 - d. Confess faith in Christ.
 - 1) Matthew 10:32-33: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also

- before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven."
- 2) Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - 3) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."
- e. Be baptized into Christ for the remission of sins.
- 1) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - 4) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 5) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
- f. Remain faithful. Christians are to realize that they cannot live above an occasional stumble into sin, thus need all the help they can get.
- 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) Romans 15:1-3: "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please *his* neighbour for *his* good to edification. For even Christ pleased not himself; but, as it is written, The reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me."
 - 3) 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 - 4) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
2. For the erring Christian, the requirements are plain.
- a. Repent of the evil that has been done. "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee" (Acts 8:22).
 - b. Confess the fault.
 - 1) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - 2) 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."
 - c. Pray for forgiveness.
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) Acts 8:24: "Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me."
 - 3) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
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3. Temptation is not a sin of itself; it is the occasion for sin to develop.
 - a. Our Lord was tempted on many occasions, but that did not make him sinful. It is the yielding to temptations that is sin.
 - b. The devil does not spend much time on those already securely in his clutches; he is after those who are holy to some degree. Therefore, when temptations come, that may indicate that Satan needs to work on you some more; you are not yet under his control.
- B. Some illustrations may help us appreciate the information we have studied.
 1. Benjamin Franklin, well-known American writer, scientist, and diplomat, wrote of a childhood experience that deeply affected him. One holiday when he was seven years old, his friends filled his pockets with coins. He immediately started for the toy shop, but on the way he was distracted by the sound of a whistle. Franklin was so intrigued by the sound of the whistle that he offered its owner all of his money for it. With great excitement he ran home to tell his family about his purchase, but they laughed at him and explained that he paid four times what the whistle was worth. Franklin's joy soon turned to bitter tears; but he often remembered the lesson in later life when he was tempted to buy some unnecessary object, and would think, "Don't pay too much for the whistle."
 - a. Unfortunately, many of us are paying too much for the whistle when it comes to sin. It looks so alluring to us, and presents such a grand picture, but we seldom stop to look at the actual cost.
 - 1) Sin costs us our serenity. It robs us of our peace of mind. In Isaiah 57:20-21 the writer pictures the wicked "like the tossing sea which cannot rest." David knew the cost of sin with Bathsheba. Night after night what he had done reverberated in his consciousness. He could not forget it, and in Psalm 51:3 he says, "My sin is ever before me."
 - 2) Sin costs us our self respect. Sin fills our lives with bitter memories and regrets. Imagine the apostle Paul as he went to worship with the saints in Jerusalem. Perhaps he saw children whose parents he had imprisoned, or a widow whose husband he had killed. Although he felt the forgiveness of God, he also remembered the pain of that sin.
 - 3) Sin ultimately costs us our soul. Adam and Eve paid the price of their sin by being separated from God. Romans 6:23 promises that sin still demands the same price.
 - b. No pleasure that sin can give is worth what it costs. "Don't pay too much for the whistle." [Ron Stough].
 2. It was almost 1:00 in the morning when the phone rang in the Winters' home. Dr. Leo Winters, the highly acclaimed Chicago surgeon, was awakened with a start. Tonight it was a young boy, they said, tragically mangled in a late night accident. Could not someone else handle it? Not this time. This time his hands were possibly the only ones in the city, or maybe even in the whole region, which were skilled enough to save.
 - a. The quickest route happened to be through a rather rough area, but with time being a critical factor, it was worth the risk. He almost made it through the worst of the neighborhood. Almost. Then, at a stop light, his door was jerked open by a man in a grey hat and a dirty flannel shirt. "I've got to have your car!" the man screamed, pulling him from his seat. Winters tried explaining the gravity of his situation, but the man was not listening.
 - b. The doctor wandered for over 45 minutes looking for a phone. When the taxi finally got him to the hospital, over an hour had passed. He burst through the doors and into the nurses' station, but the nurse on duty only shook her head. Too late. The boy had died just about 30 minutes earlier. "His dad got here just before he died," the nurse told him. "He is in the chapel. Go see him. He is awfully confused. He could not understand why you never came."
 - c. Without explaining, Dr. Winters walked hurriedly down the hall and quietly entered the chapel. At the front knelt the huddled form of a weeping father—in a grey hat and dirty flannel shirt. Tragically, he had pushed from his life the only one who could save.
 - d. I have the strange feeling that I have known that same father. With his marriage coming apart, he just could not find the time for the Lord. With his business on the rocks, he will have to put off his decision about Jesus....he is pushing from his life the only One who can save. [Jay Utley].

A Survey of the Bible

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The Bible traces the development of God's Plan of Redemption and shows man his part in being saved.
1. Many people fail to see the Bible as a united book, telling one harmonious, complete story.
 2. All things man needs to know about salvation, how to live, and going to heaven is revealed in the Bible.
 - a. Romans 16:25-26: "Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
 - b. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
- B. The following is a brief survey of the major features in the development of God's Great Plan for man.
1. We are able to take a journey through the Bible, seeing its major features.
 2. With an overview of its contents, we will be better able to grasp its meaning and to appreciate its message.
 3. This journey is a trip well worth taking!

II. DISCUSSION.

- A. Genesis 1-3 sets before us the Bible record of the need for a plan for human redemption.
1. God spent six days creating the earth, and its plant and animal life.
 2. He made a garden paradise (Eden) for his offspring (Adam and Eve). He created Adam and Eve, and placed them in Eden. God gave them one prohibition: "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17).
 3. Adam and Eve violated this prohibition, and incurred the penalty of physical and spiritual death.
 - a. Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
 - b. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 4. There was a need for redeeming fallen man from the folly of his disobedience.
- B. God promised a Redeemer for lost mankind,
1. Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 2. This was the first promise of redemption; it was dark and vague to them, but is made extremely clear by the light shed on it by the New Testament. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law" (Gal. 4:4).
 3. Five significant points concerning the Redeemer are set forth by the promise:
 - a. The need for a plan of salvation is indicated.
 - b. The fact that the Redeemer would come is shown.
 - c. The Redeemer would be a member of the human family—the seed of woman.
 - d. The Redeemer would be brought into the world by miraculous means—the seed of woman; no man was involved.
 - e. The Redeemer would be victorious in his mission: he would bruise the head of the serpent (Satan).
- C. God then began developing the genealogical line by which the Redeemer would enter the world.
1. Seth was born to replace righteous Abel whom unrighteous Cain slew: "And Adam knew his wife

again; and she bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, *said she*, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew" (Gen. 4:25).

2. Genesis 5 traces the genealogical line from Adam through Seth to Noah.
3. Genesis 6-9 gives the report of how mankind corrupted itself, and was destroyed except for Noah and his family. The genealogical line was preserved through Noah and his son Shem.
4. Genesis 10-11 traces the lineage from Noah to Abram. "And Joshua said unto all the people, Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, *even* Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods" (Josh. 24:2). The majority of Noah's descendants had corrupted themselves, but Abram was pure and usable for God's timeless purposes.

D. God gave to Abraham a great and wonderful promise.

1. Genesis 12:1-3: "Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."
2. This great promise was meaningful and far-reaching. From the time it was made to the end of the Bible, every inspired word has some connection to this basic promise. It is the basis of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ. It is an enlargement of the promise of Genesis 3:15.
3. God selected Abram to become head of a great nation; the Redeemer would enter our world as a member of this nation. Abram's name was changed to Abraham (Gen. 17:5).
 - a. For a nation to exist, three things are essential: a people, a law, and a land. God provided each of these three in keeping with his promise.
 - b. From Genesis 12 onward, the Bible shows how the lineage of the Messiah was developed and preserved. Details are given showing how the nation came into being from Abraham, how the law was given, and how the land was provided.
4. The promise had physical aspects.
 - a. These features of the promise applied to Old Testament Israel, and were not intended for anyone today.
 - b. The promise of the land was literally fulfilled.
5. The promise had figurative aspects; these do apply today.
 - a. The nation of Israel was the *type* of the church of Christ (the *antitype*). Israel, with its land and law, was the shadow; the Lord's church, with its gospel and spiritual blessings, is the substance. "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect" (Heb. 10:1).
 - b. The spiritual features of the promise are fulfilled in Christ, in the gospel, in the church.
 - 1) Romans 2:28-29: "For he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly; neither *is that* circumcision, which is outward in the flesh: But he *is* a Jew, which is one inwardly; and circumcision *is that* of the heart, in the spirit, *and* not in the letter; whose praise *is* not of men, but of God."
 - 2) Galatians 6:16: "And as many as walk according to this rule, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God."
 - 3) 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"

E. The genealogical line of the Redeemer proceeded through the nation of Israel.

1. The nation was developed through Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the twelve sons of Jacob. From the small beginning of one elderly couple (Abraham and Sarah), who were childless, God was able to bring into being a great nation. Isaac was born to Abraham and Sarah; Isaac begat twins (Jacob and Esau); the lineage continued through Jacob by his twelve sons. Four hundred years later, when the

descendants of Jacob emerged from Egypt, they numbered perhaps three million or more.

2. The Messiah's lineage proceeded from Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob, to Judah (Jacob's son). At the proper time, centuries later, Christ was born into the Israelite nation.

F. A survey of the Israel's Old Testament history reveals the following details:

1. Joseph, the favorite son of Jacob, was sold into Egyptian slavery by his ten older, jealous brothers (Gen. 37). He obtained favor of Pharaoh, and was elevated to a position of great authority in Egypt, unbeknownst to his family in Canaan.
2. When a severe famine hit Canaan, Jacob sent his sons into Egypt to obtain food. After making himself known to his brothers, Joseph brought his father's entire family into Egypt, to be protected by his powerful position in the land.
3. After the death of Joseph, a pharaoh arose who knew not Joseph, who enslaved the descendants of Abraham. After a long time in harsh bondage, which bound these Hebrews together with a bond which has endured nearly forty centuries, God sent Moses to deliver them from their slavery. Powerful miracles were used in gaining Israel's release.
4. After leaving Egypt, they came to Mt. Sinai in the wilderness; there God gave them the Mosaic Law. After forty years in the trackless wilderness, the nation finally entered the Promised Land of Canaan.
5. Following the death of Joshua, the successor to Moses, Israel digressed from God's will, and were punished by powerful enemies who invaded the land. They cried for deliverance, and God sent them judges to effect their restoration. This pattern of restoration—apostasy—repentance—restoration continued through the times of fifteen judges.
6. Israel later demanded a king so that they could be more like the pagan nations around them. God gave them a king, but with strong warnings about the evil that their demand would bring upon them.
 - a. The kingdom later divided following the death of their third king (Solomon). Ten tribes selected Jeroboam and are subsequently known as the Northern Kingdom (or Israel); two tribes followed Rehoboam, and afterwards are known as the Southern Kingdom (or Judah).
 - b. During these dark days, God sent many prophets to warn them of their wrongdoing; these inspired spokesmen also gave many predictions of the coming Redeemer.
 - c. In 721 B.C., the Northern Kingdom was conquered by their enemies, and taken into captivity in Assyria.
 - d. Beginning in 606 B.C., the Southern Kingdom was conquered and carried into captivity in Babylon—in three stages [606, 597, and 686 B.C.].
7. Beginning in 536 B.C., the Israelites were allowed to return to their own land. Zerubbabel led a large company back at that time. Later, Ezra and Nehemiah performed their great works of restoring Israel's standing with God.
8. Finally, when the fullness of time was come, the Redeemer entered the Israelite nation by the Virgin Birth. "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS" (Mt. 1:18-25).

G. A survey of the Bible gives several descriptions of the Redeemer.

1. He is depicted as the seed of woman.
 - a. Genesis 3:15> "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her

seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

- b. Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,"
2. He is called Shiloh (Peace): "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*" (Gen. 49:10).
3. He is known as the son of David: "And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom" (2 Sam. 7:12).
4. He is also called the son of man: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him" (Dan. 7:13).
5. He is the son of a virgin: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (Isa. 7:14).
6. He is called Immanuel—which makes him the Son of God.
 - a. Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
 - b. Isaiah 9:6-7: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *his* government and peace *there shall be* no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this."
7. He is depicted as the suffering Savior (Isa. 53).
8. He is known as a king and priest: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both" (Zech. 6:13).
9. He is also called The Branch.
 - a. Isaiah 11:1: "And there shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a Branch shall grow out of his roots:"
 - b. Zechariah 6:13: "Even he shall build the temple of the LORD; and he shall bear the glory, and shall sit and rule upon his throne; and he shall be a priest upon his throne: and the counsel of peace shall be between them both."

H. The Redeemer came.

1. All the preparations had been made.
 - a. Sin had been fully identified: it is the transgression of God's will.
 - b. Man had been taught that he cannot save himself: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps" (Jer. 10:23).
 - c. God had shown man that he could not be saved by the Law of Moses or by any manmade system.
 - d. The need for a special Savior had been shown.
2. The coming of the Redeemer was perfectly timed: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons" (Gal. 4:4-5).
 - a. Rome had given the world an orderly system of civil law; it had also provided a network of roads unknown beforehand.
 - b. The Greeks had provided a language that was able to uniquely express the message of God's word to human minds.
 - c. Morality was at a low ebb in all lands, even among many Jews. Mankind was ripe for the high standard of the gospel.
 - d. Religion was at an extremely low point; every kind of perverted belief and practice had been invented. Many were able to see the foolishness of idolatry, and wanted something better.
3. The Redeemer came to help fallen man.

- a. He lived a perfect life:
 - 1) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:21-25: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls."
 - b. He taught perfect truth
 - 1) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) John 8:45: "And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not."
 - 3) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - c. He died on a Roman cross, was buried in a new [unused] tomb, was raised to life on the third day, and later ascended back to his Father in heaven.
4. He gave a new law—the gospel.
- a. Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were written to furnish evidence to cause us to believe he is the Son of God: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).
 - b. Acts was given to show what to do to be saved. Several accounts of conversion are included to illustrate the plan of salvation, making the requirements extremely clear to the unprejudiced mind.
 - c. Romans through Jude were given to show man how he is to serve Christ, how he is to live, and how to worship God.
 - d. The Book of Revelation gives great encouragement for all who are in tribulations, providing them hope of better things in heaven.
5. The Redeemer established his kingdom [*aka church*].
- a. Matthew 16:16-19: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b. Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - c. Ephesians 3:10-11: "To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - d. Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - e. His kingdom is shown to be his church, his body, his family, his temple, his spiritual building.
6. The Redeemer revealed and confirmed God's redemptive plan. God originated that plan; Christ executed it; the Holy Spirit revealed it, under the direction and control of Christ.
- a. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered

into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."

- b. Ephesians 3:1-11 "For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ for you Gentiles, If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward: How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words, Whereby, when ye read, ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ) Which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men, as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the Spirit; That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel: Whereof I was made a minister, according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me by the effectual working of his power. Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearch-able riches of Christ; And to make all *men* see what *is* the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God, who created all things by Jesus Christ: To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly *places* might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God, According to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord."
 - c. Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 - d. Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
7. The plan's details include:
- a. Believing the gospel, repenting of sin, confessing faith in Christ, and being baptized for the remission of sins. This plan restores man to the position he originally occupied with God in the Garden of Eden.
 - 1) Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 - b. Concerning worship, it tells us **how, what, and whom** to worship: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:24).
 - c. Regarding the Lord's church, we are told how it is to be organized, what its work is, and reveals its identity.
 - d. The plan also shows us how we are to live: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" (Titus 2:11-12).
- I. If an honest man investigated the Bible and discovered these truths, what would be the result?
1. Which law would he obey?
 - a. Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - b. Romans 8:1-2: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death."

2. Of what would his obedience consist?
 - a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - c. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - d. Acts 2:37-38: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - e. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
3. What would he then be? "And when he had found him, he brought him unto Antioch. And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch" (Acts 11:26; cf. 26:28; 1 Peter 4:16).
4. To what church would he belong? To which church did Peter and Paul belong?
 - a. Matthew 16:16-18: "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - b. Romans 16:16: "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you."
5. How would he worship God?
 - a. Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
 - c. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - d. Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
6. How would he live? "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Peter 1:5-11).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Our journey through the Bible comes to an end.

1. The things we have seen are simple, and easy to grasp. Any normal open mind can understand these truths.
2. "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11). Anywhere and anytime the pure word of God is planted in honest hearts, and produces its natural fruit, several things happen.
 - a. When it is believed and obeyed, Christians are the result.

- b. The Lord's church exists when Christians are produced.
 - c. Acceptable worship of God is possible.
 - d. Those who are taught the truth can serve God rightly.
- B. Are you a member of HIS church?

THE PARABLE OF THE SEETHING POT

[An Expository Study of Ezekiel 24]

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. In his wisdom and goodness, God formed the descendants of Abraham through Isaac into a great nation.
1. He delivered them from Egyptian bondage, led them through the wilderness, and finally brought the second generation into Canaan.
 2. He blessed them with every advantage and aided them in every necessary way. He encouraged their obedience and warned them against rebellion; but they departed from his word in virtually every way.
- B. The heart of their rebellion was their demand for a king, to be like the other nations.
1. 1 Samuel 8:5,7: "And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations....And the LORD said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."
 2. Saul's reign lasted 40 years, until he corrupted himself; David reigned the next 40 years, and Israel was blessed; Solomon reigned for 40 prosperous years, but he introduced idolatry through his pagan wives. Rehoboam caused the nation to be divided; Jeroboam ruled in the ten tribes of the north.
 3. Disaster eventually came upon the Northern Kingdom, when God sent the Assyrians into the land; they slew many Israelites, devastated the cities of the north, and enslaved the rest. This was in 721 B.C.
 4. Disaster came upon Judah, the Southern Kingdom, when the Babylonians invaded and captured Jerusalem in 606 B.C. A number of the Israelites were slain, some were taken into captivity, and the rest placed under Babylonian control. They rebelled again in 597 B.C., and once more the Babylonians came, killing many and enslaving more. At this point, King Jehoiachin and Ezekiel were among the captives. Ezekiel began his prophetic work in 592 B.C., after five years in Babylonia.
 5. The Israelites in captivity believed the false prophets who told them their would soon be returning home. Ezekiel's work, in part, was to convince them that there would be no return until seventy years of captivity had elapsed. Later, when they had repented, he became the prophet of hope for Israel.
 6. Those Israelites still in Palestine believed the false prophets who told them they would be taken from under the cruel heel of the Babylonians (Jer. 28:1-4). They thought that they were safe within Jerusalem, that the city was like an iron pot (Ezek. 11:3), that as long as they had Jerusalem, the enemy could do them no harm; that like the pot keeps the fire from the flesh within the pot, so the walls of Jerusalem would protect them from the assault of the Babylonians.

II. EZEKIEL 24.

- A. Ezekiel 24:1-8: The Fall of Jerusalem.
1. Verses 1-2: "Again in the ninth year, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, write thee the name of the day, *even* of this same day: the king of Babylon set himself against Jerusalem this same day."
 - a. The siege against Jerusalem lasted for eighteen months, during which time there was immense suffering and death.
 - b. Jeremiah 39:1-2: "In the ninth year of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the tenth month, came Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon and all his army against Jerusalem, and they besieged it. *And* in the eleventh year of Zedekiah, in the fourth month, the ninth *day* of the month, the city was broken up."
 - c. Jeremiah 52:4-5: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he and all his army, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it, and built forts against it round about. So the city was besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah."
 - d. 2 Kings 25:1-4: "And it came to pass in the ninth year of his reign, in the tenth month, in the tenth *day* of the month, *that* Nebuchadrezzar king of Babylon came, he, and all his host, against Jerusalem, and pitched against it: and they built forts against it round about. And the city was

besieged unto the eleventh year of king Zedekiah. And on the ninth *day* of the *fourth* month the famine prevailed in the city, and there was no bread for the people of the land. And the city was broken up, and all the men of war *fled* by night by the way of the gate between two walls, which *is* by the king's garden: (now the Chaldees *were* against the city round about:) and *the king* went the way toward the plain."

2. With the fall of the city, many were slain, including the king's sons, and many people were taken into exile in Babylonia. Jeremiah 52:24-30: "And the captain of the guard took Seraiah the chief priest, and Zephaniah the second priest, and the three keepers of the door: He took also out of the city an eunuch, which had the charge of the men of war; and seven men of them that were near the king's person, which were found in the city; and the principal scribe of the host, who mustered the people of the land; and threescore men of the people of the land, that were found in the midst of the city. So Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard took them, and brought them to the king of Babylon to Riblah. And the king of Babylon smote them, and put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah was carried away captive out of his own land. This *is* the people whom Nebuchadrezzar carried away captive: in the seventh year three thousand Jews and three and twenty: In the eighteenth year of Nebuchadrezzar he carried away captive from Jerusalem eight hundred thirty and two persons: In the three and twentieth year of Nebuchadrezzar Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard carried away captive of the Jews seven hundred forty and five persons: all the persons *were* four thousand and six hundred."
3. The very day that Nebuchadnezzar began his 18-month siege of Jerusalem, God informed that fact to Ezekiel, and instructed him to record it; in the following verses, he is told to report the fact to the Jews in exile. The only way the prophet could have known of the beginning of the siege was by revelation from God. Later, when the official report of the siege reached their ears, they could know beyond any doubt that Ezekiel was a true prophet of God.

B. Ezekiel 24:3-8: The Parable of the Seething Pot.

1. Verses 3-8: "And utter a parable unto the rebellious house, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Set on a pot, set *it* on, and also pour water into it: Gather the pieces thereof into it, *even* every good piece, the thigh, and the shoulder; fill *it* with the choice bones. Take the choice of the flock, and burn also the bones under it, *and* make it boil well, and let them seethe the bones of it therein. Wherefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city, to the pot whose scum *is* therein, and whose scum is not gone out of it! bring it out piece by piece; let no lot fall upon it. For her blood is in the midst of her; she set it upon the top of a rock; she poured it not upon the ground, to cover it with dust; That it might cause fury to come up to take vengeance; I have set her blood upon the top of a rock, that it should not be covered."
2. In his prophetic picture, called a parable here, the people are told to set up an iron pot and fill it with water; they were to gather the various parts of an animal's carcass and put them into the pot. The pot was to have a fire built under it so that the flesh and bones might be well-cooked.
3. The city is represented by the pot; the choice pieces of meat are the leaders and chief people of the city; the flesh in the pot represents the inhabitants of Jerusalem. The bones under the pot depict those who have no flesh left on them (the poorest of the people, who are put out of their misery first).
4. The terrible affliction and destruction to be brought against Jerusalem was earned by reason of the sinful conduct of the people. They had been warned, but would not repent. The scum in the pot is the permeating wickedness that filled Jerusalem. Each piece in the caldron would be subjected to the tribulation; no lot would be cast by which any of them would be shown favor.
5. The bloodshed which the inhabitants of Jerusalem had shed during their rebellion against God was open to the sight of all. The blood they shed was as if it had been poured upon the top of a rock; its presence was obvious. They did not pour it upon the ground and cover it with soil.

C. Ezekiel 24:9-14: Jerusalem is to be Severely Punished.

1. Verses 9-14: "Therefore thus saith the Lord GOD; Woe to the bloody city! I will even make the pile for fire great. Heap on wood, kindle the fire, consume the flesh, and spice it well, and let the bones be burned. Then set it empty upon the coals thereof, that the brass of it may be hot, and may burn, and *that*

the filthiness of it may be molten in it, *that* the scum of it may be consumed. She hath wearied *herself* with lies, and her great scum went not forth out of her: her scum *shall be* in the fire. In thy filthiness *is* lewdness: because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee. I the LORD have spoken *it*: it shall come to pass, and I will do *it*; I will not go back, neither will I spare, neither will I repent; according to thy ways, and according to thy doings, shall they judge thee, saith the Lord GOD.”

2. God is giving a verbal picture in parabolic form to describe to the exiled Jews the destruction being then imposed on their brethren back at Jerusalem. He calls for more wood, that the fire may be intense; he directs that the contents of the pot be well-seasoned with spices, that the “taste” of the “meal” will be palatable to the Babylonians, who were “cooking” Jerusalem.
3. The city had worn itself out in committing sin; her sins included lies and lewdness; the scum of sins was great, but God would burn it up in the conflagration of the Babylonian siege and assault. God would not rest until his wrath had been poured fully upon Jerusalem. “Even the consumption of the contents is not enough; the caldron itself, which is infected by the poisonous scum, must be destroyed—*i. e.*, the city itself must be destroyed, not merely the inhabitants, just as the very house infected with leprosy was to be destroyed (Lev. 14:34-35)” (JFB, p.295).
4. God had determined the fate of the city; he would not go back on his word; they had reached the point of no return; it was too late for a reprieve to be offered. They had had more than sufficient time and occasion to repent, but refused to do so. Jeremiah 6:16: "Thus saith the LORD, Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where *is* the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls. But they said, We will not walk *therein*."
 - a. Our nation is fast approaching a similar disaster; it has had ample time, reason, and opportunity to come to a sort of national repentance, but is plunging further and more deeply into depravity; it has largely rejected the precepts of the gospel, which at the first formed the basis of America’s existence. Although our founding fathers were not Christians in the New Testament sense of the word, they were God-fearing men, who believed in the power of his word.
 - b. The Lord’s church in this nation is also nearing a similar disaster. It has courted with sin and sectarianism for many years; many preachers and elders have corrupted themselves by sin and false doctrine; the majority of the members have likewise become tainted; those who maintain a strong stance in the truth are shunned, hated, and dismissed as anachronistic. But since only the truth can save, only those who follow the truth will be saved.
 - 1) John 8:31-32: "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

III. THE TRAGEDY OF EZEKIEL’S WIFE SYMBOLIZED ISRAEL.

A. Ezekiel 24:15-27: The Death of Ezekiel’s Wife is Foretold.

1. Verses 15-18: “Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down. Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not *thy* lips, and eat not the bread of men. So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.”
2. Ezekiel is required to do a most unusual thing. God reported to him that his wife was to die that day, but that the prophet was not to mourn for her. The “desire” of his heart was his wife. This was to be a sign to the captives that they were not to mourn when news came of the downfall of their beloved city.
3. Ezekiel is not to cry or mourn, according to the custom when someone near and dear died. He was not to remove his headdress; the head covering was usually removed and dust and ashes were put on the head. Cf. Joshua 7:6: "And Joshua rent his clothes, and fell to the earth upon his face before the ark

of the LORD until the eventide, he and the elders of Israel, and put dust upon their heads."

- a. The prophet was not to remove his shoes, which was another sign of mourning. 2 Samuel 15:30: "And David went up by the ascent of *mount Olivet*, and wept as he went up, and had his head covered, and he went barefoot: and all the people that *was* with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up."
 - b. He is told not to cover his lips, another sign of grieving. Micah 3:7: "Then shall the seers be ashamed, and the diviners confounded: yea, they shall all cover their lips; for *there is* no answer of God."
 - c. He was not to partake of the food brought in by neighbors who sought to offer comfort. In order to refrain from displaying grief over his loss, he was not to eat the food his friends would bring; apparently he was to provide his own food.
4. The cause of the death of his beloved wife is attributed to "a stroke" from the Lord. Her death would be sudden and unexpected. She likely did not know ahead of time about her part in the operation. It was not wicked of God to take her life; it would be merciful and painless. But in this special plan, she had an important part in God's arrangements. There are some points of comparison between her and Isaac, when that young man was used as a test of his father's faith (Gen. 22).
- B. Ezekiel 24:19-24: Exile Israelites ask the meaning of the parabolic picture.
1. Verses 19-24: "And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these *things are* to us, that thou doest *so*? Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying, Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword. And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover *your* lips, nor eat the bread of men. And your tires *shall be* upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another. Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I *am* the Lord GOD."
 2. Ezekiel spoke to the people in the morning; in the evening his wife died; the following morning he followed the instructions God gave him, and refrained from any of the usual demonstrations of grief. He volunteered no information about his unusual conduct. They were moved to inquire.
 3. The prophet then delivered the message God gave him. God would profane his sanctuary; this he did by allowing the Babylonians to conquer Jerusalem, after which they plundered and destroyed the temple. The Jewish captives were full of longing for the temple; it was the center of their reflections. The temple was more to the Jews of that ancient time than Washington, D.C., and its national treasures are to most Americans. But God would allow it to be destroyed.
 4. Further, the young generation living in Jerusalem would fall by the sword. Some of these evidently were offspring of the captives. Think how devastating it would be to adult Americans if nearly all of the young generation was to be starved to death, die of disease, and to be slaughtered by heathen invaders. This is what happened to their people, young and old.
 5. The prophet instructed the people that they were to follow his example; as he did not mourn for his dead wife, they were not to mourn for the tragedy that was to befall their beloved city and temple. As far as we know, Ezekiel's wife was a godly woman; but the people of Jerusalem were not godly; they were being justly punished for their grievous transgressions; they deserved what they received. This is why the exiles are not to mourn; God was justly punishing them for their many offenses.
- C. Ezekiel 24-25-27: The Exiled Israelites to learn of Jerusalem's fall.
1. Verses 25-27: "Also, thou son of man, *shall it not be* in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters, *That* he that escapeth in that day shall come unto thee, to cause *thee* to hear *it* with *thine* ears? In that day shall thy mouth be opened to him which is escaped, and thou shalt speak, and be no more dumb: and thou shalt be a sign unto them; and they shall know that I *am* the LORD."
 2. Eighteen months later, news would reach them of Jerusalem's fall; they would learn that Ezekiel had

predicted the exact details of its destruction; they would then know that Ezekiel was a true prophet and that God is truly the Lord.

3. The prophet is not to speak until the siege was over and the report came of the tragedy. God would allow someone to escape to bring the message.
4. When the report of the city's destruction came, the exiles would be more inclined to listen to God's word. Until then, they would live with the desire to return home, to their loved ones and to their temple; but with the temple destroyed, the city in ruins, and their loved ones either dead or in exile, they would have only one proper alternative: to turn back to God. They would now be fully convinced that God is the Lord, that Ezekiel is his true spokesman, and that God's word is to be followed.

IV. CONCLUSION.

A. Our nation is not taking heed to the Gospel.

1. Many efforts are being made, but few obey the gospel. The reasons may be manifold, including:
 - a. The hypocrisy they perceive in the religious community, and even in the Lord's church.
 - b. Material success has led many to think they have no need of God.
 - c. The world religions and corrupted forms of Christianity have deceived multitudes into thinking they are all right spiritually because they have satisfied their conscience.
 - d. The religions of men offer strong competition for the Lord's church; they tell the materially minded man that covetousness is all right; they give those who seek only for an emotional fulfillment a message and practice that stimulates them to an emotional high; they offer the casual seeker a system that makes no great demands on their time, money, or energy; they provide entertainment to those who are more interested in worldly pleasure. The truth of the gospel has little interest to these kinds of people.
 - e. Unbelief has perverted the thinking of the masses, so that great numbers have rejected the God of the Bible and repudiate the Bible as the inspired message it claims to be.
2. There are many enemies of the truth in our nations. The number of avowed atheists in America is put at 4% of the population—more than ten million. Their efforts to oppose the truth are many and very strong and venomous. Every means at their disposal are being employed to corrupt the minds of our children.
 - a. They have succeeded in getting the majority of people to believe in evolution.
 - b. They have been able to obtain court rulings and have promoted laws which essentially deprive all the children in public schools the opportunity of learning about God, the Bible, and real morality.
 - c. They have developed television programs and movies which promote irreverence. A generation ago, it would have been unthinkable for the entertainment industry to offer the American public a diet of irreverent material that is becoming common today. Several years ago, a series of movies were made in which God was portrayed as a cigar-smoking man. Plans have been announced for a prime-time television cartoon series with the unpalatable title "God, the Devil, and Bob." How much of an impact will such have on the impressionable minds of children? We cannot see any possible way for any good influence of such programming.

B. Many in the Lord's church have fallen victim to these current trends.

1. Instead of preaching and teaching the truth on all subjects, some have compromised the Bible standard of morality, the plan of salvation, the work and worship of the church, and virtually every other sacred truth in God's word.
2. The liberals and the modernists are working tirelessly to dilute the pure gospel of Christ.
3. The radicals have sown discord by binding what God did not bind, and promoting other extremist practices and doctrines.
4. The lukewarm members have adversely influenced many who were formerly zealous in the work. "If brother _____ doesn't attend every service, I can miss when I please."
5. The profligate members contaminate weak members and give the local church a bad reputation.
6. Those who are materialistic and enamored with pleasure disrupt and weaken the efforts of the faithful.
7. The compromisers demand that the truth be diluted so that the sectarians, the materially-minded, those

in unscriptural marriages, and others who do not accept the truth, will not be offended by the truth.

C. We do not know the future, but we can know the past.

1. Indeed, if we do not learn from the lessons of the past, we are doomed to repeat the mistakes of those who have gone before us.
 - a. We know the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah; we have learned of the decline and fall of the Roman Empire; we have read of the downfall of the Babylonians, the Medo-Persians, and the Greeks.
 - b. There have been a great number of other cities and nations which have been overthrown by God on account of their rebellion. History's undeniable lesson is that when a society degenerates to a certain level [known only to God], that entity is sure to fall into ruin.
2. The case of the Amorites: "But in the fourth generation they shall come hither again: for the iniquity of the Amorites *is* not yet full" (Gen. 15:16).
 - a. God would not dispossess them of Canaan until their iniquity was full.
 - b. His longsufferance would delay the entry of Israel into the promised land.
 - c. We wonder why God allows evil nations/men to prevail: His patience is being shown; also his dealings are unbelievably complex; plans for centuries.
 - d. When their iniquity peaked they lost their deed; so did Israel: "Therefore it shall come to pass, *that* as all good things are come upon you, which the LORD your God promised you; so shall the LORD bring upon you all evil things, until he have destroyed you from off this good land which the LORD your God hath given you. When ye have transgressed the covenant of the LORD your God, which he commanded you, and have gone and served other gods, and bowed yourselves to them; then shall the anger of the LORD be kindled against you, and ye shall perish quickly from off the good land which he hath given unto you" (Josh. 23:15-16).
3. The case of Sodom and Gomorrah: "And the LORD said, Because the cry of Sodom and Gomorrah is great, and because their sin is very grievous" (Gen. 18:20).
 - a. They had crossed the line and must be destroyed! His mercy has a limit: "And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3).
 - b. But for Abraham's sake, he would spare them if 10 righteous people were found.
 - c. For lack of six people 1000s were destroyed! You are important: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 5:16).
4. The case of Nineveh: "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry against it; for their wickedness is come up before me" ((Jonah 1:2).
 - a. They were given 40 days to repent; this powerful message terrified them; they repented—Jonah 3 (773 B.C.).
 - b. One hundred and fifty years later they returned to sin, and were destroyed: Nahum 1:8 (625 B.C.).
 - c. The whole nation was overwhelmed by Babylon in 612 B.C.
5. The case of Israel.
 - a. Throughout their history as God's chosen people, they ran hot and cold.
 - b. They reached a point in rebellion that God disowned them after they rejected Christ; he had no use for them (Matt. 23:35-39; 24:1-35). They were overthrown by the Roman army in 70 A.D.
 - c. A remnant obeyed the gospel; a remnant is now in Palestine; the rest are scattered throughout the world as a reminder of God's sovereignty and as proof of inspiration: "For I *am* with thee, saith the LORD, to save thee: though I make a full end of all nations whither I have scattered thee, yet will I not make a full end of thee: but I will correct thee in measure, and will not leave thee altogether unpunished" (Jer. 30:11).
6. God does not change in his righteous character (Mal. 3:6; cf. Heb. 13:8).
 - a. Since he punished wicked nations in ancient times we may expect he does now. If not, then Old Testament Scriptures are not as important as Romans 15:4 suggests.
 - b. It is certain, that unless there is a drastic change in the moral decline we see all around us in our nation, in a time of God's own choosing, some great disaster is bound to occur. It might be in the

form of hard times (as in the Great Depression); it might be in the form of extreme inflation; it might be in the form of a great famine or pestilence or war.

D. What about the future of our own great nation?

1. Has America become more righteous or less righteous over the past 200 years? By comparing current attitudes with those of the past we can answer this question.
 - a. Washington: "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible....He is worse than an infidel who does not read his Bible and acknowledge his obligation to God."
 - b. Lincoln: "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book...and you will live and die a better man."
 - c. Webster: "If we abide by the principles taught in the Bible our country will go on prospering, but if we and our posterity neglect its instruction and authority, no man can tell how sudden a catastrophe may overwhelm us and bury us and our glory in profound obscurity."
2. Public laws and practices show that a great decline in respect for the Bible has occurred in America.
 - a. Prayers to God and studying his word are now forbidden in public schools.
 - b. Each year we murder more than 1 million unborn babies.
 - c. A recent survey of 100,000 women revealed that 90% of those not married admitted they were fornicators; two-thirds of those married confessed adultery or said they desired to do so.
 - d. Add to this the crime figures, drug problems, sexual perversion, hatred, religious error, suicide rates, child abuse, and sins of other kinds.
3. There are many who believe the Bible and follow it; but America has lost much of the former respect for the moral principles of the Bible.

E. What can we do to preserve our nation?

1. We can commit ourselves to godly, scriptural lives.
 - a. Even the church is slipping into the ways of our society. We must do all within our power to keep the church from apostasy and to present the truth to our world and to the next generation.
 - b. The influence of a few godly people is tremendous (cf Sodom; Matthew 5:13-16).
 2. We can bind our homes together with the Word of God.
 - a. The home is the backbone of a nation: as goes the home, so the nation.
 - b. Strong Christian homes can benefit the nation and the world.
 3. We can teach against the evils that plague us and enlist others in the war.
 4. You can begin your battle now by obeying the gospel or by being restored!
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What Must I Do To Be Saved?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The greatest question ever to be asked by a sinner is the title of this study.

1. It is not:
 - a. "How to cure cancer?"
 - b. "How to eliminate war completely?"
 - c. "How can I live to be 150?"
2. The greatest question is: "What must I do to be saved?"

B. This query is a Bible question.

1. Acts 16:30: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"
2. Acts 2:37: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
3. Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."

C. The question is of little importance to the modern mind.

1. It is an important, but usually unasked, question for our skeptical generation.
2. Members of the Lord's church need to be reminded of its importance.
 - a. A full understanding of the question will help us to better serve the Lord as soul-winners.
 - b. It will help us to appreciate more fully our own salvation.
3. A clear, honest answer to the question from the Bible will clarify the understanding of those who have been deceived into thinking they are saved, when they are not saved.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The question implies the need for deliverance from impending danger.

1. If there is no danger, there is no need for salvation (deliverance).
 - a. Salvation implies danger; the term "salvation" is defined as "deliverance from destruction, danger, or great calamity."
 - b. One who is in no danger of drowning cannot be saved from drowning.
 - c. One who is standing with his feet firmly planted on the earth cannot be saved from the danger of falling since he is in no danger of falling.
2. The impending danger of any sinner is the "second death."
 - a. We cannot be spared from physical death; this is the unconditional penalty of sin imposed on us by the past.
 - 1) Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
 - 2) Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - b. We can avoid the penalty of the second death.
 - 1) Revelation 20:14: "And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death."
 - 2) Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - 3) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - 4) Revelation 2:11: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He

that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death."

- 5) Revelation 20:6 "Blessed and holy *is* he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years."
3. The place of the second death is *Gehenna*, the place prepared for the devil and his angels.
 - a. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - b. Matthew 5:22: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
 - c. Revelation 19:20: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image. These both were cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."
 - d. Revelation 21:8: "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
 - e. Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
4. Deliverance from this place of eternal punishment is the most important and necessary salvation!
 - a. Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - b. Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
- B. The sinner is lost, headed inexorably for this lake of fire.
 1. He will most assuredly enter this awful place of punishment if he does not take proper action.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 7:20,29: "For *there is* not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not... Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
 - b. Romans 3:10-23: "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one: There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one. Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips: Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness: Their feet *are* swift to shed blood: Destruction and misery *are* in their ways: And the way of peace have they not known: There is no fear of God before their eyes. Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - d. 1 John 5:19: "*And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness."
 2. The sinner is lost because of his own personal sins, not the sins of his ancestors.
 - a. Ezekiel 18:20: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

- b. Isaiah 59:1-2: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: 2 But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - d. Exodus 32:30-33: "And it came to pass on the morrow, that Moses said unto the people, Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the LORD; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin. And Moses returned unto the LORD, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written. And the LORD said unto Moses, Whosoever hath sinned against me, him will I blot out of my book."
3. Sin is personal and prominent; it is seen on every hand.
- a. The daily crime reports are reports of sin.
 - b. The annual statistics of abortion are listings of sin.
 - c. The staggering divorce statistics are reports of sin.
 - d. The lists of the dead and maimed from terrorists and warmongers are listings of sin.
 - e. The arrest list of police departments of drunks, of wife-beaters, of child-abusers, are reports of sin.
 - f. The ugly, unholy language that fills the air where the ungodly gather is the language of sin.
 - g. The torn bodies of the wounded and dead in war and violence are evidence of sin.
 - h. The false doctrines of men are examples of sin.
4. Without the presence of God's law, there would be no sin.
- a. Romans 4:15: "Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression."
 - b. Romans 5:13: "For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
5. If God had no law, there would be no sin and no penalty for sin.
- a. If there is no penalty for sin, there would be no motivation for men to live better.
 - b. If the state decreed that factories must not dump their refuse into the rivers and streams, but attached no penalty, what good would the law be?
 - c. If there is no penalty for sin, God's law would be only an empty decree.
6. Hell is the penalty for sin.
- a. Sin is the transgressing of God's law, hence eternity in hell (*Gehenna*) is the penalty for violating God's word. Yet the common attitude of mankind is that the Bible is old-fashioned, and deserves to be ignored or rejected.
 - b. Consignment to *Gehenna* is the penalty for ignoring or shunning God's mercy.
 - c. This awful penalty is the punishment earned by those who have developed wicked hearts.
 - d. If there is no penalty for sin, there is no law; if no law, there is no sin; if there no sin, there is no responsibility—and a man is no different from an animal, and a society of men and women is no different from a herd of cattle.
- C. To answer the question of our study, we must rightly divide the word of truth (2 Tim. 2:15).
1. The answer is not found in the Old Testament, for that law was given to the Jews only, and has been superseded by the gospel of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 5:17: "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil."
 - b. Ephesians 2:14-15: "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*; Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of
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- commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace.”
- c. Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - d. Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - e. Romans 7:1-7: "Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth? For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband. So then if, while *her* husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, *even* to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God. For when we were in the flesh, the motions of sins, which were by the law, did work in our members to bring forth fruit unto death. But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not *in* the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? *is* the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet."
 - f. Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
2. The full answer is not found in the gospel accounts, prior to the Lord's death on the cross. Before a man's will takes effect, he can dispense his property and money as he wishes, but after his death, his will takes effect, and his estate can be dispensed only as he has dictated in his will.
 - a. Galatians 3:15: "Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto."
 - b. Hebrews 9:15-17: "And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament *is*, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament *is* of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth."
 - c. We are not to look to the case of palsied man to learn how to be saved (Mark 2:1-12). This man was forgiven prior to the Lord's death, thus before his will took effect.
 - d. We are not to look to the penitent thief on the cross as an example of how to be saved (Luke 23:43). That man was saved prior to the death of Christ, and thus before his will took effect.
 3. The book of Acts records the question of our study, and supplies the answer.
 - a. Acts 16:30-34: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them, and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house."
 - b. Acts 2:37-38: "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
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- c. Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do." Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 4. The different answers are not contradictory; as we shall see, they harmonize perfectly.
 - a. Suppose you were to travel from Miami, Florida to Nashville, Tennessee. Were you to ask someone in Miami how far it was to Nashville, the answer might be 910 miles; if you were to ask someone in Atlanta, Georgia how far to Nashville, he might tell you 260 miles. If you were to ask someone in Chattanooga, he might tell you 120 miles. These answers are not contradictory, but indicate that the traveler is at different stages in his journey toward Nashville.
 - b. Suppose you were to be looking for a particular house on a particular street in Nashville; Mr. Jones lives in the house. Let's suppose you find the street, but cannot find the house. You ask someone where Mr. Jones lives; he replies that he lives seven houses down the street, on the left side. You walk a little closer and ask someone else, and are told that Mr. Jones' house is three houses further. As you get closer, you ask someone else, and are told that the house you seek is the next house. Again, the answers are not contradictory, but indicate that you are at different stages in your journey to your destination.
 5. Why were the different audiences in our texts told different things?
 - a. Why was the jailer told to believe? This was the beginning point for him; he knew virtually nothing about the gospel Paul and Silas preached. He needed to learn and believe that Christ is the Savior. It would have been useless to tell this Gentile jailer to be baptized if he knew nothing of the gospel or of the purpose of baptism.
 - b. Why were the Pentecostians told to repent and be baptized? This was their present need; they were believers for they had already been taught about Christ being the Savior; they believed he was the Savior, which moved them to ask what to do to be saved. Peter told them what they needed to do. Believers do not need to be told to believe.
 - c. Why was Saul only told to be baptized? It is clear from the facts of the case that he was a believer in Christ and that he had repented from his sins. He had asked the Lord what he should do; the Lord told him to enter Damascus and he would be told what he must do. During the three days before the preacher came to him, he fasted and prayed. His faith in Christ and his repentance are clearly evident. Therefore, he was told to arise and be baptized (Acts 22:16); he did not need to be told to do what he had already done..
- D. An analysis of the question is very revealing.
1. **What.**
 - a. Since this is a spiritual question, what is to be done is not to sing, whistle, run, jump, clap hands, climb a mountain, dance, laugh, or eat a meal.
 - b. Since it is a logical question, it follows that we are not to do everything that is possible to be done in this world.
 - c. The question calls for a logical, spiritual, and therefore a scriptural response.
 2. **Must.**
 - a. The question calls for a definite and required response. The response is not a mere good thing to do; it is not a recommendation, but a requirement.
 - b. Saul was told to enter Damascus, where he would be told what he *must* do.
 3. **I.**
 - a. The action that is to be done must be done by the individual; it is an individual, personal obligation. Saul was to be told what *he* must do, not what his mother or father or friend must do.
 - b. The nature of the salvation of the soul is such that no one else can be saved in our stead. It is he
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that believeth and is baptized who shall be saved (Mark 16:16).

- c. God took action to send his Son into the world; the Son came and died on the cross; the Holy Spirit came to reveal and confirm the gospel; now it is the individual sinner's turn to take action.
4. **Do.**
- a. An action is required. The question does not ask what we should feel, or imagine, or dream; it asks what must be *done*.
 - b. What is to be done is the will of God, not the decree of some man or council of men.
 - c. Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - d. Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - e. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
5. **To Be Saved.**
- a. The question does not ask how to live 150 years, or how to obtain wealth, or how to have good physical health; it points to the greatest need of every sinner—the salvation of his soul.
 - b. Romans 5:8-9: "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - c. 1 Timothy 1:13-15: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
 - d. Acts 26:28-29: "Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."
 - e. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."

E. An examination of the prominent conversion accounts in Acts reveals the following:

Cases of Conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 2	Spoke	Heard	Pricked	Baptized	Added, Saved
Acts 8:1-13	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Great Joy
Acts 8:26-40	Preached	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Rejoiced
Acts 10 & 11	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:12-15	Spoke	Heart Opened	Attended	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 16:19-34	Spoke	[Heard]	[Believed]	Baptized	Washed Stripes
Acts 18:1-8	Reasoned	Heard	Believed	Baptized	[Saved]
Acts 9, 22, 26	Spoke	Heard	Believed	Baptized	Sins Washed

Cases of Non-conversion

CASE	GOSPEL	ACTION	ACTION	RESULT
Acts 5:29-33	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Wanted to Kill Them
Acts 7	Spoke	Heard	Cut to the Heart	Resisted, Stoned
Acts 13:14-46	Spoke	Heard	Contradicted & Blasphemed	Rejected
Acts 17:16-33	Spoke	Heard	Mocked	Rejected
Acts 24:24f	Reasoned	[Heard]	Trembled	Put Off
Acts 26	Spoke	[Heard]	Believed	Rejected
Acts 28:23-29	Expounded & Testified	[Heard]	Did Not Believe	Disputed

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The New Testament gives us a picture of the awfulness of *Gehenna*.

1. It is a place of outer darkness (Matt. 25:30).
2. It is a place of fire (Mark 9:42-48; Matt. 25:41).
3. It is a place of wailing (Matt. 25:30).
4. Those consigned to this place are separated from God (Matt. 25:31-46).
5. The condition of those in *Gehenna* is described as being destroyed (2 Thess. 1:7-9). The word *destroyed* means "loss of well-being, not loss of being".
 - a. Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to **destroy both soul and body in hell.**"
 - b. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he **hath killed hath power to cast into hell;** yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
6. To enter this dreadful place is to be separated from all who are holy and all that is holy. "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
7. It is far worse than physical death. "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him" (Luke 12:4-5).

B. We are very familiar with the usual events surrounding the death and burial of a loved one.

1. The individual dies, unexpectedly or expectantly.
 - a. The body is prepared for burial.
 - b. The funeral service is conducted, during which the proper words are spoken.
 - c. The hearse leaves the funeral home, leading the procession of cars to the cemetery.
 - d. The internment ceremony is conducted.
 - e. Flowers and tears are evident.
2. The loved one is no longer with us; even the body is hidden from our view. We will not see this person again under the sun, on this side of eternity.

3. But the Resurrection Day will come!
 - a. 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
 - b. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - d. Matthew 25:31-32, 46. "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats....And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - C. God, Christ, your redeemed loved ones living and dead, all want you to be with them in eternity.
 1. But without obeying the gospel and living a faithful Christian life you cannot enjoy their company there.
 2. There will never be a better, more convenient time to obey the gospel than at this hour!
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INTRODUCTION TO THE SEVEN LETTERS

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. John 3:16 is called the "Golden Text" of the Bible.

1. It teaches that Christ is the greatest person ever to favor this world with his glorious presence.
2. Never before or since has one entered our world by a Virgin Birth: "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost....And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:18,21-23).
3. God, the Maker and Ruler of the universe, has never acknowledged another as he did Jesus: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him" (Matt. 17:5).
4. Never before or since has one's coming been so carefully planned, foretold, and timed.
 - a. Genesis 3:15: "And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."
 - b. Genesis 49:10: "The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him *shall* the gathering of the people *be*."
 - c. Deuteronomy 18:15: "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken."
 - d. Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."

B. Jesus the Christ the Son of God is the greatest being ever to live upon the earth.

1. No one has ever had such a great mission.
 - a. Luke 19:10: "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."
 - b. 1 Timothy 1:15: "This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief."
 - c. 2 Timothy 1:9-10: "Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel."
2. No one has so-altered the course of the world.
 - a. Mark 16:15: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature."
 - b. Acts 17:6: "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."
 - c. Romans 10:18: "But I say, Have they not heard? Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world."
 - d. Colossians 1:23: "If ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and *be* not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, *and* which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister."
3. The effect of the gospel may be quickly seen in many ways.
 - a. Women are now more than mere possessions of men.
 - b. Modesty in dress and manner of life is greatly elevated where the gospel of Christ is taught.
 - c. Slavery was finally destroyed by the principles of the gospel.
 - d. Our years are numbered from the time of his entry into the world.

C. It is a wonderful honor to be part of his kingdom, the church, and to learn more of him.

1. His story is told from the early chapters of Genesis through the last chapter of Revelation.
2. A great deal of information about his nature is found in the introductions given in the letters to the seven congregations of Asia. Revelation 2-3.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Ephesus.

1. Revelation 2:1: "Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks."
2. He holds the seven stars in his right hand. The stars are the angels of the churches (Rev. 1:20). These angels are in the Lord's hands, being guided and protected by his infinite power.
 - a. These angels are not angelic beings. The same word ["messenger"] is used to describe John the Baptist (Mark 1:2). The Bible does not teach the doctrine of Guardian Angels.
 - b. These angels may be special messengers, like Titus (1:5).
 - c. The angels may have reference to evangelists.
 - d. The angel may be the eldership.
3. He walks in the midst of the 7 golden candlesticks.
 - a. The seven candlesticks represent the seven churches; they are golden which suggests their value.
 - b. This is a wonderful, yet awesome, thought: Christ is in the midst of his people (cf. Matt. 18:20). Compare this with a farmer walking in his fields, inspecting the crops.
4. He knew the works of the Ephesian saints (2:2). He knows all about congregations today.
 - a. He knows if a congregation is faithfully upholding the truth (1 Tim. 3:15). Would the truth be safe if this congregation as the only one left to support it? Would it be safe if you or I were the only one left on earth to support it?
 - b. He knows if a congregation is performing its mission: "For the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ" (Eph. 4:12, ASV).
 - c. He knows if the church is hot or cold, or lukewarm, or alive or dead. Just because a church has many members and boasts of much activity does not necessarily mean that it is alive and well. Just because a congregation may be few in number does not mean it is lukewarm or dead.
 - d. He knows if the members of a congregation are alive and well.
 - e. He knows if a congregation is like a city on a hill or a candle under a basket.
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) Matthew 5:14-16: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 3) Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - f. He knows of the heartaches, problems, and struggles of his people—churches and individuals.

B. Smyrna.

1. Revelation 2:8: "And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive."
2. Jesus is the first and the last. In Revelation 1:11, he identified himself as Alpha and Omega—the names of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet.
3. This declares his eternal existence.
 - a. This truth is commonly taught in the Scriptures.
 - 1) John 1:1-2: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God."
 - 2) John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

- 3) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist."
 - 4) Revelation 1:8: "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty."
 - b. Psalm 90:1-2, which was given in description of the Father, also describes the Son. Christ is just as eternal in existence as the Father is.
 - 1) Psalms 90:1-2: "LORD, thou hast been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, thou *art* God."
 - 2) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - c. Furthermore, it implies that after all mortal man has said and done all he can, Christ's will **will** be done!
 - 1) Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - 2) Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
 4. He was dead but is now alive.
 - a. His divine being has never died and will never die; but his mortal body was put to death on the cross. He had to have a physical body in order to die!
 - 1) Hebrews 10:5: "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me."
 - 2) Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
 - 3) James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."
 - b. He **was** dead, but **now he is alive**. He died but death could not hold him.
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) Acts 2:23-24: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain: Whom God hath raised up, having loosed the pains of death: because it was not possible that he should be holden of it."
 - 3) "Prevail" means to "prevent." The gates of hades were not strong enough to retain the soul of Christ to prevent his resurrection. Hades could not prevent his building his church.
 5. Since he accomplished so much for us in his death, think how much he can do for us while he is alive and occupies the throne of his kingdom! (Rom. 5:8-10; Rev. 1:8, 18).
 - a. He can save us from our sins (Rev. 1:5).
 - b. He can help us along life's way (Heb. 13:5).
 - c. He can help us overcome our temptations, heartaches, and trials (Matt. 11:28-30).
 - d. He will raise us up from the grave (John 5:28-29; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).
 - e. He will give us a new, spiritual body (Phil. 3:20-21).
 - f. He will give us a mansion in heaven (John 14:1-3).
 - g. He will enable us to live forever with him in heaven (1 Thess. 4:18).
- C. Pergamos.
1. Revelation 2:12: "And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges."

2. He has the sharp two-edged sword. Revelation 1:16 states that the sword proceeds from his mouth, clearly representing his word.
 - a. Ephesians 6:17: "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."
 - b. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
3. The kingdom of Christ is not promulgated by any carnal means, but by proclaiming the word of the gospel.
 - a. Luke 8:11: "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe."
 - c. 1 Peter 2:22-23: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously."
 - d. Mohammed spread his new religion with military might. By conquering neighboring tribes, he gained the necessary military strength to conquer a great portion of the ancient world in only two or three generations.
 - e. Those subdued in the fighting were given three choices: accept Islam, pay tribute, or die. Often the choice was only between accepting Islam or dying.
4. The kingdom of Christ is not defended by any carnal weapon.
 - a. John 18:36: "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "(For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."
 - c. Revelation 19:15: "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."
5. Preaching the gospel pricks the heart, disturbs those who will listen and learn, and moves them to action. "Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls" (Acts 2:37-41).
6. The gospel still has the power to disturb and motivate, that is why many oppose it—they know that it condemns evil conduct, they are unwilling to change, and do not want to be disturbed.
 - a. Acts 17:6: "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 2:15-17: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ, in them that are saved, and in them that perish: To the one *we are* the savour of death unto death; and to the other the savour of life unto life. And who *is* sufficient for these things? For we are not as many, which corrupt the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ."
 - c. The gospel was in the apostles at the first (2 Cor. 4:7); it was committed to written form later, but it has not lost any of its power! (Heb. 4:12).

D. Thyatira.

1. Revelation 2:18: "And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass."
2. His eyes are like fire.
 - a. The Lord has the ability to see with divine insight. On earth, he was able to read the minds of men to perceive their thoughts and motives. "But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?" (Mark 2:6-8).
 - b. His knowledge of our activities, words, thoughts, and motives are fully known to him.
 - 1) Proverbs 15:3: "The eyes of the LORD *are* in every place, beholding the evil and the good."
 - 2) Hebrews 4:13: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 3) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:15-16 "Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; *16* Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen."
3. His feet are like fine brass (burnished brass—ASV).
 - a. In his earthly ministry, his feet carried him throughout Israel, bringing the gospel of peace, the glad tidings of good things (cf. Rom. 10:15). In this sense, his feet are beautiful.
 - b. His feet are also used figuratively to trod the wicked. "And out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it he should smite the nations: and he shall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God" (Rev. 19:15).
4. He plainly identifies himself as the Son of God.
 - a. He is not God's son because the Father brought him into existence. As earlier noted, he is as eternal as the Father. In our world, a father begets children; without the father's involvement, there could be no offspring. But God did not make Christ.
 - b. God is the Father of Christ in the sense that he has greater authority than the Son, just as in the ordinary case, an earthly father has greater authority than his son.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) John 13:16: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him."
 - 3) John 17:4: "I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do."
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 15:24-28: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death. For he hath put all things under his feet. But when he saith all things are put under *him*, *it is* manifest that he is excepted, which did put all things under him. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all."
 - c. God is his Father in the sense that he brought him into the world by the Virgin Birth. "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son? And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him" (Heb. 1:5-6).
 - d. God is his Father in the sense that he raised him from the dead. "God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again; as it is also written in the second psalm, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee. And as concerning that he raised him up from the

dead, *now* no more to return to corruption, he said on this wise, I will give you the sure mercies of David" (Acts 13:33-34).

E. Sardis.

1. Revelation 3:1: "And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."
2. He has the seven stars.
 - a. From Revelation 1:20, we learned that the stars represented the angels of the seven churches. These angels were not heavenly beings; the angels may represent the eldership or the preacher. The word *angel* means *messenger*. "As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my **messenger** before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee" (Mark 1:2). "Messenger" is from the Greek word for "angel."
 - b. The angels of the congregations are under the control of Christ; he has them in his right hand (Rev. 1:16). Whatever the identity of these angels, they operated under his authority and divine protection. Elders and preachers have authority from Christ to do the work into which they are called.
3. He has the seven Spirits of God.
 - a. The number seven is used in the Scriptures to represent completeness. In Revelation 1:4-5, the message of the book is attributed to God, from Christ, and from the seven Spirits of God. The gospel originated in the mind of God, Christ executed the plan, and the Holy Spirit revealed it (1 Cor. 2:1-14; John 1:1-3,14,17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17). The *chain of command* starts with God, then Christ, and then the Holy Spirit.
 - b. Christ possessed the Spirit without measure. "For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure *unto him*. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand" (John 3:24-35; cf. Matt. 28:18; Luke 10:22; John 5:20,22).
4. Christ sent the Holy Spirit upon the apostles, which provided them with full power to fulfill their mission.
 - a. John 14:26: "But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."
 - b. John 15:26: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."
 - c. John 16:23-24: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."
 - d. Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - e. 2 Corinthians 12:11-12: "I am become a fool in glorying; ye have compelled me: for I ought to have been commended of you: for in nothing am I behind the very chiefest apostles, though I be nothing. Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds."
5. We are guided today by the Holy Spirit, but not by his direct influence. "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches."
 - a. This statement is in each of the seven letters. What the Spirit said was what he wrote. He did not communicate to them through any kind of subjective means, such as an intuition, or some emotional tingle; instead, it was through the message of truth.
 - b. This is how the Holy Spirit directed ancient Israel.

- 1) Nehemiah 9:20: "Thou gavest also thy good spirit to instruct them, and withheldest not thy manna from their mouth, and gavest them water for their thirst."
- 2) Nehemiah 9:30: "Yet many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by thy spirit in thy prophets: yet would they not give ear: therefore gavest thou them into the hand of the people of the lands."
- c. God applies his power to our souls today through the inspired word.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 3) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 4) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 5) 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."

F. Philadelphia.

1. Revelation 3:7: "And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth."
2. He is holy.
 - a. He is absolutely and completely separated from evil. His was the only accountable life ever lived on earth entirely free from sin.
 - b. Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - c. Hebrews 7:26: "For such an high priest became us, *who is* holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens."
 - d. 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
3. He is true.
 - a. He is absolutely free from deceit and falsehood.
 - 1) John 8:45-46: "And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - 2) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - b. He is absolutely trustworthy.
 - 1) Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
4. He has the key of David.
 - a. He has absolute authority; he has full legal power. As David possessed regal right over the nation of Israel, so Christ has all authority over things that pertain to his spiritual kingdom.
 - 1) Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - 2) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - 3) 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God.

- He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
- b. No man has the right to make changes to his will, nor can any man thwart his purposes.
 - 1) Isaiah 22:22: "And the key of the house of David will I lay upon his shoulder; so he shall open, and none shall shut; and he shall shut, and none shall open."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:24-26: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power. For he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* death."
 - 3) Ephesians 1:20-23: "Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set *him* at his own right hand in the heavenly *places*, Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - 4) Acts 2:31-38: "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 5. He can open and no man can shut, and he can shut and no man can open. No one can defy his great authority successfully; he will have the final word.
 - a. This is true with regards to the authority of his word.
 - 1) Psalms 119:89: "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven."
 - 2) Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 3) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 4) Matthew 24:35: "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away."
 - b. This is true with regards to opportunities.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 16:9: "For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and *there are* many adversaries."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 2:12-13: "Furthermore, when I came to Troas to *preach* Christ's gospel, and a door was opened unto me of the Lord, I had no rest in my spirit, because I found not Titus my brother: but taking my leave of them, I went from thence into Macedonia."
 - 3) Colossians 4:3-4: "Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in bonds: That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak."
 - 4) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you."
 - c. This is true with regards to the means of our escape from temptations. Tests of faith come to us all, but with each temptation, the Lord provides a door to escape: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall. There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will

- with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it*" (1 Cor. 10:12-13).
6. Christ will use the faithful: he will give them opportunity to spread the gospel, and to be useful in his kingdom in other ways.
 - a. Thirty graduates from Memphis School of Preaching, working in hard areas, in 18 months baptized more people than all of the 45 congregations in Memphis baptized during the same 18 months.
 - b. Prepare yourself for service; pray for opportunity to serve; use your time, opportunities, and talents wisely, and give Christ the glory for whatever success you realize.

G. Laodicea.

1. Revelation 3:14: "And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."
2. He calls himself "the Amen."
 - a. The definite article *the* is in the Greek text. Only Deity can be absolutely perfect in speech. The word is used as a proper noun here, and guarantees all that he says.
 - b. What he says will surely remain true and is dependable. The Greek term [*Amen*] is akin to the Hebrew word meaning "truth." "That he who blesseth himself in the earth shall bless himself in the God of truth; and he that sweareth in the earth shall swear by the God of truth; because the former troubles are forgotten, and because they are hid from mine eyes" (Isa. 65:16).
 - c. The Greek term was used many times by Christ, being translated "verily." In 2 Corinthians 1:20 it is used to emphasize the certainty of his promises.
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 1:20: "For all the promises of God in him *are* yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."
 - 2) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - 3) Hebrews 13:8: "Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever."
3. He calls himself "the faithful and true witness."
 - a. There is no unfaithful particle in his character, person, word, or activity. As a witness, he is utterly and always true; there is no deceit or guile in him.
 - b. His testimony is true, and his warnings and promises are to be taken seriously.
 - c. A properly qualified witness must have first-hand knowledge of the information he affirms, be competent to recall and present the information, and be willing and able to present it faithfully and truthfully (Trench). Our Lord is fully qualified in each of these.
4. He is the beginning of the creation of God.
 - a. Watchtower Witnesses pervert this statement in a fruitless effort to sustain their misguided tenet that Christ was the first thing God created in the beginning. They allege the statement means that Christ is a "lesser god."
 - 1) They pervert Isaiah 44:24: "Thus saith the LORD, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, *I am* the LORD that maketh all *things*; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself." There is only one divine nature; there are three beings who possess that divine nature (God, Christ, the Holy Spirit).
 - 2) They pervert John 1:1-3 in their New World Translation, by changing the text to describe Christ as "a god."
 - 3) They reject the authority of Christ.
 - b. However, the Bible teaches that Christ is eternal.
 - 1) Micah 5:2: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, *though* thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting."
 - 2) John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."
 - 3) Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."

- c. The Greek term used here [*arche*] translated "beginning" refers to the cause (not to the order) of creation.
5. Their doctrine violates the word of God in several significant particulars.
 - a. It violates the Bible truth that Christ is eternal: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, *yet* out of thee shall he come forth unto me *that is* to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth *have been* from of old, from everlasting" (Micah 5:2).
 - b. It violates the truth of John 20:24-28: "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said unto him, We have seen the Lord. But he said unto them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."
 - c. It violates this very passage (Rev. 3:14). The word *arche* means, "that by which anything begins to be, the origin, active cause" (Thayer, p.77). "The beginner, or author" (Vincent, p.595). Hebrews 12:2 also uses this word in this very sense ["author" or "captain"].
6. The passage does not say that Christ is the first of God's creations, but that he is the one who did the creating; he was God's agent in bringing the universe into existence.
 - a. John 1:10: "He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not" (ASV).
 - b. 1 Corinthians 8:6: "But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - c. Colossians 1:15-18: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - d. Revelation 5:13: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."
 - e. If he were created, he would be here said to be praising himself.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The greatest news ever delivered to mankind is related in the following passages.

1. John 3:14-17: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved."
2. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures."

B. He came to save lost humanity.

1. All spiritual blessings are by his name and are in him.
 - a. Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - b. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 2. His blessings are conditioned on our obedience: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Heb. 5:8-9).
 3. God wants all to be submissive to his Son: "And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling" (Phil. 2:11-12).
 - a. Alien sinners:
 - 1) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 2) Luke 13:3: "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."
 - 3) Romans 10:9-10: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." Matthew 10:32: "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven."
 - 4) Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Erring Christians:
 - 1) Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 - 2) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. We are expected to remain faithful:
 - 1) Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
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THE PURPOSE OF WORSHIP

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. An interesting story is told about the brother of Henry Ward Beecher (1813-1887).

1. Henry was unable to fill the pulpit on a certain occasion, so he asked his brother to preach in his place. A great audience had assembled to hear the famous orator. When he arose to begin his speech, a large number of people began to leave the building, seeing the speaker was not Henry.
2. It was painfully obvious that they had come to hear an eloquent presentation, and not to worship God. Beecher began his sermon by saying, "All who came to worship Henry Ward Beecher may now leave; the rest of us will remain and worship God." No one left.

B. What is our purpose for assembling at this place today?

1. Knowing human nature, we must say that some people attend merely to hear something novel, like the Athenians. "For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)" (Acts 17:20-21).
2. Another type of individual may attend only to be entertained by the singing, prayers, sermon, etc. Many were disappointed in Paul's speaking ability: "For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible" (2 Cor. 10:10).
3. Some may attend only to "put in their time" or to "have their ticket stamped."
4. There are many in our generation whose purpose for attending is to "get on a spiritual high." Their idea of spirituality is limited to "getting their emotions pumped up." If this is not done, they find some other place where their demands can be met, or they stay home. Is anyone justified in this? Are the worship leaders at fault if they do not provide such an atmosphere or if their presentations are not filled with emotional display?

C. What is worship? What is the purpose of worship?

II. WORSHIP IS AN AWESOME RESPONSIBILITY AND AN EXALTED PRIVILEGE.

A. Think of the object of our worship.

1. Psalms 33:6-9: "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was *done*; he commanded, and it stood fast."
2. Psalms 100: "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name. For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations."
3. Isaiah 6:1-5: "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory. And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. Then said I, Woe *is* me! for I am undone; because I *am* a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."
4. John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."

B. Worship is disastrous if wrong.

1. Genesis 4:3-5: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof.

And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell." Abel offered his sacrifice "by faith" (Heb. 11:4); obviously, Cain did not; since faith comes by learning God's word (Rom. 10:17), we can know that Abel offered the sacrifice God had appointed. But Cain did not.

2. Leviticus 10:1-2: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD." [They offered fire from the wrong source].
3. 1 Samuel 13:5-14 "And the Philistines gathered themselves together to fight with Israel, thirty thousand chariots, and six thousand horsemen, and people as the sand which *is* on the sea shore in multitude: and they came up, and pitched in Michmash, eastward from Bethaven. When the men of Israel saw that they were in a strait, (for the people were distressed,) then the people did hide themselves in caves, and in thickets, and in rocks, and in high places, and in pits. And *some of* the Hebrews went over Jordan to the land of Gad and Gilead. As for Saul, he *was* yet in Gilgal, and all the people followed him trembling. And he tarried seven days, according to the set time that Samuel *had appointed*: but Samuel came not to Gilgal; and the people were scattered from him. And Saul said, Bring hither a burnt offering to me, and peace offerings. And he offered the burnt offering. And it came to pass, that as soon as he had made an end of offering the burnt offering, behold, Samuel came; and Saul went out to meet him, that he might salute him. And Samuel said, What hast thou done? And Saul said, Because I saw that the people were scattered from me, and *that* thou camest not within the days appointed, and *that* the Philistines gathered themselves together at Michmash; Therefore said I, The Philistines will come down now upon me to Gilgal, and I have not made supplication unto the LORD: I forced myself therefore, and offered a burnt offering. And Samuel said to Saul, Thou hast done foolishly: thou hast not kept the commandment of the LORD thy God, which he commanded thee: for now would the LORD have established thy kingdom upon Israel for ever. But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him *to be* captain over his people, because thou hast not kept *that* which the LORD commanded thee." [Saul was not authorized to offer sacrifices, a privilege extended to the priests].

C. Worship is wearisome to those who do not understand its meaning and purpose.

1. Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
2. Psalms 122:1: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD."
3. Isaiah 1:12: "When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts?" Some Israelites merely wore out the floors of temple; they did not assemble to worship, but to go through the motions

III. WORSHIP IS DESIGNED TO PLEASE GOD RATHER THAN OURSELVES.

A. Consider Biblical cases and statements.

1. Cain: "And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell" (Gen. 4:3-5).
2. Nadab and Abihu: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2).
3. Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."

B. Why do so many people offer worship acts and methods that are unscriptural?

1. There are many such things done in the name of Christianity which have no Biblical authority.

- a. Many worship Mary and pay homage to certain “saints.”
 - b. Many worship images.
 - c. Many use mechanical instruments of music in worship.
 - d. Many use entertainment bands in their worship.
 - e. Many dance and clap their hands in worship.
2. Why? It pleases the worshipers! But if we are to honor and please God, we must follow his will in all our activities, including the matter of worship!
 - a. 1 Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - c. John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - d. Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 3. Israel [Jeshurun] was denounced by Jehovah for following their [his] own way: "But Jeshurun waxed fat, and kicked: thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered *with fatness*; then he forsook God *which* made him, and lightly esteemed the Rock of his salvation" (Deut. 32:15).

IV. WORSHIP IS TO EXPRESS OUR SPIRITUALITY, NOT PRIMARILY TO AROUSE IT.

A. Worship defined:

1. To bow down.
2. To venerate.
3. To pay reverence to.
4. To offer homage to.

B. Thus worship is an expression of our love and devotion to God.

1. But many want an emotional “kick” in their worship activities, otherwise they will declare them dull and boring.
 - a. Using worship as entertainment profanes that which is holy. That is exactly what modern “worship” activities do.
 - b. Using worship acts to set the environment profanes worship.
 - 1) Some sectarian groups serve the communion (the Lord’s Supper) as weddings.
 - 2) Some of our brethren sing during the Lord’s Supper. This confuses two separate acts of worship, and is used to merely set the environment.
2. True worshippers express their love for God in worship since their worship is offered in spirit [sincerely] and in truth [according to God’s word].
 - a. Only then can we be edified by worship.
 - b. Then our love will be intensified and our dedication enhanced.
 - c. Then we come away satisfied in our soul and are happy.
3. But this is the by-product of worship—not the main purpose of worship. The primary purpose of worship is to glorify God! We are happy to offer praise to him, and are made happy by doing so!

V. IN TRUE WORSHIP, GOD IS THE AUDIENCE, NOT THE WORSHIPPERS.

A. Worship is offered to God, not to any man or to ourselves.

1. The primary purpose of worship is to please, honor, and glorify God. God is the prime object of true worship.
2. Matthew 4:10: "Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship

the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve."

3. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."

B. Some say, "I did not get anything out of worship?"

1. The statement shows they have missed the very point of worship.

2. Prime purpose is to give glory to God, not get something for ourselves.

3. To be able to offer acceptable worship (and obtain the proper by-products of worship) we must prepare our minds beforehand.

a. We can do this if we pray; read the Scriptures; meditate and talk about spiritual matters before we enter into worship.

b. It is difficult for most of us to instantly change from thinking about sports items, worldly problems, health difficulties, and other secular subjects, to offering sincere, devout worship to God.

VI. IN WORSHIP, PRIMARILY WE ARE TO GIVE RATHER THAN TO RECEIVE.

A. In worship, we give (offer) praise to the Almighty.

1. Christ taught this principle during his earthly ministry: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, **It is more blessed to give than to receive**" (Acts 20:35). Our great involvement in worship is giving praise to God.

a. Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us **offer the sacrifice of praise** to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips **giving thanks** to his name."

b. 1 Peter 2:5: "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, **to offer up spiritual sacrifices**, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

2. We count it a privilege to attend all services! We hold it an honor to sing, to pray, to give, to listen to the message, and to eat the Lord's Supper! We do not see it as a burdensome obligation!

3. If we come mainly to GET, we have missed prime point of worship.

B. It is impossible to GAIN unless we GIVE healthy worship to our Heavenly Father.

1. One of the prime principles of the gospel is to get we must give. **"Give, and it shall be given unto you;** good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:38).

2. It is a pity that some view worship only as a means to GET.

VII. CONCLUSION:

A. Consider these passages:

1. Psalms 30:4: "Sing unto the LORD, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness."

2. Psalms 50:23: "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth *his* conversation *aright* will I show the salvation of God."

3. Psalms 67:3-4: "Let the people praise thee, O God; let all the people praise thee. O let the nations be glad and sing for joy: for thou shalt judge the people righteously, and govern the nations upon earth."

4. Psalms 92:1-2: "*It is a good thing* to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High: To show forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night."

5. Psalms 105:1-2: "O give thanks unto the LORD; call upon his name: make known his deeds among the people. Sing unto him, sing psalms unto him: talk ye of all his wondrous works."

6. Psalms 106:1: "Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for *he is* good: for his mercy *endureth* for ever."

7. Psalms 116:12: "What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?" Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:"

8. Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."

9. 1 Peter 2:5 "Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ."

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10. Revelation 14:7: "Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."
- B. Consider these scriptural injunctions regarding worship:
1. Let us **sing** with sincerity, understanding, and purpose of heart.
 2. Let us **pray**, knowing that God hears; with reverence, sincerity, and gratitude.
 3. Let us **study**, knowing that God speaks to us through the Bible.
 - a. The lesson may be in the words of the preacher, but if it is true to God's book, it is God's word we are hearing.
 - b. Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
 4. Let us **give** freely, gladly, and with purpose of heart, knowing that God is glorified.
 5. Let us **eat the Lord's Supper** gladly, with gratitude, sincerely, and with understanding.
- C. Some final statements from the Bible:
1. Psalms 19:14: "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."
 2. Psalms 100: "Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* hath made us, and not we ourselves; *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, *and* into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, *and* bless his name. For the LORD *is* good; his mercy *is* everlasting; and his truth *endureth* to all generations."
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THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The Kingdom of God!

1. The mere mention of it stirs the interest of spiritually-minded people, and raises questions in the minds of the thoughtful.
 - a. Has the kingdom come?
 - b. Is its coming still future?
2. There are many errors concerning it which are taught and believed by many sincere people.
 - a. The nature of the kingdom is misunderstood: millions view the kingdom as an earthly entity.
 - b. Many believe and teach that the kingdom has not come yet, but that its establishment is soon to occur.
 - c. Many believe and teach that the throne of the kingdom will be in Jerusalem. In the past, there were some who thought it would be in Asia Minor (Montanus taught this—about 160 A.D.), and others asserted it would be in Munster, Germany (some of the Anabaptists).

B. It is vitally important that we know what the Bible says about the establishment of the kingdom.

1. A proper understanding of the establishment of the kingdom is essential if we are to comprehend the New Testament. Millions of sincere folks do not know, and thus misunderstand much of the gospel. Great Biblical subjects are tied to the kingdom, including the new birth and the Lord's Supper. If the kingdom has not come, we have no right to eat the Lord's Supper or to preach the new birth, for both of these pertain to the kingdom. John 3:1-8; Luke 22:15-20.
2. Prominent, popular religious systems have been built around a misunderstanding of what the Bible says about the establishment of the kingdom.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Daniel 2: King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia had a dream.

1. The dream was so startling and real that the king woke up, but could not recall the details of the dream. He called his magicians, astrologers, and sorcerers to remind him of what he had seen and to reveal the meaning thereof.
 - a. Daniel 2:10: "The Chaldeans answered before the king, and said, There is not a man upon the earth that can show the king's matter: therefore *there is* no king, lord, nor ruler, *that* asked such things at any magician, or astrologer, or Chaldean."
 - b. God revealed the dream and its meaning to Daniel. "Then was the secret revealed unto Daniel in a night vision. Then Daniel blessed the God of heaven" (Dan. 2:19).
2. Daniel came to the king with the information he wanted. "But there is a God in heaven that revealeth secrets, and maketh known to the king Nebuchadnezzar what shall be in the latter days. Thy dream, and the visions of thy head upon thy bed, are these" (Dan. 2:28).
 - a. In the dream, Nebuchadnezzar saw a great image, very bright and terrible in appearance. Its head was of fine gold, its breast and arms were of silver, its belly and thighs were of brass, and its legs of iron and feet partly of iron and partly of clay.
 - b. A stone smote the image on its feet, breaking it into pieces; the pieces were blown away by the wind; the stone became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth (Dan. 2:31-35).
3. Daniel gave the meaning of the dream (Dan. 2:31-45).
 - a. The golden head of the image represented Nebuchadnezzar and his great Babylonian Empire: "Thou, O king, *art* a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thine hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou *art* this head of gold" (Dan. 2:37-38).
 - b. The breast and arms represented another kingdom which would replace Nebuchadnezzar's great empire; it would be inferior to that of Babylonia: "And after thee shall arise another kingdom

- inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth" (Dan. 2:39). The reference to this kingdom is connected to the third, and the descriptive clause apparently applies to both the second and third kingdoms; that is, both would bear rule over all the earth.
- c. The belly and thighs represented the kingdom which would succeed the second kingdom (Dan. 2:39). This kingdom would bear rule over all the earth.
 - d. The legs and feet represented a fourth kingdom. This would be a mighty kingdom, inasmuch as iron breaks other into pieces, but it would be divided: "And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all *things*: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay, and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And *as* the toes of the feet *were* part of iron, and part of clay, *so* the kingdom shall be partly strong, and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men: but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay" (Dan. 2:40-43).
4. Having plainly named the first of these four great kingdoms to be that of Babylon, the other three powers are easily identified from history.
 - a. Babylon rose to power when it defeated the Assyrians at Nineveh in 612 B.C and the Egyptians in 606 B.C. at Carchemish. It subdued Judah also in 606 B.C. Babylon fell to the combined armies of the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.
 - b. The Medo-Persian Empire captured Babylon in 539 B.C., taking over its vast empire. They were in turn conquered by the Grecians in 330 B.C., when Alexander the Great invaded the East.
 - c. The Grecian Empire prevailed from 330 B.C. until they were overcome by the Romans in 63 B.C.
 - d. The Roman Empire extended their influence throughout the *civilized* world, conquering nation-after-nation, subjugating the ancient world to their iron rule. The Roman Empire fell into ruin about 476 A.D.
 5. In connection with this fourth kingdom (the Roman Empire), Daniel uttered his awesome prophecy of the coming kingdom.
 - a. Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 - b. God promised to establish his kingdom during the days of the Roman kings. If he was true to his word, we may confidently look for the beginning of the kingdom during the span of time between 63 B.C. and 476 A.D., a period of 539 years.
- B. The Kingdom was at hand during the days of John the Baptizer and Jesus.**
1. John's message prominently featured a promise of the nearness of the kingdom. "In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:1-2).
 - a. The events of this chapter are separated from the events with which chapter two closed by almost thirty years; Matthew began this chapter with these words: *in those days*. Daniel 2:44 had predicted: "And in the days of these kings...."
 - b. Luke 3:1-3: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judaea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Ituraea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias the tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiapas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness. And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins."
 - c. Daniel had predicted that the kingdom would be established during the time when the Roman kings were in power; Luke identified the Roman king then on the throne, and named several of the other great men who were also in power at the time.
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2. Jesus began his ministry with the same message as did John. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).
 3. Jesus instructed the twelve to preach the same message when he sent them on the limited commission: "And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 10:7).
 4. Christ gave this same message to the seventy disciples when he sent them forth to preach: "And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you" (Luke 10:9).
 5. These eighty-four preachers had the same message: the kingdom was about ready to be established. How can anyone who respects the integrity of God's word think that all of these were wrong?
 - a. Premillennialism teaches that Christ planned to establish an earthly kingdom and reign over it from a literal throne in Jerusalem, but that the Jews rejected his efforts.
 - b. The truth is, a powerful group of Jews tried to enthrone Christ on a literal throne, which the Lord refused. "When Jesus therefore perceived that they would come and take him by force, to make him a king, he departed again into a mountain himself alone" (John 6:15).
 - c. His kingdom was never intended to be a worldly kingdom. "Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews: but now is my kingdom not from hence" (John 18:36).
- C. The kingdom was still future during the years 30-33 A.D.
1. Christ taught his disciples to pray for the kingdom to come in Matthew 6:10: "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as *it is* in heaven."
 2. Faithful people were still awaiting the coming of the kingdom in Mark 15:43: "Joseph of Arimathaea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."
 3. The kingdom had not come by the time of Luke 19:11: "And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear."
 4. It was still future in Luke 22:18: "For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come."
 5. It had not come by the time of Luke 23:42-43: "And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 6. It was still future at the time of Acts 1:6: "When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"
- D. Some signs were given by which the appearance of the kingdom could be discerned.
1. Luke 17:20-21: "And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you."
 - a. The appearance of the kingdom was not to be detected by the natural eye. Its coming could be discerned, but not by physical manifestations.
 - b. The kingdom of God is within you; that is, it is not a visible, earthly kingdom. This makes it undeniable that the kingdom of God was not intended to be a worldly or political organization.
 - c. The Lord made it plain that men were not to look with physical eyes to find his kingdom; the nature of it was spiritual.
 2. Mark 9:1: "And he said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power."
 - a. The Lord bluntly stated, without reservations, that the kingdom would come within the lifetime of some of those people who were then living upon earth; it would come before the generation then living on earth passed on into eternity.
 - b. He affirmed also that the kingdom would come in company with power. Therefore, we should look to the establishment of God's kingdom prior to the passing of that generation, and at the time when *power* was demonstrated.
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- c. Consider these possibilities:
 - 1) Christ was wrong about the promise—it never took place. Obviously, this conclusion is to be rejected.
 - 2) Christ was right about the promise, but some members of that generation are still living upon the earth. Clearly, this conclusion is to be rejected; if not, where are these old men?
 - 3) Christ was right about the promise—the kingdom came with power before that generation left the earth by dying. This conclusion demonstratively is the only correct view.
 3. Luke 24:47-49: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are witnesses of these things. And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high."
 - a. The apostles were to remain in Jerusalem until they were “endued” (clothed) with power from “on high” (heaven). At that time, repentance and remission of sins would be preached in the Lord’s name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.
 - b. The promise that had originated with God would be given to them from heaven while they abode in Jerusalem.
 - c. If we can identify the occasion when the apostles were given this power, we will have identified the time when the kingdom was established.
 4. Acts 1:5-8: "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."
 - a. Christ was speaking to his apostles in this passage; he promised that they would receive the “baptism of the Holy Ghost” in the very near future.
 - b. He promised that the apostles would “receive power” when the Holy Spirit came upon them. The baptism of the Holy Spirit and their reception of power would be simultaneous.
 5. Tying Acts 1:5-8 to Mark 9:1 and Luke 24:47-49, we learn that the kingdom was to come when the apostles received the power with which the Holy Spirit would clothe them. If we can determine when the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, giving them the power indicated, we will discover the beginning of the kingdom. The kingdom came when all of these factors were present.
- E. God was true to his promises.
1. He had promised to set up the kingdom after the ascension of Christ.
 - a. Daniel 7:13-14: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, *one* like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him: his dominion *is* an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom *that* which shall not be destroyed."
 - b. We are given a view of the Lord’s ascension from earth in Acts 1:9-11: "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked stedfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; Which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."
 - c. We are given a prophetic picture of Christ’s return to heaven following his successful mission to earth, in Psalms 24:7-10: "Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who *is* this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift *them* up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he *is* the King of
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- glory.”
- d. Daniel 7:13-14 states plainly that the Messiah received the kingdom after his return to heaven; this is another key to identifying the time the kingdom was established.
 - e. A three-part picture is given to us of the Lord’s ascension.
 - 1) Acts 1:9-11 gives the view of his departure from earth.
 - 2) Psalm 24:7-10 describes his return to heaven, where the mighty gates were opened to him.
 - 3) Daniel 7:13-14 shows his return to the Father, who gave him the kingdom.
2. The Holy Spirit gave power to the apostles on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
- a. Acts 2:1-4: "And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
 - b. Acts 2:29-36: "Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this, which ye now see and hear. For David is not ascended into the heavens: but he saith himself, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, Until I make thy foes thy footstool. Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:20: "For the kingdom of God *is* not in word, but in power." The kingdom of God does not rest on words only, but on miraculous power! The miracles that were wrought in the first century proved that point. It came in close connection with supernatural demonstrations, proving to those who witnessed them (and to those today who read of them) that the kingdom of God is now with men.
3. Penitent believers who were baptized were added by the Lord to his church for the first time on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2.
- a. Acts 2:41,47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." To be added to the Lord is to be added to the church, for the church is the body of Christ (Eph. 1:22-23; Col. 1:18).
 - b. When Christ promised to build his church, he described this institution as the church and the kingdom, using the terms interchangeably shows that they are identical. "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - c. When Christ built his church, he established his kingdom. He used the apostles to fulfill this promise.
 - d. He gave Peter (and the rest of the apostles) the keys to the kingdom; they used these keys to open the church (Matt. 16:18-19).
 - 1) Matthew 18:18: "Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - 2) Matthew 19:28: "And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel."
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- e. To be added to the church is identical to be translated into the kingdom. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:13-14).
4. Prior to the time of Acts 2, the kingdom was still future; after Acts 2, the kingdom is spoken of as being present.
 - a. Revelation 1:9: "I John, who also am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jesus Christ, was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." [Revelation was written about 96 A.D.].
 - b. Revelation 1:6: "And he made us to be a kingdom, to be priests unto his God and Father; to him be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen" (ASV).
 - c. Hebrews 12:28: "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear." [Hebrews was written about 63 A.D.].
 - d. Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son." [Colossians was written about 62 A.D.].
- F. The importance of the kingdom.
 1. Those who are purified are in the kingdom, which is entered by the new birth.
 - a. John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:22-23: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."
 - c. We must be pure (holy) before we can be in God's presence in heaven.
 - 1) Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - 3) Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."
 2. Those who are redeemed are in the kingdom.
 - a. Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - b. To be redeemed is to be forgiven of our sins.
 3. Those in the kingdom have the privilege of worshiping and serving God. "Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear" (Heb. 12:28).
 4. The kingdom will be taken to heaven at the second coming of Christ.
 - a. I Corinthians 15:24: "Then *cometh* the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power."
 - b. 2 Peter 1:11: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - c. Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Are you a citizen in God's kingdom?

1. You must be born again to enter the kingdom: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).
 2. To be born again is simply to obey the gospel.
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- a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - c. 1 Peter 1:22-25: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh *is* as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."
- B. Can you give a logical reason why you do not:
1. Obey the gospel now, if you need to do so?
 2. Return to the Savior if you have obeyed the gospel but have fallen away?
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WHERE THERE IS NO CONDEMNATION

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Romans 8:1-6: This is a conclusion based on chapters 1-7.

1. The thesis of the Book of Romans is stated in 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
2. Romans 1:18—2:29 shows that the Gentiles need the gospel.
3. That the Jews also need the gospel is shown in Romans 3.
4. Romans 4 shows that the salvation God offers to fallen men today is by the gospel, which is a system of faith, and not by the Law of Moses.
5. Romans 5 teaches the fundamental truth that Christ died to make salvation possible. "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him" (Rom. 5:6-9).
6. We are saved when we obey the gospel: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness." (Rom. 6:16-18).

B. Romans 8:1-6 is in contrast to Romans 7:22-25.

1. Romans 7:22-25: "For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin."
2. The Law of Moses condemned. None could keep it perfectly; its adherents tended to live in dread. "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).
3. In Romans 7 there is a wail of despair, but in Romans 8:1-6 there is a shout of victory! "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace" (Rom. 8:1-6).

II. DISCUSSION.

A. We cannot cherish salvation if we do not understand what it means to be lost.

1. The significance of being lost is shown by highly descriptive words:
 - a. To be Destroyed: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28; cf. 2 Thess. 2:7-9). The Greek word translated "destroyed" means loss of well-being, not loss of being.
 - b. To be Separated from God: Matthew 25:31-46.
 - c. To be Punished in Unquenchable Fire: Mark 9:42-48; Matthew 25:41.

- d. To Exist in Darkness: Matthew 25:30.
 - e. To be Surrounded by Horrible Cries: Matthew 25:30.
 2. The awfulness of being lost is also described in these passages:
 - a. Luke 12:4-5: "And I say unto you my friends, Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 - c. Hebrews 10:31: "*It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 3. To be lost in eternity is much worse than experiencing physical death. "Death" carries the idea of separation
 - a. In physical death, the spirit is separated from the physical body. "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).
 - b. Being lost in eternity is to be forever separated from God.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - 3) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 4) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 4. One who is guilty of sin in this world is under condemnation now, with the official sentence to be passed in the Judgment
 - a. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
- B. Romans 8:1 speaks of a state of *No Condemnation*.
1. Is this a universal proposition? Does it apply to everyone? No.
 - a. Matthew 7:13-14: "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."
 - b. Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."
 2. It is the obedient who enjoy the state of being under *no condemnation!*
 - a. Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
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- b. Hebrews 5:8-9: "Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 - c. Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 3. "No condemnation" is a negative description which means that the individual is "justified"—God considers him as though he has never been guilty of sin.
 4. This state of "no condemnation" pertains to those who are "in Christ."
 - C. The New Testament identifies the blessings which are provided in Christ.
 1. Citizenship in the kingdom of God. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).
 2. Redemption. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins" (Col. 1:14).
 3. Forgiveness: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:7).
 4. Given spiritual life: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1).
 5. Brought near to God: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13).
 6. Reconciliation: "And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby" (Eph. 2:16).
 7. Sanctification: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called *to be* saints, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours" (1 Cor. 1:2).
 8. Become a new creature [creation]: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
 9. Liberty: "And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage" (Gal. 2:4).
 10. Hope: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" (1 Pet. 1:3).
 11. Salvation: "Therefore I endure all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).
 - D. Since these pertain to those in Christ, what of those who are out of him?
 1. Spiritually dead: "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins" (Eph 2:1).
 2. Child of disobedience: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2).
 3. Child of wrath: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:3).
 4. Alien and stranger to God: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph. 2:12). "And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:23).
 5. No hope: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12).
 6. Without God: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world" (Eph 2:12).
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7. In the world: "That at that time ye were ...in the world" (Eph 2:12).
 8. Far off: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ....And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh" (Eph 2:13,17).
 9. In darkness: "Having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart" (Eph 4:18).
- E. What does it mean to be in Christ? How do we enter into Christ?
1. To be in Christ is to be in his body:
 - a. Romans 12:5: "So we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 12:27: "Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular."
 2. To be in his church is to be in his body since his spiritual body is his church:
 - a. Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - b. Colossians 1:18: "And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all *things* he might have the preeminence."
 - c. Colossians 1:24: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up that which is behind of the afflictions of Christ in my flesh for his body's sake, which is the church."
 3. To be in his church is to be in his kingdom since his church is his kingdom:
 - a. Matthew 16:18-19: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."
 - b. The Lord used *church* and *kingdom of heaven* interchangeably, which shows that the kingdom and the church are the same institution.
 4. To be in the body of Christ is to be in the church of Christ, which is the kingdom of Christ, which is to be in Christ, where all spiritual blessings are given. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ" (Eph 1:3).
 5. Ephesians 4:4-6: "*There is* one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who *is* above all, and through all, and in you all." There is only one baptism, even as there is only one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, and one God. This baptism puts us into:
 - a. Christ:
 - 1) Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - 2) Galatians 3:27: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
 - b. The Body of Christ (his church):
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 12:13: "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether *we be* Jews or Gentiles, whether *we be* bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit."
 - 2) Acts 2:38, 41,47: "...Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost....Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
 - c. The Kingdom:
 - 1) John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - 2) Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy

he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."

- 3) Colossians 1:13: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son."
- 4) Colossians 2:12: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."

F. There is no condemnation if:

1. We are in Christ.
 - a. Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - b. Romans 8:1: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."
 - c. Galatians 3:26-27: "For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ."
2. We walk not after the flesh: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom 8:1).
 - a. We must not allow our fleshly lusts to govern us.
 - 1) Matthew 26:41: "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak."
 - 2) Romans 8:5: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit."
 - 3) Romans 8:12-13: "Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."
 - b. We must set our affections on spiritual things and heaven.
 - 1) Colossians 3:1-4: "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, *who is* our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 - 3) 1 John 3:1-3: "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
3. We must walk after the Spirit: "*There is* therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit...For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit" (Rom 8:1, 5).
 - a. We walk after the Spirit by doing what the Holy Spirit taught, by minding his word. "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:2). "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Pet. 1:22).
 - b. The Holy Spirit speaks through the inspired word.
 - 1) 2 Samuel 23:2: "The spirit of the LORD spake by me, and his word *was* in my tongue."
 - 2) Acts 1:16: "Men *and* brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus."

- 3) 2 Peter 1:20-21: "Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
- 4) 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
- 5) 1 Timothy 4:1: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils." The Holy Spirit uttered these clear statements through the written word which Paul inscribed.
- 6) Revelation 2:7: "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God." The Holy Spirit spoke through the letters that were written.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Do you need to obey Spirit's word?

1. The Holy Spirit has spoken these words:
 - a. To the unbeliever: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house" (Acts 16:30-31).
 - b. To the believer who has not repented: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30-31).
 - c. To the penitent believer: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:36-37). "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Rom. 10:9-10).
 - d. To the penitent believer who has confessed his faith: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16).
2. When an individual obeys the gospel, the following transactions are done:
 - a. The Lord adds that person to his church: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:47).
 - b. The Lord translates that person into his kingdom: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son" (Col. 1:13).
 - c. The person enters into Christ: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Rom. 6:3-4).
 - d. The individual is delivered from the guilt of his past sins and receives all the spiritual blessings which are provided in Christ: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ....In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace" (Eph. 1:3,7).

B. The child of God then cultivates the spiritual graces and serves Christ faithfully.

1. 2 Peter 1:5-11: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 2. 1 Corinthians 15:58: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord."
 3. Matthew 10:22: "And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved."
 4. 1 Peter 1:3-9: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations: That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ: Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory: Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls."
 5. 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."
 6. Revelation 2:10: "Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer...be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."
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The Lord's Supper

[An Expository Study of 1 Corinthians 11:17-30]

II. INTRODUCTION.

A. Through the centuries, the Lord's Supper has undergone much abuse through perversion.

1. It has been changed into **transubstantiation**: the unscriptural notion that the elements literally become the flesh and blood of Christ after a *priest* supposedly *blesses* them.
 - a. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - b. 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
 - c. 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
2. It has been changed into **consubstantiation**: the unscriptural notion that the flesh and blood of Christ somehow exist along side of the elements (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
3. It has been called **the holy eucharist**: the term is not found in the Scriptures (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
4. It has been described as a **sacrament**: this unscriptural term refers to certain *ceremonies* (rites) which are said to be sources of *divine grace*. Catholics think there are seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, penance, holy orders, matrimony, and anointing the sick [Webster]. (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
5. The sectarian world observes it only on **infrequent occasions**: the Bible teaches it is to be observed on the first day of each week (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
6. Some sectarians groups serve it at **marriage ceremonies**: This abuse attaches mystical powers to sacred Supper of the Lord (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
7. Some brethren have described the Lord's Supper as **the most important act of worship**: the Bible does not say or teach this (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).
8. Some brethren **sing** while serving it: this is without scriptural authority; it is an attempt to gratify the fleshly senses; it joins two separate acts of worship into a confusing union; it is an attempt to "set the atmosphere." Why not have someone pray, preach, or take up the collection while the Supper is being eaten? (cf. Col. 3:17; 1 Pet. 4:11; 2 John 9).

B. There were abuses of the Lord's Supper among the saints at Corinth.

1. Paul wrote a section of 1 Corinthians to correct these abuses and to teach the truth on this important subject.
2. Our aim in this study is to survey what Paul writes in this section; it will be informative and enlightening.

III. DISCUSSION.

A. 1 Corinthians 11:17-22: Abuses of the Lord's Supper.

1. Verses 17-18: "Now in this that I declare unto you I praise you not, that ye come together not for the better, but for the worse. For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you; and I partly believe it."
 - a. The Corinthians were instructed to meet on the Lord's day to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Lord's Supper is not a meaningless ceremony, but is intended to keep the memory of Christ fresh in our minds. If one eats it without the proper contemplation of Christ's death, the supper is void of benefit; our eating it will do more harm than good.
 - b. Paul had learned that the Corinthian saints were split into cliques when they assembled to eat the supper; he partly believed the report. He had no praise for them in this lapse into carnality.
 - c. To worship God falsely does much harm and no good: "Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy

of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:7-9).

2. Verse 19: "For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you."
 - a. Faithful Christians are sorely discouraged when divisions in the local church occur. However, we need to see the situation as God sees it. If false doctrine enters a congregation, the members are tested: will they hold fast to the truth or will they turn aside after the false doctrines of men?
 - b. God has no use for those who will give up the truth for error! When Adam and Eve failed their test of faith in the Garden of Eden, God had no choice but to drive them away from his presence. If we had been there, we would have had to agree with God's action, or else be removed from the garden, also.
 - c. Every Christian and every congregation will face tests of faith. These tests must come if we are to mature. Mankind is prone to crave that which is new, or exciting, or forbidden. If we do not grow in knowledge of God's will and in determination to walk with God, we will be disposed to follow some new doctrine, and thus fail the test.
 - d. When those who believe and practice false doctrine, or who follow other sinful ways, depart from a congregation, or are excluded therefrom, the church is stronger; and the faithful are made manifest. We should not be shocked or overly dismayed when divisions occur; that simply means that God has tested some of our brethren and found them wanting. We should rejoice that we did not fall into their evil ways.
3. Verse 20: "When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper."
 - a. One purpose of their coming together into the assembly was to eat of the Lord's Supper (Acts 20:7). However, because of the evil practices associated with their observance of the supper, it was impossible for them to partake of it acceptably. The occasion identified is the one in which they all came together into one place. This calls for the church to have regular meetings in which all the members are present.
 - 1) A congregation that divides into classes for the purpose of studying the Bible is fulfilling the requirement of instructing the members. Bible classes is an excellent method of edifying Christians and teaching the young and others.
 - 2) However, when a congregation divides the worship assembly into separate groups, it fails to "come together into one place." Such a practice also discourages the unity and fellowship so necessary for the strength of a congregation. "If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?...How is it then, brethren? when ye come together, every one of you hath a psalm, hath a doctrine, hath a tongue, hath a revelation, hath an interpretation. Let all things be done unto edifying" (1 Cor. 14:23,26).
 - b. The ASV gives this rendering of the verse: "When therefore ye assemble yourselves together, it is not possible to eat the Lord's supper." The next two verses show that the Corinthians had turned the Lord's Supper into a common meal in which some were drunken and others went without food. This was not eating the Lord's Supper, and as long as they continued this perversion, it was impossible for them to eat it (acceptably to God).
 - c. A common meal and the Lord's Supper are incompatible. They are mutually exclusive. One feeds the spiritual man and the other nourishes the physical man. The Lord's Supper glorifies God; a common meal in the place of the Lord's Supper brings shame to the partakers and angers God.
 - d. They assembled in the wrong spirit and for the wrong motives, thus the act was wrong. Paul condemns their practice because what they offered was a perversion, not an act of worship. Since the Supper is the Lord's, it is only the Lord who has the right to set the procedures by which it is to be eaten.

- e. Some scholars think that the Corinthians ate a common meal in connection with the Lord's Supper, while others say that they had turned the Lord's Supper into a regular meal. In either case, Paul condemns the practice.
4. Verse 21: "For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken."
- a. Paul had already stated that when they came together, division was present in the ranks of the believers. When Christians congregate, unity and fellowship and love are to be enjoyed. In this verse, the apostle accuses them of disunity, selfishness, drunkenness, gluttony, and respect of persons, in addition to their perverting the Lord's Supper.
 - b. This is the trend people adopt if they have not been fully taught. Under the best of circumstances, Christians have a struggle to remain on the narrow way (Matt. 7:13-14; 26:41; Luke 13:24).
 - 1) When preachers will not preach the whole counsel of God, when elders will not require that teachers and preachers present all of the unadulterated truth, or when members will not study the Bible, we should not be surprised to see them embrace the same kinds of practices the Corinthians followed.
 - 2) Offering free food as a method to draw big crowds is apt to succeed, but such material sustenance will not enliven the soul, and cannot make the church stronger.
 - c. The members brought their own food according to their means. The poor had nothing to eat, while the rich had an abundance. On one hand, some would eat gluttonously, and others would be hungry. The word *before* shows that they did not all eat at the same time.
 - d. Paul accuses some of them of being drunken.
 - 1) This offers no proof regarding the nature of the fruit of the vine. Their drunkenness could have stemmed from the meal (assuming the meal was kept separate from the Supper), but the Supper itself had been perverted to the extent that it was nothing more than a common meal.
 - 2) Were these saints drunken to the point that they passed out? That is not very likely, however Paul says they were drunken. Drunkenness occurs somewhere between the first drink and the time the drinker becomes unconscious. The only safe course is totally to abstain from any alcoholic beverage!
 - e. Paul had taught them the truth about observing the Lord's Supper during his initial work at Corinth. He worked and worshipped with them for at least eighteen months (Acts 18:11). By word and example he would have shown them the proper way of partaking of the Supper. However, in the short period of time between the time he left them and the time of this letter, the brethren had grossly perverted the Supper.
 - 1) The Romanists claim the antiquity of their practices and doctrines as the primary source of authority for their peculiar dogmas and works. Even if they could trace these back to the first century, that would not be sufficient authority for them. To what would they have trailed them? To the faithful practices of the Lord's church, or to the perversions that began to run rampant in the latter part of that century?
 - 2) The only authority for religious beliefs and practices is the inspired word of God. If a person has to appeal to tradition for authority, that implies he cannot find authorization for his dogmas in the Bible!
5. Verse 22: "What? have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."
- a. There are several things about the Corinthians' practices which Paul condemns:
 - 1) Their gluttony and drunkenness.
 - 2) The selfishness of those who had food but would not share it with those who had none.
 - 3) Their perversion of the Lord's Supper.
 - 4) Their eating at different times. Even if they were eating the Supper, they were not partaking of it together.
 - 5) The divisions that were in evidence in their assemblies.
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- b. "Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" Some brethren view this statement as barring the practice of eating in the church building. There are several things wrong with this conclusion:
- 1) There is no evidence that any of the congregations in the first century owned a meetinghouse. They gathered in public places or on private property. Many references are made in the New Testament of congregations meeting in private homes. Eating and drinking may be done in a private home, even if a congregation holds its meetings there. Does the house become holy when the brethren congregate, and return to its common status when the saints disperse?
 - 2) This implies that there are places more holy than other locations. However, Christ taught that there were to be no special, holy places as under Judaism. "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth" (John 4:20-24).
 - 3) If it is wrong to eat in the church house, it would also be wrong to drink water, and yet every church building has provisions for the people to drink water.
 - 4) If it is wrong to eat in the meetinghouse, it would be equally wrong to have a bathroom.
 - 5) If it is wrong to eat in the building, why is it not wrong for mothers to feed their infants there?
 - 6) Paul's obvious point in the statement is to denounce their practice of mixing the Lord's Supper with a common meal. The holy and the secular are to be kept separate. Common meals were to be eaten outside the assemblies; the Lord's Supper was to be eaten in the assemblies. If this simple procedure was observed, their perversion of the Supper would be halted, and that sacred feast could be observed properly.
- c. Does this passage forbid Christians gathering together for a common meal? Certainly not. Jude 12 speaks of the brethren having "feasts of charity," a clear reference to them eating meals together, but we must not intermingle profane activities with sacred exercises (worship).
- d. When they perverted the Lord's Supper, they showed scorn for the church of God. In their eating the common meal selfishly, they shamed those Christians who did not have food.
- e. How could they expect Paul to praise them for such practices? There was much to condemn about these matters, but nothing that was praiseworthy.
- B. 1 Corinthians 11:23-30: Paul Shows Basic Truths of Lord's Supper.**
1. Verses 23-26: "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come."
 - a. Paul sets before them the truth regarding how to observe the sacred feast. His information was not obtained from uninspired sources, but by the revelation he obtained from Christ (Gal. 1:11-12; 1 Cor. 14:37). This information was not something new to them; he had delivered it to them when he was with them.
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 14:37: "If any man think himself to be a prophet, or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord."
 - 2) Galatians 1:11-12: "But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - b. On the night in which Christ was betrayed, in the meeting with the apostles in the upper room, the Lord took bread, gave thanks for it, broke it, and instructed the apostles to eat it.
 - 1) This lifeless, broken bread represented the broken body of the crucified Savior. Foolish men
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- have misapplied the Lord's words, and claim that the bread actually becomes the literal flesh of Christ after the priest "blesses" it. This error results from failing to recognize a figure of speech. One of the basic elements of sacred hermeneutics is knowing how to identify whether a statement is literal or figurative. That the bread is still bread can be learned from a simple examination of it: it looks like bread, it tastes like bread, and it has only such ingredients that are consistent with bread. When Christ instituted the Supper, his body was intact after the disciples ate; they did not consume his physical body. Paul called it *bread* (verse 26).
- 2) The bread is intended to remind Christians of the suffering death the Lord accomplished on the cross. As we eat the bread, we remember his sacrifice.
 - 3) There is no contradiction between the two facts that (1) no bones of the Lord's body were broken during the crucifixion (John 19:31-37) and (2) Paul's statement about Christ's broken body. Although none of his bones was broken, his body was broken, in that he died. His body was broken by the crucifixion and by the spear which pierced his side. Some ancient manuscripts do not include *broken* in the verse.
 - 4) The bread was unleavened. The Passover Feast, during which the Supper was instituted, was eaten with unleavened bread (Ex. 12:8,15; 133,7; Dt. 16:3). The feast of unleavened bread accompanied the Passover, in which leaven was not even permitted in Jewish houses.
 - 5) Matthew 26:26-29: "And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."
 - 6) Mark 14:22-25: "And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave *it* to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God."
 - 7) Luke 22:15-22: "And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide *it* among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me *is* with me on the table. And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!"
- c. The Lord took the cup, and likened it to his blood which was to be shed. As often as his followers partook of it, they were to do so in remembrance of him. It reminds us of his shed blood.
- 1) The life of the flesh is the blood (Gen. 9:4-6; Lev. 17:11-14). To say that Christ shed his blood for us, is equivalent to saying that he gave his life for us.
 - 2) The blood of Christ sealed the New Covenant (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:7-13; 10:29). His blood provided the means for salvation to the lost (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:15-17; 1 Pet. 1:18-23).
 - 3) That which we drink is not the cup, but the contents of the cup. *Cup* is used figuratively to represent that which is contained in the cup. There is nothing in this passage, or anywhere else in the New Testament, which requires Christians to drink from the same container. It is a matter of expedience that individual containers are used in serving the fruit of the vine.
- d. The Corinthians were reminded that they proclaim the Lord's death each time they partake of his Supper. The frequency of partaking of the Supper is not specified in the passage, but Acts 20:7
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shows how often it to be eaten.

- 1) The saints came together upon the first day of the week to break bread; since every week has a first day, they met to partake every first day of the week.
 - 2) God did not tell the Israelites, in so many words, to remember every sabbath day (Ex. 20:8), but they all understood that to be God's meaning. One who profaned even a single sabbath day, faced the prescribed penalty; he did not have to profane every one of them. Thus, God intended that *every sabbath day be remembered and kept holy*.
 - 3) The Lord's Supper is to be eaten every Lord's Day until the return of Christ. The millennial theory asserts that the kingdom will not be established until the return of Christ. However, Christ said that the Lord's Supper was to be eaten in the kingdom (Luke 22:15-20); but the Supper is to cease when the Lord returns (*till he come*); therefore, the kingdom has come.
 - 4) As long as faithful Christians eat the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, they perpetuate the memory of him who died for us. It is important that we keep the death of Christ alive in our memories. Sometimes, sobs are heard when a dog dies, but when the Lord's Supper is being eaten, whispering is heard. The occasion of eating the Lord's Supper ought to be a time of sober reflection and gratitude. Mementos such as pictures, a lock of hair, or some personal possession, by which we remember some departed loved one, are very important to us. The Lord's Supper ought to be infinitely more so!
 - 5) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 requires a weekly assembly in which the saints were commanded to give as they had been prospered. In the original text, Paul stated that giving was to be done **every first day**. 1 Corinthians 11:20 shows their obligation to gather to eat the Lord's supper (which the brethren in Corinth had perverted—11:20-30). When they came together "into one place" they were expected to eat the supper; they came together on the first day of each week (1 Cor. 16:1-2); this was obviously the time when they ate the supper.
 - 6) Pliny, a Roman official, wrote to Emperor Trajan in 112 A.D. about the practice of Christians eating the Lord's Supper on a "fixed day." (See Coffman, *Commentary on Acts*, pp.385f).
2. Verses 27-30: "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
- a. The manner with which we partake of the Supper is extremely important to our souls. To eat it with a thoughtless or irreverent manner is sinful, making our worship null and void. We would be no better than the Corinthians, who were strongly denounced for their perversions of the Supper.
 - 1) The apostle specified both the bread and the cup, and showed that the same person partook of both. Some sectarians think that only the priest should drink the cup, but both Paul and the Lord showed that each one is to partake of both elements.
 - 2) If we eat the Supper unworthily (in an unworthy manner), we become guilty of the body and blood of Christ. We partake of it unworthily if we take the emblems without an inward and sincere desire to commemorate the death of the Lord. A perfunctory observance will bring no glory to God, no honor to Christ, and no nourishment to our souls.
 - 3) To partake of this hallowed repast unworthily, profanes both it and him who gave it. "He incurs the guilt of treating lightly the slain body of the Lord Jesus" (Lipscomb, p.173). In the absolute sense of the word, none of us is worthy to eat the Supper, but each of us can eat it in a worthy manner.
 - 4) "If any person shall partake of this solemn rite without discernment of the event it memorializes, or without regard to the obligations imposed by it, or without any consistent effort to partake of it continually and faithfully throughout his life, or until the Lord comes, or without the due reverence and appreciation due such an ordinance—then such a person
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- becomes guilty of the body and the blood of Jesus, the meaning of this being that he, in a spiritual sense, has become a crucifier of the Lord himself" (Coffman, p.186).
- b. To partake of this solemn feast in a worthy manner, is described in verse 28. One is to examine himself. The purpose of this inward examination is not to discover whether he is worthy to partake. Rather, the design of the introspection is to insure that his aim and attitude are proper, to set himself in the right frame of mind so that he can partake of the feast in a worthy manner.
 - 1) Some questions would be entirely in order during this self-examination: Am I eating the Lord's Supper to perpetuate the memory of Christ? Am I eating it out of gratitude for what he did for me? Am I giving honor to him in the way I eat it? Do I bring glory to him in eating it by living as I live? Such an examination would remove all shameful behavior and attitude on our part.
 - 2) Some men may think that such an examination is beneath their dignity as males, but without it we cannot eat the Lord's Supper acceptably; and if we do not worship as we ought, how can we expect to enter heaven, or be happy there even if we entered? Such pride will cause our souls to be lost.
 - c. In verse 29, Paul declares that one who eats and drinks unworthily (in an unworthy manner), eats and drinks damnation to himself (to his own soul). Why? Because he does not discern the Lord's body.
 - 1) The apostle told the Corinthians that because they improperly partook of the Supper, their gatherings did more harm than good. He shows here that such is true of every other Christian who does not eat it properly. Without the honest examination of our motives, without sober thinking as we eat, and without a sincere attitude, our eating of the Supper will do us more harm than good.
 - 2) We must rightly discern the Lord's body for our observance of this memorial feast to do us any good. The Corinthians failed to make the right distinction between the Supper and an ordinary meal. Our failure to recognize it as God's appointed symbols of Christ's body and blood, our worship will be meaningless. Anyone who eats the spiritual feast carelessly, partakes of it irreverently, and so accrues condemnation to himself.
 - 3) Hebrews 10:29,31: "Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?...*It is* a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God."
 - 4) The acts of worship we offer and the spirit with which we offer them, are important to the welfare of our souls! How sad it is that anyone should rob himself of heaven's blessings by failing to learn the truth about worship.
 - d. Because they failed to discern the Lord's body and blood in the Communion, many were spiritually sick, and many were spiritually dead. This spiritual sickness and death was brought about by improper observance of the Lord's Supper. This illustrates the importance of this act of worship to our souls!
 - 1) A good way to see if you are drifting away from the Lord is to examine your attitude while eating the Supper. Ask yourself, "Am I doing this merely out of habit? Is it a mere formality?" What do you think about as the emblems are being passed through the audience? An accurate gauge of your spiritual status can be obtained by noting the manner in which you eat the Lord's Supper.
 - 2) These sick and sleeping Corinthians were afflicted with a spiritual malady. Some were grievously sick, and others were already spiritually dead, although each of these was physically alive (cf. 1 Tim. 5:6).
 - 3) If improper observance of the Lord's Supper produces spiritual ailments that can result in eternal banishment from God, then proper observance of the Supper will provide spiritual health and vitality, and yield eternal acceptance in the presence of God.
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C. Acts 20:7-12: Paul Meets With the Saints at Troas.

1. Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
 - a. The disciples met and broke bread on the first day of the week (Sunday). This is the only passage that directly links the Lord's Supper and the first day of the week, but there is other evidence which shows that Sunday was the day in which they ate the sacred supper. Important events that occurred on the first day of the week indicate the special significance of that day:
 - 1) Christ was raised from the dead (Matt. 28:1).
 - 2) The church was established (Lev. 23:15-16; Acts 2:1, 47).
 - 3) The Lord's Supper was eaten (Acts 20:7).
 - 4) The collection was taken up on that day (1 Cor. 16:1-2).
 - b. The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. 11:20) is eaten on the Lord's Day (Rev. 1:10) from the Lord's Table (1 Cor. 10:21).
 - c. The text reads that they came together to break bread "on the first of the week," with *day* being italicized. The phrase, which is also used in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, means *upon one of the sabbath*, "Hebrew idiom for the first day of the week. The word *sabbaton* was by them used to designate the week (cf. Luke 18:12); hence, day *one* of the week is the *first* day thereof" (Guy N. Woods, *Questions and Answers*, Vol. 1, p.355).
 - d. They came together to "break bread." "'Break bread' here is likely a synecdoche for all the items of worship, teaching, singing, the contribution, the Lord's Supper and prayer (Acts 2:42), derived, of course, from the fact that bread was 'broken' (eaten) in the Lord's Supper. Otherwise, where is authority for 'fruit of the vine' in Acts 20:7? On the assumption that the phrase, 'to break bread,' is a literal, and not a figurative allusion, this passage, at least, could not be cited to support any activity other than breaking a piece of bread. In this case, where is authority here for the items of worship? It seems clear, therefore, that the phrase, 'to break bread,' is a figurative statement embracing all the items of worship, including the Lord's Supper" (ibid., pp.67f).
 - e. Paul preached to them; he continued his speech until midnight. Depending on which system of time-keeping was employed at the time, the gathering began on the evening toward the end of Sunday or in the evening at the beginning of Sunday. The Romans divided their days as we do, with the day beginning at midnight and ending at the following midnight; the beginning of a day according to the Jewish system was at sundown (six p.m.) and concluded at the same time the next evening. In either case this gathering was on the first day of the week. However, as Woods pointed out, the breaking of the bread cited in verse 11 is clearly the Lord's Supper, in which case, they would have been partaking of it on Monday morning—if the Roman time is being used. (ibid., pp.68f).
 - f. Paul had waited in Troas for seven days in order to meet with the saints; his plans were to leave the next morning following the assembly described.
2. Acts 20:8-9: "And there were many lights in the upper chamber, where they were gathered together. And there sat in a window a certain young man named Eutychus, being fallen into a deep sleep: and as Paul was long preaching, he sunk down with sleep, and fell down from the third loft, and was taken up dead."
 - a. The upper chamber where they had gathered was illuminated. A young man was seated in the window in the "third loft." Paul's long sermon, possibly coupled with fatigue on the part of Eutychus, resulted in his falling asleep, and tumbling down to his death. The statement is that he was taken up dead, not that they merely thought he was dead.
 - b. Remember that Luke was a medical doctor, and in his report he indicates the young man was dead. The "third loft" places the "upper chamber" on the third floor of the house. The age of Eutychus is not given.
3. Acts 20:10: "And Paul went down, and fell on him, and embracing *him* said, Trouble not yourselves; for his life is in him." Paul went down to the young man, fell on him, and embraced him; he reported

- to the crowd that there was no need for them to be troubled, for "his life is in him."
4. Acts 20:11: "When he therefore was come up again, and had broken bread, and eaten, and talked a long while, even till break of day, so he departed."
 - a. When he returned to the upper chamber, they broke "the bread." The definite article is in the ASV, which identifies this bread with the bread of verse 7. That this is the Lord's Supper is also indicated by the connecting thought: "and eaten." They broke bread **and** ate. In biblical phraseology, to break bread was to eat; Luke would be using an unnecessary repetition if a common meal is all that is described in the verse.
 - b. The verse reports their partaking of the Lord's Supper, which was followed by a regular meal. The brethren continued to talk until daybreak, when Paul departed to meet his ship.
 5. Acts 20:12: "And they brought the young man alive, and were not a little comforted."
 - a. The young man had been brought back to the upper chamber—alive. The text does not say that they carried him.
 - b. Naturally, there was considerable comfort in his being raised back to life.

IV. CONCLUSION.

A. There are Certain Things to which we Look in Eating the Lord's Supper.

1. We look **backwards** in time to see in the eye of faith the sufferings of Christ on the cross.
2. We look **forward** in time to the Lord's Second Coming.
3. We look **upward** toward heaven to see the Lord sitting at God's right hand.
4. We look **inward** into our own hearts to insure that we are eating the supper with meaning and sincerity.
5. We look **outward** toward a world that needs the benefits of Christ's death, proclaiming his death.

B. Let us as Faithful Christians Resolve:

1. That we will always eat the Supper worthily.
2. That we will eat it regularly: upon the first day of every week.
3. That we will eat it sincerely: remembering the Lord's sufferings on the cross.
4. That we will eat it with gratitude: recognizing and being thankful for his matchless gift.

C. For the Lord's Supper to Nourish your Soul:

1. You must be in Christ.
 - a. Romans 6:3-4: "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."
 - b. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
2. You must remain faithful to Christ. "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

Music of the New Testament Church

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. There are many things which make the Lord's church different from all other religious groups.
1. Perhaps the most obvious is that we do not use instruments of music in worship as they most often do.
 2. Our not using instrumental music (IM) is not due to our:
 - a. Not liking that kind of music.
 - b. Being too poor to buy one or more musical instruments.
 3. Our non-use of IM in worship is based on Biblical principles:
 - a. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - d. There is no New Testament authority to use IM in the worship of God by the church on earth.
- B. The history of how IM came to be acceptable in worship by religious bodies is enlightening.
1. The first mechanical instrument of music (an organ) was introduced in a group of people claiming to be Christians in 670 A.D.
 - a. It was introduced by Pope Vitalian I; he acted on his own authority, not by Bible authority.
 - b. The introduction of this instrument created problems and was removed.
 2. IM was introduced again about 800 A.D., and again faced some opposition, but was retained anyway.
 3. The Greek Church refused it and still does not use it. But the modern denominational world has almost entirely accepted it.
 - a. IM is so prominently used that we are thought most peculiar because we do not use it.
 - b. Most people who notice its absence ask why we do not have "music" in our worship. The only kind of music they are aware of is instrumental music; they do not realize that singing is music.
- C. It is obvious that IM was used in worship during part of the Mosaic Age and that many use it now.
1. But the Jews rejected God as their ruler, **then** instrumental music came in.
 - a. 1 Samuel 8:4-7: "Then all the elders of Israel gathered themselves together, and came to Samuel unto Ramah, And said unto him, Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations. But the thing displeased Samuel, when they said, Give us a king to judge us. And Samuel prayed unto the LORD. And the LORD said unto Samuel, Harken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee: for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them."
 - b. 1 Chronicles 15:16-28: "And David spake to the chief of the Levites to appoint their brethren *to be* the singers with instruments of music, psalteries and harps and cymbals, sounding, by lifting up the voice with joy....And Chenaniah, chief of the Levites, *was* for song: he instructed about the song, because he *was* skilful. And Berechiah and Elkanah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. And Shebaniah, and Jehoshaphat, and Nethaneel, and Amasai, and Zechariah, and Benaiah, and Eliezer, the priests, did blow with the trumpets before the ark of God: and Obedom and Jehiah *were* doorkeepers for the ark. So David, and the elders of Israel, and the captains over thousands, went to bring up the ark of the covenant of the LORD out of the house of Obedom with joy. And it came to pass, when God helped the Levites that bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, that they offered seven bullocks and seven rams. And David *was* clothed with a robe of fine linen, and all the Levites that bare the ark, and the singers, and Chenaniah the master of the song with

the singers: David also *had* upon him an ephod of linen. Thus all Israel brought up the ark of the covenant of the LORD with shouting, and with sound of the cornet, and with trumpets, and with cymbals, making a noise with psalteries and harps."

- c. 2 Chronicles 7:6: "And the priests waited on their offices: the Levites also with instruments of music of the LORD, which David the king had made to praise the LORD, because his mercy *endureth* for ever, when David praised by their ministry; and the priests sounded trumpets before them, and all Israel stood."
- d. Amos 6:5: "That chant to the sound of the viol, *and* invent to themselves instruments of music, like David."
- e. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."

2. It was not until the Great Apostasy had fully developed that professed believers began to use IM in worship; they did so without New Testament authority.

II. ARGUMENTS IN FAVOR OF INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP.

A. "Playing an instrument is a natural talent and since it came from God, IM is proper in worship."

1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:
 - a. All natural talents are things which may be used in Christian worship.
 - b. Playing a piano is a natural talent.
 - c. Therefore, playing a piano is a practice which may be used in Christian worship.
2. But what proves too much, proves nothing: if IM is approved because it is a natural talent, then every other natural talent could be used. Could one play basketball as an act of worship? Could one pitch horseshoes as an act of worship? Is hog-calling a suitable act of worship? Is long-distance spitting?
3. God's system is not based on natural (earthly) principles.
 - a. Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - b. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - c. Matthew 15:8-9: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - d. Mark 7:13: "Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye."
4. Christianity is based on faith:
 - a. 2 Corinthians 5:7: "For we walk by faith, not by sight."
 - b. Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - c. Hebrews 11:6: "But without faith *it is* impossible to please *him*: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and *that* he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."
 - d. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - e. John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - f. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).

B. "If we can have an instrument in the home, we can have it in the church."

1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:

- a. All things which can be rightfully had in the home can be rightfully had in the church.
 - b. Mechanical instruments may be had in the home.
 - c. Therefore, mechanical instruments may be rightfully had in the church in Christian worship.
 2. But the home is governed by moral law; the worship of God is governed by spiritual law (the New Testament).
 - a. The head of the home (the family) is the father; the head of the church is Christ.
 - b. Things are proper in the home if they are morally right.
 - c. Things in the church are right only if they are scripturally right (authorized by the New Testament).
 3. There are things that are morally right but which are religiously wrong.
 - a. It is morally right to wash hands, but wrong if done as an act of worship (Mark 7:1-13).
 - b. It is morally right to count beads, but wrong if done as worship, for it is not commanded or otherwise authorized in the New Testament.
 - c. It is morally right to eat meat, but wrong if it is used on the Lord's table as part of the Supper.
 - d. It is morally right to discipline a child in the home, but wrong if we do so as an act of worship.
 - e. It is morally right to have infants as part of the home, but there is no authority for infant membership in the church.
 4. While it is right to have an instrument and to play it in the home, it is wrong to use IM anywhere in an act of worship.
- C. "Instrumental music is used in heaven, therefore is right for use by the church on earth."
1. But who said there are mechanical instruments in heaven? What would or could a spiritual being do with a physical instrument?
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption." Heaven is the home of the soul, not of the physical body; nothing physical will be in heaven.
 - b. Revelation 5:8: "And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints." The harps are no more literal than the censers; the censers represented prayers. What did the harps represent? A thing cannot represent itself. Revelation is comprised of symbols: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his angel unto his servant John" (Rev. 1:1).
 - c. Revelation 14:2: "And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps." John heard a voice which he likens to many waters, thunder, and harpers harping. These were not the literal sounds of water, thunder, and harps.
 2. Even if one could establish the presence of mechanical instruments in heaven, it would be meaningless to the question. "If God has it in heaven it is his business, but as he did not put it in the church, we have no right to do so" (Foy E. Wallace, Jr.).
- D. "Since instrumental music was used in Old Testament worship, it is authorized for us today."
1. Psalm 150: "Praise ye the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary: praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts: praise him according to his excellent greatness. Praise him with the sound of the trumpet: praise him with the psaltery and harp. Praise him with the timbrel and dance: praise him with stringed instruments and organs. Praise him upon the loud cymbals: praise him upon the high sounding cymbals. Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD."
 2. Psalm 66:13,15: "I will go into thy house with burnt offerings: I will pay thee my vows....I will offer
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unto thee burnt sacrifices of fatlings, with the incense of rams; I will offer bullocks with goats." Why pick out the instrument and leave the rest? David offered animal sacrifices as part of his worship; may we do so? May we burn incense?

3. David, Solomon, Jacob, and many others practiced polygamy. May we do so today?
 4. To illustrate the inconsistency further, consider this situation:
 - a. A man responds to a denominational preacher's invitation; he brings with him a bowl of incense and demands that he be admitted into that church along with his incense: he is refused!
 - b. Another man responds and brings with him down the aisle a lamb which he insists on offering as the Old Testament required: he is refused!
 - c. Another man responds and brings with him several wives which he insists on keeping: refused!
 - d. Yet another responds bringing with him his harp and insists on keeping it: he is accepted!
 5. One who tries to justify the use of IM by appealing to the Old Testament reveals a serious lack of understanding of the Bible.
 - a. Colossians 2:14: "Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."
 - b. Acts 15:10: "Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?"
 - c. Hebrews 10:9: "Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second."
 - d. Galatians 2:21: "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain."
 - e. Galatians 5:4: "Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace."
 - f. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 6. To appeal to the Old Testament is to reject the authority of Christ.
 - a. Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - b. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - c. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - d. Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
- E. "Since the New Testament does not expressly forbid instrumental music in worship, we may use it."
1. Set forth in a syllogism, the argument states:
 - a. All things which the Bible does not expressly forbid may be used in Christian worship today.
 - b. Instrumental music in worship is not expressly forbidden by the New Testament.
 - c. Therefore, IM may be used in Christian worship today.
 2. But again, what proves too much, proves nothing.
 - a. The Bible does not expressly forbid LSD, marijuana, heroin, cocaine, and abortion; it does not

- expressly forbid the use of bacon and eggs in the Lord's Supper, using beads as we pray, using icons in our worship, and a host of equally repulsive and unauthorized things and activities.
- b. The Bible did not expressly forbid the offering of strange fire, but Nadab and Abihu were put to death immediately for this error. "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD....And that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean" (Num. 10:1-2,10).
 - c. God did not expressly forbid Moses to strike the rock, but he sinned and was punished when he did so. "Take the rod, and gather thou the assembly together, thou, and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink. And Moses took the rod from before the LORD, as he commanded him. And Moses and Aaron gathered the congregation together before the rock, and he said unto them, Hear now, ye rebels; must we fetch you water out of this rock? And Moses lifted up his hand, and with his rod he smote the rock twice: and the water came out abundantly, and the congregation drank, and their beasts *also*. And the LORD spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them" (Num. 20:8-12).
3. There is a principle we use every day which is also used by God in his word.
 - a. When we address a letter, it is not necessary to inscribe a list of all those for whom the letter is not intended. We exclude all those not included by identifying the individual who is to receive the letter. The name and address on the envelope excludes all other states, cities, streets, and people.
 - b. If we are driving to Atlanta, the signs we see do not tell us, "This is not the right road to Atlanta." Rather, we pick the roads which are identified positively as leading to Atlanta.
 4. Likewise, when God specified the item or activity he wants, all others are excluded.
 - a. When God specified gopher wood for the ark, Noah knew that all other types of wood were excluded and prohibited.
 - b. When God specified a lamb for sacrifice, he excluded pigs, alligators, horses, snakes, buzzards, armadillos, tarantulas, etc.
 - c. If God had wanted any kind of music, he would have simply said, "Make music."
 - d. If he had wanted only singing, he would have said, "Sing." And that is what he did say!
 - 1) Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit; Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
 - 2) Colossians 3:16-17: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
- F. "Instrumental music is just an aid, it aids the singing just like a cane aids walking."
1. The argument asserts that IM does nothing more than a songbook pitch pipe, tuning fork, shaped notes, lights, pews, meeting houses, blackboards, etc. This appears to be a sound argument, but only on the surface!
 2. We must be able to determine whether something is a true aid or an unauthorized addition. To illustrate, consider the "cup" question.
 - a. Is it scriptural to have more than one cup on the Lord's table? No, for "cup" is used in the New
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- Testament in reference to the contents.
- b. When we have individual cups we have added nothing to the Lord's Supper for the cup the Lord spoke of is the fruit of the vine, the element of which we partake; it is not the container.
 - c. To have more than one container for the loaf or the fruit of the vine does not add anything to the Lord's Supper; multiple containers are true aids, not additions; they expedite the action of the worship commanded.
3. Eyeglasses pertain to the realm of observation. There are various ways to observe: we may observe by feeling, by hearing, by seeing, by smelling, and by tasting.
 - a. These are co-ordinates: they are equal; they are different ways of observing. In no way would seeing be an aid to feeling; in no case would feeling be an aid to seeing.
 - b. Things which are co-ordinates cannot be sub-ordinate, and therefore cannot be aids. When one uses eyeglasses to see, he is doing just one thing: seeing. Glasses do not help one to feel, smell, taste, or hear; they help him to see!
 4. A walking cane pertains to the realm of travel. One may travel by walking or by riding; these are co-ordinates; they are different ways to travel.
 - a. In no case is walking an aid to riding; in no case is riding an aid to walking.
 - b. When one uses a cane as an aid to walking, he is walking—he is not riding; the cane adds nothing to the activity, but aids in the one action in progress: walking.
 - c. Using a walking cane is not a different way to travel.
 5. An organ relates to the realm of making music. There are different ways of making music: one may sing, hum, or play an instrument. These are co-ordinates.
 - a. Singing and playing an instrument are co-ordinates just as seeing and feeling, and walking and riding are co-ordinates.
 - b. To sing is one way of making music; playing an instrument is another way of making music; to play is a different action from singing; singing is a different action from playing.
 6. When one is using artificial lighting to help him use his eyeglasses to see the words and notes in the song book as he sings, he is doing only one thing: singing.
 - a. The lights, glasses, and song book are true aids; they do not add anything to the one action.
 - b. But if one uses a fiddle, an additional action is added: he is not only singing, he is playing.
 - c. Remember that the Lord specified singing; he said nothing about the fiddle!
 7. Those who use this argument cannot consistently use their standard argument that "David used it and so we can use it." IM was not used as an aid in the Old Testament situation, but rather as the worship itself. "And it came to pass, when the priests were come out of the holy *place*: (for all the priests *that were* present were sanctified, *and* did not *then* wait by course: Also the Levites *which were* the singers... *being* arrayed in white linen, having cymbals and psalteries and harps, stood at the east end of the altar, and with them an hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets:) It came even to pass, as the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, **to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD**; and when **they lifted up *their* voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, saying**, For *he is* good; for his mercy *endureth* for ever: that *then* the house was filled with a cloud, *even* the house of the LORD; So that the priests could not stand to minister by reason of the cloud: for the glory of the LORD had filled the house of God" (2 Chron. 5:11-14).
- G. "Instrumental music is authorized because the apostles went into the worship of the Jews.
1. The argument assumes that IM was used and that the apostles engaged in the worship. There is no proof for either. This argument is similar to the one made by advocates of infant church membership: Lydia's household was baptized; there must have been infants among them; therefore, infants are to be brought into the church! Both are spurious arguments.
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2. The apostles entered the temple and various synagogues on many occasions when religious services were being conducted. They went there to preach the gospel (Acts 3, 4, 13).
 3. Even if IM was used in synagogue worship, the worship offered was in accordance with the Law of Moses, and was not Christian worship.
- H. “The Greek word *psallo* means to play an instrument.”
1. The argument has caused some debaters to affirm that it is sinful **not** to use IM in worship.
 2. Greek scholars report that *psallo* had these various meanings at different times through the ages: to pluck the hair; to twang the bowstring; to twitch a carpenter’s line; to touch the chords of a musical instrument, that is, to make instrumental music; to touch the chords of the human heart, that is, to sing, to celebrate with hymns of praise.
 - a. The basic idea in *psallo* is “touch.” But the item that is touched is not inherent in the word.
 - b. The basic idea of *baptidzo* is “dip” or “immerse.” But the element in which one is immersed is not inherent in the word. In the New Testament, some were baptized with the Spirit; some are to be baptized with fire; others are baptized with water; others were baptized with suffering. One must consult the context to find the element in which *baptidzo* is accomplished.
 - c. One must also consult the context to discover the item that is to be “*psallo-ed*.”
 3. Ephesians 5:19: “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord.” Paul commands “singing” (*adontes*) and making melody” (*psallontes*) [present participle of *psallo*]. “Speaking one to another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody **with your heart** to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19, ASV).
 - a. The instrument is identified as “your heart.” An instrument is required but it is not mechanical. If a mechanical instrument is inherent in the word, then no one could sing praise to God without a mechanical instrument! This passage requires it! But the instrument is the heart!
 - b. Two things are required: singing **and** making melody with the heart.
 4. Colossians 3:16: “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace (loving favor; grati-tude) in your hearts to the Lord.” Paul requires “singing” (*adontes*) with grace in your hearts unto God.”
 - a. What he called “making melody” in Ephesians 5:19, he called “with grace” in this passage.
 - b. The two passages are parallel; each sheds light on the other.
 - c. The **heart** is identified as the instrument used in the praise described.
 5. The word *psallo* is used five times in the New Testament; one time it is translated “making melody” and four times translated “sing.” The 47 scholars who gave us the KJV and the 101 scholars who gave us the ASV were fully qualified to know the real meaning of this Greek term; they properly translated the word.
- I. “I like instrument music, therefore it is proper to use it in worship of God.”
1. This may be the most honest argument of all!
 2. But who is to be honored in worship? The individual? Or God? What does God like? The only way anyone can know what honors God is if it is revealed—in the New Testament.
 3. If the logic behind this argument is consistently applied, it would destroy the only authoritative standard there is in religion: God’s word. It would open the door for anything anybody would want to bring in. It has already led to rock music, dancing, etc., in modernistic churches.
 4. Nadab and Abihu wanted to offer strange fire—but God consumed them with fire! What a needed lesson for those who would please themselves in worship today!
 - a. Judges 21:25: “In those days *there was* no king in Israel: every man did *that which was* right in his own eyes.”
 - b. Romans 15:4: “For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope.”
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- c. Jude 10: "But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."
- d. 1 Corinthians 10:7,11: "Neither be ye idolaters, as *were* some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play....Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come."
- e. 1 Corinthians 14:33,40: "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints....Let all things be done decently and in order."

J. "All references to singing in the New Testament refer to individual singing and not to corporate worship."

1. This asserts that there is no New Testament authority for congregational singing. The proponents admit there is no New Testament authority for IM; but since there is nothing against either, they say it is all right anyhow! They claim that as long as a practice is not forbidden, it is authorized! They assert that "congregational singing is in the realm of choice or expediency." They say the same about IM. "Neither is authorized but both are acceptable!"
2. The basic argument was answered under "E." But it is important to point out their error in claiming that the passages regarding singing are not directed to congregations, but only to individuals.
 - a. Every act of worship in which the congregation engages must be done by each individual. The congregation prays when the individuals which make up the congregation prays; the congregation worships by giving when the individuals worship by giving; so also with eating the Lord's Supper, studying God's word, and singing.
 - b. One stated purpose of singing (in Col. 3:16) is to the end of "teaching and admonishing one another." This is accomplished when the congregation sings "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Individuals may surely sing in private (cf. Jas. 5:13; Eph. 5:19), but the requirement of Colossians 3:16 is fully realized only when others are present; this is congregational singing.
3. The argument asserts that IM is a thing that is permitted, but not required; thus IM is equated with the eating of meats (cf. Rom. 14:1-6; 1 Cor. 8); it is claimed to be an expediency.
 - a. An expedient is that which expedites; there can be no expediency where there is no obligation. Since God gave us the obligation to assemble, then a meeting house becomes an expediency.
 - b. If he had given us the obligation to use IM in worship, then the **kind** of instrument would have been an expedient. But he gave us no such obligation.
 - c. He gave us the command to sing; playing an instrument is not an expedient to singing. Singing is one action; playing an instrument is another action altogether.

III. WHAT DOES THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACH ON THE SUBJECT OF MUSIC IN WORSHIP?

A. First, notice the principle of exclusion.

1. The Great Commission contains some generic commands.
 - a. GO—this is a generic command; it leaves the method of going to our good judgment.
 - b. TEACH—this is generic; we may teach using a blackboard; we may teach orally or by written message; we might do it face-to-face or over the radio or television.
2. The story of Noah and the ark illustrates exceedingly well the issue before us.
 - a. God specified gopher as the kind of material Noah was to use in constructing the ark. He did not include oak, pine, locust., etc.
 - b. But if there were different kinds of gopher wood, Noah's instructions would have permitted him to choose the gopher wood he thought best to use.
3. Old Testament people were commanded to offer certain animals in their sacrifices; if no particular animal was identified, they could have offered any animal and be in compliance with the order.
 - a. In the Passover (Ex. 12), God commanded a lamb from the sheep or goats, a male of the first year, without any blemish.
 - b. These specifics excluded all other kinds of animals, every female lamb, every lamb above the first

year, and all lambs which were physically imperfect.

- c. No one has any difficulty understanding this with reference to the Old Testament people, but most people seem to think that we are special today, and are not limited in what we can do in religion. But no one has the right to disregard God's word (Gal. 1:6-9; 2 John 9-11; John 12:48; Rev. 20:12-15; Rom. 14:10-12; cf. Rom. 15:4; 1 Cor. 10:1-12).
4. We live and worship under the Christian system, being governed by the New Testament. Under the New Testament, God's commands **singing**.
 - a. There are two kinds of music: vocal and instrumental. If he had commanded us simply to make music, we could play an instrument, or sing a song, or play and sing.
 - b. But he commanded singing, thus playing a mechanical instrument of music is excluded. It is as surely excluded as were the strange fire (Lev. 10:1-2,10), Moses striking the rock (Num. 20), and the use of pine instead of gopher wood in Noah's ark.
 - c. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).
 - d. 2 John 9: "Whosoever goeth onward and abideth not in the teaching of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the teaching, the same hath both the Father and the Son" (ASV).
 - e. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one *point*, he is become guilty of all" (ASV).

B. Every New Testament passage that speaks on the subject of music in worship, specifies singing.

1. Matthew 26:30: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."
2. Mark 14:26: "And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives."
3. Acts 16:25: "And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them."
4. Romans 15:9: "And that the Gentiles might glorify God for *his* mercy; as it is written, For this cause I will confess to thee among the Gentiles, and sing unto thy name."
5. 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
6. Ephesians 5:19: "Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."
7. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
8. Hebrews 2:12: "Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee."
9. James 5:13: "Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms."

IV. **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC CANNOT FULFILL THE PURPOSES GOD INTENDED BY SINGING.**

A. The New Testament gives several purposes which singing is intended to accomplish.

1. To teach (Col. 3:16).
2. To admonish (Col. 3:16).
3. To praise God (Jas. 5:13; Acts 16:25).

B. When Christians sing:

1. We make melody with our hearts unto the Lord (Eph. 5:18-19).
2. We sing with grace in our hearts unto God (Col. 3:16).
3. We sing with the spirit (1 Cor. 14:15; cf. John 4:24).
 - a. To sing with the spirit means to sing with one's will, mind, and emotions; it must be sincere or else it is meaningless.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:14-17: "For if I pray in an *unknown* tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my under-

standing is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also. Else when thou shalt bless with the spirit, how shall he that occupieth the room of the unlearned say Amen at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest? For thou verily givest thanks well, but the other is not edified."

- 1) The passages show that the individual's spirit is meant ("my spirit"). Paul is saying in the context: "My heart is involved in the prayers and songs, but since it is in another language not understood by others, it is not profitable to them (or to me if I do not have the gift of interpretation). Thus, when I sing, I will sing with sincerity and in a language in which all can participate." The same is true with prayer.
 - 2) This passage shows that the early Christians used singing in their worship and that singing should be done so as to be intelligible and edifying to all present. If this is not done, the singing might as well be in a foreign tongue (1 Corinthians 14:16-17). The sounds produced by a mechanical instrument can offer no instruction to the individual, and neither can it glorify God.
4. We sing with understanding.
- a. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 14:15: "What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also."
5. What part could a dumb mechanical instrument of music have in the points named above? How could a mechanical instrument teach or admonish?

V. UNINSPIRED COMMENTS OF FAMOUS RELIGIOUS LEADERS ARE INFORMATIVE.

- A. Martin Luther: "The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal."
- B. John Wesley: "I have no objection to the organ in our chapels provided it is neither heard nor seen."
- C. John Calvin: "It is no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of tapers or revival of the other shadows of the law. Catholics foolishly borrowed it from the Jews."
- D. Adam Clarke: "I am an old man and an old minister, and I here declare that I have never known instrumental music to be productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that it has been productive of much evil. Music as a science I esteem and admire, but instruments of music in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This the abuse of music, and I here register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of that Infinite Spirit who requires his followers to worship him in spirit and in truth."
- E. Charles H. Spurgeon: "I will pray with the spirit and I will pray with the understanding also....I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."
- F. Alexander Campbell: "To all whose animal nature flags under the oppression of church service, I should think instrumental music would not only be a desideratum but and essential prerequisite to fire up their souls to even animal devotion. But to all spiritually minded Christians such...would be as a cowbell in a concert."
- G. J.W. McGarvey: "We cannot adopt the practice without abandoning the only ground upon which a restoration of New Testament Christianity can be accomplished."

VI. THERE ARE MANY SCRIPTURES WHICH PROHIBIT THE USE OF IM IN WORSHIP.

- A. The principle of prohibition and warning given people who lived under the Old Testament Law.
 1. Deuteronomy 4:2: "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish *ought* from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you."
 2. Proverbs 30:6: "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar."
 3. Romans 15:4: "For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the scriptures might have hope." Numerous Old Testament cases

illustrate and teach us against going beyond God's word, doing anything not clearly authorized.

B. The New Testament offers warnings.

1. Galatians 1:8-9: "But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
2. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
3. Revelation 22:18-19: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
4. 1 Corinthians 4:6: "Now these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes; that in us ye might learn not *to go* beyond the things which are written; that no one of you be puffed up for the one against the other" (ASV).

C. Paul presented the whole counsel of God to the brethren in Ephesus.

1. Acts 20:20, 27: "*And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house....For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God."
2. He made no mention of instrumental music. He instead told them to sing (Eph. 5:19). Therefore, IM was not profitable to them, nor was it included in God's counsel.

D. The apostles were guided into all truth, which did not include Instrumental Music in worship.

1. John 16:13: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
2. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
3. 1 Peter 4:11: "If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."
4. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
5. The apostles were guided into all truth, God has delivered all things that we need for life and godliness, he has given us everything we need to be made spiritually mature (perfect), and has warned us not to go beyond his written word: and no where in the New Testament did he say anything about our having the right to use IM! The subject of IM was not even mentioned!

VII. THERE ARE SEVERAL DIRE CONSEQUENCES OF USING IM IN WORSHIP.

A. Those who use the instrument often have pushed it into the worship.

1. They force the instrument in, against the will and conscience of others. It is not a matter of indifference to them. It is a source of contention and strife which cause offenses.
2. Matthew 18:6-7: "But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!"

B. The use of IM in worship is a violation of God's law.

1. God requires us to teach and admonish each other and praise him.
 2. The instrument is dumb: it cannot do any of these things, and does not enhance these things.
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3. It is an unauthorized addition to God's revealed plan for worship.
- C. Instrumental Music turns the heart of the worshipper from God to his own satisfaction.
 1. Instead of producing and encouraging devout worship, it becomes a musical entertainment.
 2. It encourages an emphasis on the sound, rather than on the quality of the heart of the would-be worshipper.
- D. Acceptance of the instrument in worship is a rejection of the authority of the Scriptures.
 1. It is a more than a violence to the silence of the Scriptures.
 2. Once a person has accepted one unauthorized activity, the door is wide open for the introduction of more and more unscriptural beliefs and practices.
 3. The Disciples of Christ group turned into a very liberal, modernistic denomination in the deepest sense. Their first steps were to accept IM into their worship and adopt the Missionary Society as a means of spreading their message. The floodgates were thrown open when the instrument was introduced and they have gone onward to become a very liberal denomination.
- E. Consequences of rejecting the authority of the Scriptures.
 1. The acceptance of IM goes far deeper than merely adopting an aid: in reality it shows one's attitude toward God and his word.
 2. To reject the authority of the Bible is to reject God.
 - a. 2 Samuel 12:9-10: "Wherefore hast thou **despised the commandment of the LORD**, to do evil in his sight? thou hast killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and hast taken his wife *to be* thy wife, and hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house; because thou hast **despised me**, and hast taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be thy wife."
 - b. Malachi 1:6-7: "A son honoureth *his* father, and a servant his master: if then I *be* a father, where *is* mine honour? and if I *be* a master, where *is* my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name? Ye offer polluted bread upon mine altar; and ye say, Wherein have we polluted thee? In that ye say, The table of the LORD *is* contemptible."
 - c. Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - d. Luke 16:10: "He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much."
 - e. James 2:10: "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all."
 3. If we reject the Scriptures as final authority in spiritual affairs, we repudiate the authority of God, who speaks to the human family today through Christ (Heb. 1:1-4).
 - a. Matthew 17:5: "While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."
 - b. Luke 24:47: "And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."
 - c. John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - d. Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - e. 1 Corinthians 16:22: "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha."
 - f. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - g. 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He

that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."

VIII. CONCLUSION.

A. The New Testament and our good judgment dictate:

1. That we do not use IM in weddings, when spiritual songs are involved; and at any time at the meeting house; or anywhere else when there is a possibility that we will appear inconsistent.
2. That we do not have IM in any of our worship or work activities.
3. That we do not use IM privately as we sing spiritual songs. IM is unauthorized in any worship act, in public or in private.

B. The church of our Lord is different from all other religious organizations.

1. We have noticed one of these differences.
2. We are scoffed at, sneered at, and harshly ridiculed because we have no instruments of music in our worship of God.
3. This is far from being a shame: it is an indication that we are following God!
 - a. Matthew 5:11-12: "Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:12-17: "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution. But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*; And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - c. 2 Timothy 4:1-4: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables."
 - d. 1 Peter 2:9: "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light."
 - e. 1 Peter 4:4: "Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*."

C. Time is rapidly passing, opportunities are flying by.

1. Your present decision about your spiritual welfare may very well determine your future destiny.
 2. Let us resolve that if we need to obey the gospel, to do so now!
 3. If we need to change our thinking and practice regarding instrument music, let us resolve to do so now.
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Growing Old Gracefully

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Great emphasis is placed on youth in our work.

1. This is good, for Christian young people will be the church of tomorrow and are in the church today.
2. The future of the world, of the nation, of local society, and of the family lies in young people. In the future, the nature of our world, our nation, our society, and our family will be what the younger generation makes them.

B. But the percentage of older people in our nation is greater than it has ever been.

1. This is due to improvement in health care, better information about health, and an easier lifestyle.
2. Many sound congregations have more older people than younger ones. The reasons for this are many:
 - a. There is a general lack of interest in spiritual things in modern society.
 - b. Many of those who have an interest in religious matters today are more concerned about being entertained, or having a social-club with a religious atmosphere.
 - c. Respect for Bible authority for spiritual activities is at a very low ebb.
3. We must be concerned about the problems of growing old. Even teenagers will be old people some day, if they live long enough.
4. This study will address the prospect of growing old, the problems of growing old, and proper attitudes to develop for old age. The information to be presented will be useful to everyone, young and old.

II. WE MUST NOT BE AFRAID OF GROWING OLD.

A. Growing old is natural and is according to God's arrangement.

1. After sin entered into the human family, death was mandated as the penalty:
 - a. Genesis 2:15-17: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die."
 - b. Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
 - c. We do not know what our situation would have been on earth if sin had never been committed.
2. Can you remember a time when you did not know that you would die sometime? Can you remember a time when you did not know that you would grow old? One of the first great truths we learn about life is that it will inevitably end.
3. We do everything possible to postpone death. We try to eat properly, dress warmly in cold weather, protect ourselves from diseases, and try to avoid dangerous situations.

B. Many try to forestall the effects of growing old.

1. Americans exercise vigorously, diet religiously, and spend billions on cosmetics, face lifts, and all kinds of health regimens and equipment. This is not to say that we ought not do any of these things, for we all want to look and feel our best.
2. These things are done in an effort to retain the appearance of youth. An old man was asked whether any of his childhood wishes had been realized. He replied that one had: "When I was young, my mother pulled my hair as punishment; I wished at the time that I didn't have any hair."
3. An aged movie star is pitiable who tries to look like a twenty-year-old.

C. Many are fearful of growing old because death follows old-age.

1. Many fear growing old because they fear death. A spiritually-mature person has no reason to fear death.
2. "To fear old age is like being afraid to look at the view after we have trudged carefully up the rugged mountainside. Age has been compared to the top of the mountain while youth is the valley and adulthood is the mountainside. The view from the top is always better and more revealing. To want

to remain young would be like limiting our view to only what can be seen in the valley around us” (Raymond Elliott).

3. As a child of God matures in age and grows in faith, he is able to gain wisdom; he can see what is truly important; he has gained enough knowledge, maturity, and insight to be ready for death.
4. Instead of fearing death, he (or she) can happily anticipate passing into eternity where he will await the resurrection and the Judgment.

III. WHAT MUST I DO TO PREPARE FOR GROWING OLD?

A. Preparation for growing old begins in our youthful years.

1. Solomon, the world’s wisest man, penned the following inspired counsel:
 - a. Ecclesiastes 12:1: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:13-14: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether *it be* good, or whether *it be* evil."
 - c. Proverbs 4:1,11-13: "Hear, ye children, the instruction of a father, and attend to know understanding...I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths. When thou goest, thy steps shall not be straitened; and when thou runnest, thou shalt not stumble. Take fast hold of instruction; let *her* not go: keep her; for she *is* thy life."
2. Inspiration offers other information:
 - a. Ephesians 6:1-3: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."
 - b. Colossians 3:20: "Children, obey *your* parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord."
3. If we develop indifference to God’s word when we are young, we are not apt to have a heart that is receptive to the gospel when we grow older. Very few old men and old women are baptized.
4. If we maintain the over-confidence common to youth, we may go through life thinking that accidents, health problems, and death only apply to the other person. This arrogant disposition may keep us from making preparations for old age and death.

B. Develop good traits of character during youthful years.

1. Just because one has lived a long time does not mean that he has gained wisdom or has acquired good traits. A visitor to a community was told about a 100-year-old man who lived there. The visitor was impressed by the gentleman’s attainment to that advanced age. The local replied, “Oh, he ain’t much. All he’s done is get old, and look how long it took him!”
2. The qualities of Christianity are not quickly or easily obtained; they must be diligently cultivated; and they are made strong only by use.
 - a. Mercy: "Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy" (Mat. 5:7).
 - b. Love: "Charity suffereth long, *and* is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things" (1 Cor. 13:4-7).
 - c. Kindness: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you" (Eph. 4:31-32).
 - d. Helpfulness: "Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Mat. 5:42).
 - e. Patience: "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

C. Plan for old age.

1. In the common things of life, many people lay good plans.
 - a. Most of us make sound preparations and plans for retirement; we try to have a reasonable income

- to finance our needs when we are no longer able to work.
- b. Parents try to provide for the future of their children. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (2 Cor. 12:14).
2. But most people do not make plans for their spiritual welfare as they grow old.
 - a. They have not obeyed the gospel.
 - b. They have not overcome the fears that terrorized them during their younger years.
 - c. Many have practiced covetousness through life and find this sinful disposition only stronger in old age. Some of our sinful tendencies desert us as we grow older; we might deceive ourselves into thinking we have mastered them. Other dispositions grow stronger with the passing of time.
 - d. Many do not overcome the weaknesses of irritability, faultfinding, complaining, gossiping, wastefulness, or laziness.
 - e. Many are self-centered when they are young, continue in that sinful disposition during adulthood, and perfect it in their old age.
 3. Many people never learn happiness (contentment) when they are younger, and are sorely unhappy when they grow old. The devil has no truly happy old men! Happiness (contentment) is cultivated on the inside, and is not obtained from outward conditions. There are those with excellent health, fine families, good jobs, beautiful homes, many friends, and much money, who are still unhappy.
 - a. Philippians 4:11-13: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:6-8: "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content."

IV. ITEMS WHICH PROMOTE GROWING OLD GRACEFULLY.

A. Be physically active.

1. It is obvious to everyone that inactivity leads to physical weakness, makes one an easy target for disease and accident, and can shorten our days. Physical activity promotes good health and strength, and gives us a sense of happiness and usefulness.
2. "Bodily exercise profiteth for a little..." (1 Tim. 4:8, ASV).

B. Lead an active spiritual life.

1. 1 Timothy 4:8: "For bodily exercise profiteth little: but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come."
2. Titus 2:1-4: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children."
3. God blesses his faithful servants.
 - a. Ephesians 6:1-4: "Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth."
 - b. 1 Peter 3:10-13: "For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile: Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil. And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

C. Keep your mind active.

1. Our thoughts determine how we live.
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- a. Proverbs 4:23: "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life."
 - b. Proverbs 23:7: "For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he..."
 - c. Matthew 15:18-19: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies."
 - d. Matthew 12:33-37: "Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit. O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."
2. What is in a man's heart determines the kind of person he is or will become. If we fill our minds with godly thoughts and motives, a godly person we will be. But the converse is also true: evil thoughts and motives will corrupt us.
 3. The "little voice" inside you is the real you; it is called the inner man, the soul, the spirit, the heart. What it says, plans, and purposes will determine your conduct, words, life, and eternal destiny. It will always be present, even though the body is dead. You cannot get away from your spirit for it is you.
 4. What we do not use, we lose. This rich truth applies to our muscles, our talents, and our mind. If we do not keep our mind active, it will lose some of its normal powers.
- D. Maintain a positive attitude.
1. If we fill our minds with negative, bitter thoughts we will inevitably talk and act accordingly. The dangers involved can be serious:
 - a. We may lose our friends, for no one enjoys being around a bitter person.
 - b. We can alienate our family.
 - c. We might grow so morose that we lose our peace of mind.
 - d. One who is bitter and negative cannot at the same time be content, a trait that each Christian is expected to maintain.
 - e. We must avoid complaining too much about our health and personal problems.
 2. Just because one is a senior citizen does not mean it is too late to accomplish more.
 - a. Cato was 85 when he began a study of the Greek language.
 - b. Tennyson was 83 when he wrote "Crossing the Bar."
 - c. Verdi was 85 when he wrote "Ave Maria."
 - d. Abraham was 75 when he began his sojourn in Canaan (Gen. 12:4).
 - e. Moses was 80 when he was called to lead Israel from Egyptian bondage.
 3. Elderly Christians can know they are still worth much to the Lord, especially during this time when apostasy is rending the body of Christ asunder.
 4. Even in the face of declining health, financial problems, and other difficulties, there may be a silver lining.
 - a. Psalms 119:67: "Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word."
 - b. Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - c. Hebrews 12:11-13: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed."
- E. Be interested in other people.
1. We are told to love our neighbor as we love ourselves (Mark 12:31); we are to be helpful to others.
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- a. Galatians 6:10: "As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."
 - b. James 1:27 "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himself unspotted from the world."
 2. If we turn inward on ourselves, we are bound to think our problems are greater than anyone's problems. The greatest single problem of society is selfishness. This can afflict older people.
 3. There is the danger of withdrawing from others and filling ourselves with self-pity. There are great advantages we have, despite our ailments and personal problems:
 - a. Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - b. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - c. Philippians 4:13,19: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me....But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
 - d. Romans 8:31-34: "What shall we then say to these things? If God *be* for us, who *can be* against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? *It is* God that justifieth. Who *is* he that condemneth? *It is* Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us."
 - e. Philippians 3:20-21: "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself."
 4. We must not allow loneliness or personal problems to destroy our peace of mind.
- F. Have a healthy sense of humor.
1. The Bible speaks of the value of laughter.
 - a. Proverbs 17:22: "A merry heart doeth good *like* a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones."
 - b. Proverbs 15:13: "A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken."
 - c. Proverbs 15:15: "All the days of the afflicted *are* evil: but he that is of a merry heart *hath* a continual feast."
 - d. Ecclesiastes 9:7: "Go thy way, eat thy bread with joy, and drink thy wine with a merry heart; for God now accepteth thy works."
 2. The Bible reports some events that appear humorous to us.
 - a. Elijah's statement to the prophets of Baal: "And Elijah said unto the prophets of Baal, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*. And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made. And it came to pass at noon, that Elijah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked" (1 Kings 18:25-27).
 - b. The story of Belshazzar's knees knocking because of fear: "In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand, and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plaster of the wall of the king's palace: and the king saw the part of the hand that wrote. Then the king's countenance was changed, and his thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another" (Dan. 5:5-6).
 - c. The report of what the demon did to the seven sons of Sceva: "Then certain of the vagabond Jews, exorcists, took upon them to call over them which had evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus,
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saying, We adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preacheth. And there were seven sons of *one* Sceva, a Jew, *and* chief of the priests, which did so. And the evil spirit answered and said, Jesus I know, and Paul I know; but who are ye? And the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, and overcame them, and prevailed against them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded" (Acts 19:13-16).

3. Someone needs to collect and put in a book many of the humorous stories that uplift and encourage. The stories and illustrations are manifold that have done this for us through the years. How dreary our life might otherwise be if we did not have an outlet for our God-given gift of laughter! Since we are made in God's image, the Father of our spirits must have a sense of humor.

V. CONCLUSION.

A. There is much to be said in favor of old age.

1. Proverbs 16:31: "The hoary head *is* a crown of glory, *if* it be found in the way of righteousness."
 - a. Previous generations had high regard for old men and women, presuming that they had accumulated great wisdom with the passing of years.
 - b. Old age does not guarantee wisdom, but does give opportunities for the acquisition of it. The white head is a crown of glory *IF* it has followed the way of righteousness (God's word).
2. As we draw near to our departure from this world, if we keep our normal faculties to the end, our spiritual state ought to be at its zenith.
 - a. Psalms 71:7-9: "I am as a wonder unto many; but thou *art* my strong refuge. Let my mouth be filled *with* thy praise *and with* thy honour all the day. Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth."
 - b. Psalms 71:15-21: "My mouth shall show forth thy righteousness *and* thy salvation all the day; for I know not the numbers *thereof*. I will go in the strength of the Lord GOD: I will make mention of thy righteousness, *even* of thine only. O God, thou hast taught me from my youth: and hitherto have I declared thy wondrous works. Now also when I am old and greyheaded, O God, forsake me not; until I have showed thy strength unto *this* generation, *and* thy power to every one *that* is to come. Thy righteousness also, O God, *is* very high, who hast done great things: O God, who *is* like unto thee! *Thou*, which hast showed me great and sore troubles, shalt quicken me again, and shalt bring me up again from the depths of the earth. Thou shalt increase my greatness, and comfort me on every side."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 4:16-18: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day. For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding *and* eternal weight of glory; While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen *are* temporal; but the things which are not seen *are* eternal."
 - d. 2 Timothy 4:6-8: "For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."

B. The Christian life is the only life that is worthwhile—it benefits us in life, in death, and in eternity!

First and Last Adam

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Although a study of Biblical types is a basic subject, many today have never heard it.

1. The Bible's message is comprised of literal and figurative language. Figurative language includes parables, fables, similes, similitudes, metaphors, metonymys, synecdoches, allegories, proverbs, hyperboles, personifications, parallelisms, symbols, and types.
2. A type is an event, person, or some item which was divinely appointed to be a prophetic picture of the good things which God purposed to bring to fruition in the New Testamaent.
3. There are several words used in the Greek New Testament to denote type.
 - a. First, there is the term *tupos* (the basis of our English word 'type'). It is used in Romans 5:14: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come." Adam is here said to be a type [a figure] of Christ.
 - b. Second, there is the word *skia*, rendered "shadow." Certain elements of the Mosaic system are said to be "a shadow of the things to come" (Col. 2:17; cf. Heb. 8:5; 10:1).
 - c. Third, there is the term *hupodeigma*, translated "copy," and used in conjunction with "shadow" in Hebrews 8:5 (cf. Heb. 9:23).
 - d. Fourth, the Greek word *parabole* (cf. parable) is found in Hebrews 9:9, where certain elements of the tabernacle are "a figure for the present time" (cf. Heb. 11:19).
 - e. Fifth, the Greek term *antitupon*, rendered "figure" (KJV) or "pattern" (ASV) in Hebrews 9:24, and "like figure" (KJV) or "true likeness" (ASV) in I Peter 3:21. This word is used in the New Testament to mean "that which corresponds to" the type; it is the reality which fulfills the prophetic picture.

B. The Holy Spirit placed a special significance on certain people and items in Old Testament.

1. These people, places, things, offices, institutions, and events have special meanings in the New Testament. Several specific likenesses are observable between those people and items and their counterparts in the New Testament.
2. The English word "type" is from the Greek word *tupos* [*tupoi*, plural], and is defined by Webster as "a person, thing, or event, that represents or symbolizes another that is to come; symbol; emblem; token; sign."
 - a. "We say that we have seen a horse's foot in the clay, when we have only seen the impression of his foot, which would be the type. But when we take the track of the foot for the foot, we really have just the opposite of the foot. So if a man should strike his fist into a ball of putty, he would leave there, not his fist, but the type of it.
 - b. A child may press his hand into uncured concrete, leaving behind a handprint. We might say, "This is my boy's hand." What we mean is, "This is my son's handprint." The hand is the reality; the print is the type.
3. Symbols are unreal, but types are real.
 - a. "Adam was a type of Christ; so were the sacrifices from the foundation of the world; the kings, priests, and prophets, in that they were *anointed*; the serpent in the wilderness, Solomon, and Joshua, etc. These were as real as the Saviour."
 - b. "It must not simply happen to represent something in the future, and therefore do as an illustration—it *must have been intended to represent that thought or fact when it was given.*"

C. The *antitype* is always superior to the *type*.

1. Moses was typical of Christ in that he served as lawgiver, prophet, and leader. Christ is Lawgiver, Prophet, and Leader in the fullest sense.
 - a. "The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him ye shall hearken" (Deut. 18:15).
 - b. "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your

- brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23).
- c. As great as Moses was, Christ is vastly superior.
2. Israel's bondage in Egypt was typical of an individual's bondage to sin.
 - a. "Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea....But with many of them God was not well pleased: for they were overthrown in the wilderness. Now these things were our examples [*tupoi*], to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted....Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples [*tupoi*]: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (I Cor. 10:1-11).
 - b. "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form [*tupon*] of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness" (Rom. 6:16-18).
 - c. As harsh as the physical hardships of the Israelites were in the wilderness, the hardships of sin are far worse.
 - d. As important as their "baptism" was, baptism into Christ is of far greater importance (Rom. 6:3-4; Eph. 1:3).
 3. The manna Israel received during their sojourn in the wilderness [Ex. 16;16] was typical of Christ, who is the "Bread of Life." "...Moses gave you not that bread from heaven; but my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven" (John 6:32). As nourishing as the manna was to the body, the "Bread of Life" is much more nutritious to the soul.
 4. The brazen serpent Moses lifted up in the wilderness [Num. 21:8] was typical of our Lord being lifted up on the cross.
 - a. "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:14-16).
 - b. The lifting up of Christ on the cross is vastly more important than the lifting up of the brazen serpent.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Adam is typical of Christ.

1. I Corinthians 15:44-49: "It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly."
2. The apostle's point in the passage is to illustrate the truth that there are natural and spiritual bodies. We inherited our physical body from Adam, down through the long ancestral line that connects us to Adam and Eve. We obtained mortality from Adam and our immortality derives from Christ, who is said here to be the second Adam. Specifically, we are told that Adam was typical of Christ: "Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure [*tupos*] of him that was to come" (Rom. 5:14).

B. Comparisons between the First and the Second Adam.

1. **The first Adam is spoken of in the Bible as "the son of God" and the second Adam is spoken of as "the Son of God."**

- a. "Which was the son of Enos, which was the son of Seth, which was the son of Adam, which was the son of God" (Luke 3:38).
 - b. "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name" (John 20:30-31).
 - c. God created the first Adam, who thus became the son of God. But the second Adam was never created (cf. Micah 5:2; John 1:1-3; Col. 2:9); He is the *Son* of God in that the Father brought about His entrance into this world (Heb. 1:5-6) and later raised Him from the dead (Acts 13:28-33). God is the Father of the Christ also in the sense that the Son was perfectly obedient to the Father's will (cf. John 13:16; 6:38; Heb. 10:7), recognizing the greater authority possessed by the Father.
2. **Each of the two Adams sustains a special relationship to the human family.**
- a. The first Adam was the head of the physical race of mankind. In keeping with the all-pervading law of nature (Gen. 1:11), Adam and Eve produced after their kind (Gen. 5).
 - b. "And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit" (1 Cor. 15:45).
 - c. The second Adam is head of the spiritual race of mankind.
 - 1) "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).
 - 2) "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 5:15).
 - 3) "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God" (1 Cor. 11:3).
 - 4) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (II Cor. 5:10).
 - d. The relationship we have with Christ is superior to the connection we have with Adam. Christ is our Savior and Sustainer. Adam was the first man in our ancestral line.
3. **Each of the two Adams came into the world by a miraculous act of God's power.**
- a. Neither of the two was produced by natural law.
 - 1) "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul" (Gen. 2:7).
 - 2) "But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matt. 1:20-23).
 - 3) If God had stopped the creation process just before creating Adam and Eve, no *homo sapien* would be here; there would be no sin; there would be no marriage and home; there would be no civil government; there would be no Bible; there would be no church. There would only be the material universe, with its plant and animal life. The only way Adam could come was by God's miraculous power.
 - b. Matthew refers to Isaiah 7:14, where the prophet had predicted the very event discussed by the apostle: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel." Our Lord's natural body was conceived by supernatural power.
 - c. It is not possible for finite man to comprehend Adam's miraculous creation, and it is certain that no man can comprehend the Virgin Birth of Christ. The means by which these two Adams entered into the world is a matter of faith, and is not to be denied. How else could their coming be

explained? In what other way could they have come? The God who made the worlds was able to circumvent the laws of nature, which He also designed and put into place. In the case of the first Adam, God constructed his physical body from the elements of the earth, and placed into that body the spirit. In the case of the second Adam, using miraculous power, God placed into the womb of Mary the fertilized seed which produced the physical body of Jesus.

4. Each entered the world free from the slightest taint of sin.

- a. There could have been no defect, physical or spiritual, in the first Adam, for it is inconceivable that God should do anything substandard or make anything that is flawed. Indeed, He pronounced that all of the components of the creation (including Adam and Eve) were "very good" (Gen. 1:31).
- b. Sin is acquired by an accountable human when he transgresses a command or precept of God's Word.
 - 1) "...Sin is the transgression of the law" (I John 3:4).
 - 2) "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (Jas. 4:17).
 - 3) "All unrighteousness is sin..." (I John 5:17; cf. Psm. 119:172).
- c. Obviously Adam could not have violated any command of God until some time subsequent to his entrance into the world (Gen. 2:16-17; 3:1-24).
- d. Christ is altogether and forever free from sin. He could not be Deity and be imperfect. Plain declarations of Scripture affirm His absolute purity.
 - 1) "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin" (Heb. 4:15).
 - 2) "For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens" (Heb. 7:26).
- e. Every human being is also free from the contamination of sin until such a time that the individual reaches an age when God can properly hold him (or her) responsible for his (or her) actions. Most of the religious world has been deceived into thinking that every baby enters the world with the guilt of sin already stamped upon its soul. If so, from what source did that guilt obtain? From God? Utterly unthinkable!
 - 1) "...The LORD...formeth the spirit of man within him" (Zech. 12:1).
 - 2) God is the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9), and He is infinitely holy (Lev. 20:7; I Pet. 1:15-16). Our guilt of sin did not originate with the Father!
- f. Does an infant inherit guilt from the first Adam through its own parents? This is denied by plain statements of the Bible!
 - 1) "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: the righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him" (Ezek. 18:20).
 - 2) The guilt of sin is obtained by each individual when he personally violates God's will. "Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee" (Ezek. 28:15).
 - 3) "Behold, all souls are mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is mine: the soul that sinneth, it shall die" (Ezek. 18:4).
 - 4) Citizens of God's kingdom are free from the guilt of sin (Col. 1:13-14), and are declared to be like little children in this regards (Matt. 18:3; 19:14).

5. Each of the two Adams was capable of being tempted to commit sin.

- a. This is a common feature of all accountable men, a characteristic of free agency. If there was no power to do wrong, there would be no virtue in doing right. If there were no possibility of incurring God's wrath by disobeying His will, there could be no possibility of obtaining God's favor by obeying His will.
- b. The first Adam was tempted successfully by Satan:
 - 1) "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the

- day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17).
- 2) "And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen. 3:6).
- c. The second Adam was tempted by the same adversary, but did not succumb to those enticements (Matt. 4:1-11).
 - 1) The devil would have known whether Christ was subject to temptation, and would not have wasted his efforts if there was no possibility of temptation having any effect on Him.
 - 2) He was tempted in every way any other human being can be tempted (Heb. 4:15; I John 2:16). Unlike ourselves, he did not permit himself to fall victim to Satan's efforts to lead Him away from the Father.
 - d. The first Adam was tempted and conquered by Satan, but the second Adam conquered Satan. "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted" (Heb. 4:14-18).
6. **Each of the two Adams received their names from God.**
- a. "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:2).
 - b. "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21).
 - c. "And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven" (Matt. 16:16-17).
 - d. It is from the father in a human family that the child's name is derived.
7. **Both of the two Adams were given brides.**
- a. God made a bride for the first Adam. "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him....And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:18-24).
 - b. The second Adam (Christ) also obtained a bride, which is His church.
 - 1) "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2).
 - 2) "And there came unto me one of the seven angels which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will show thee the bride, the Lamb's wife" (Rev. 21:9).
8. **A deep sleep came upon the two Adams in order for the bride to be given.**
- a. The first Adam underwent a deep, unnatural sleep before he could obtain his bride (Gen. 2:21-24).
 - b. Christ had to experience the "sleep of death" before His bride came into existence.
 - 1) "And Jesus cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost" (Mark 15:37).
 - 2) "Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God" (Rom. 7:4).
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- 3) Christ gave Himself for the church (Eph. 5:25; cf. Acts 20:28).
9. **The side of each of the two Adams was opened before the bride could be obtained.**
- In the case of the first Adam, God performed a surgical procedure on him to obtain a rib from which He made Eve.
 - In the case of the second Adam, Christ's side was parted by the Roman spear, from the wound of which His blood was shed (John 19:33-34). The blood of our Lord was the purchase price for His church, which is His bride (Acts 20:28; Eph. 5:23-27).
10. **Each of the two Adams was given only one bride.**
- The first Adam had only one bride, Eve. If God had wanted him to have more than one wife, He would have constructed more than one. If He had intended him to have another man for a wife, He would have constructed a man instead of Eve.
 - The second Adam, Christ, has only one bride, the church; if it had been the will of God for Christ to have more than one church, more than one would have been provided. The oneness of the church is emphasized in many passages:
 - "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build **my church**; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).
 - "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to **the church**, Which is **his body**, the fulness of him that filleth all in all" (Eph. 1:22-23).
 - "There is **one body**, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Eph. 4:4-6).
 - "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved **the church**, and gave himself for it" (Eph. 5:25: Notice, the text does not say He gave Himself for **them**, but **it**).
 - "And he is the head of **the body**, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence" (Col. 1:18). Christ has only one body, which is His one church.
11. **Both Adams held authority over their brides.**
- The first Adam exercised authority over Eve. "But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve" (I Tim. 2:12-13; cf. I Cor. 11:3).
 - Likewise, the second Adam exercises authority over his bride, the church.
 - "But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ" (Eph. 4:15).
 - "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Eph. 5:23-27).
12. **The brides each took the name of the respective husband.**
- This was true of the first Adam:
 - "And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man" (Gen. 2:23).
 - "Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created" (Gen. 5:2).
 - The church wears the name of Christ, her bridegroom:
 - "Salute one another with an holy kiss. The churches of Christ salute you" (Rom. 16:16).
 - "Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?" (Jas. 2:7).
- C. Contrasts between the First and the Second Adam.
- The first Adam was a mere man, but the second Adam is the Son of God. The first Adam was entirely

human. Christ was as human as his mother, Mary, but as divine as His Father is.

- a. "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9). "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:1-3).
 - b. "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).
 - c. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him" (John 1:18).
 - d. "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist" (Col. 1:15-17).
 - e. The Father made these statements about Christ: "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands" (Heb. 1:8-10).
2. The first Adam, having the power of choice, disobeyed the will of his Creator (Gen. 3:6), while the second Adam, also having the power of free moral agency, obeyed the will of His Father perfectly.
 - a. "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me" (John 6:38).
 - b. He "...did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth" (I Pet. 2:22; cf. Heb. 4:15).
 - c. The first Adam violated God's law and committed sin (cf. I John 3:4), but the second Adam obeyed the Father's will with absolute perfection.
 3. The disobedience of the first Adam resulted in loss for the whole human family. He was evicted from the Garden of Eden.
 - a. "Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life" (Gen. 3:23-24).
 - b. Neither Adam nor any of his offspring was ever permitted to return to that Paradise. He was alienated from his Creator, and the penalty of physical death passed on to him and his descendants. "And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die" (Gen. 2:16-17; cf. 3:6ff).
 - c. "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned" (Rom. 5:12).
 - d. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Cor. 5:21-22).
 - e. But the obedience of the second Adam made the resurrection of all mankind possible (I Cor. 15:21-22), made available great spiritual blessings to every accountable member of the human family, and the prospect of entering heavenly Eden became possible.
 - 1) "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous" (Rom. 5:19). "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ." (Eph. 1:3).
 - 2) "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in

- heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time" (I Pet. 1:3-5).
- 3) "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city" (Rev. 22:14).
 4. Everything that was lost through the disobedience of Adam has been recovered or replaced with much greater advantages and blessings in Christ!
 - a. "Let us stress the fact that Paul calls the Lord the 'second Adam' (I Cor. 15:45-49). There is a definite sense in which we regain in Christ (and the church) what was lost in Adam (and the garden of Eden). In Christ, we regain the close relationship which was destroyed by Adam's transgression. 'Friendship' is restored. Reconciliation occurs. Separation from God's favor and from the tree of life brought death. In Christ and his church we have life, and that more abundantly (John 10:10b). Truly we regain in Christ what was forfeited in Adam; we regain in the church what was lost in Eden. Truly, paradise lost becomes paradise regained; but only through the grace of God!" (Bert Thompson, *Studies in I Corinthians*, Annual Denton Lectures, Dub McClish, Editor, Denton, Texas, ("The First Man—Adam"), p.230).
 - b. Acts 13:38-39: "Be it known unto you therefore, men *and* brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses."
 - c. Hebrews 8:12: "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more."
 5. The law of propagation was given to the first Adam, which insured the continuation of the race.
 - a. "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them" (Gen. 1:26-27).
 - b. The immutable law of Genesis 1:11 applies to the human family, just as it does to all plants and animals: "And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so." There has never been a single case of an acorn producing a squirrel, or of a pair of turtles producing an orange tree, or of a human couple producing a kangaroo!
 - c. The law of spiritual propagation makes it possible for future generations of Christians to be produced, thus insuring the continuation of the kingdom of Christ.
 - 1) "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God" (Luke 8:11).
 - 2) "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (I Pet. 1:22-25).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The fall and restoration of man.

1. The same pattern evident in the fall of Adam and Eve into sin is the same pattern that individuals follow when they reach the age of accountability and fall into sin. That same pattern is followed in reverse in order for a fallen soul to be restored into fellowship with its Creator.
 - a. God fashioned an exalted being when He made man in His image (Gen. 1:26-27). He gave man a physical body, and a spirit (which exalts man above all the animals). Man was made in the image of God, but since God has no physical body (John 4:24; cf. Luke 24:39), the likeness man has to his Creator is of a different kind. God has intellect, emotions, the power to purpose, and is a spiritual Being. Man has been given intellect, emotions, the power to will, and an eternal spirit. Man is capable of making intelligent choices, but he does not always use intelligence in making

- his choices!
- b. God gave man a prohibition against eating a certain kind of fruit in Eden (Gen. 2:16-17). Adam and Eve violated that law and became guilty of sin (Gen. 3:6ff). Their fall into sin was not instantly done, but followed an easily discerned pattern.
2. A messenger [Satan] came with a message which was addressed to their minds (Gen. 3:1-4).
 - a. The message was a falsehood. God had said that they would surely die if they ate the fruit; the devil asserted that they “would **not** surely die” (Gen. 3:4).
 - b. Eve heard the lie, believed the lie, and obeyed the lie.
 - c. When she obeyed the devil’s lie, she disobeyed the commandment of God. So also did Adam.
 - d. Having disobeyed by eating the forbidden fruit, they lost their state of spiritual purity, and were now separated from God.
 - 1) Sin, which is the transgressing of God’s Word (I John 3:4), separates the sinner from God. "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear" (Isa. 59:1-2).
 - 2) They were now out of fellowship with God and were evicted from the Garden of Eden.
 3. Each of the descendants of Adam and Eve enters this world as pure and free from the guilt of sin as were the original couple, when they first came from God’s creating hand. In time, we all will violate some part of God’s Word (Rom. 3:23). We do in reality the same kind of thing Adam and Eve did in the original rebellion: we obey the devil’s will and disobey God’s will, and thus incur the guilt of our own sin (Ezek. 18:20; 28:15; I John 3:4). Each individual can be restored to his original purity and fellowship with God by taking certain definite steps.
 - a. A Messenger has come [Christ]. He has brought a message of truth (John 1:14; 8:32; 17:17). That truth is presented in the Gospel (I Pet. 1:22-25).
 - b. Man is to hear that truth, and come to an understanding of it (Rom. 10:13-14; Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16).
 - c. The individual is to believe that message (Acts 16:30-31; Mark 16:16; 2 Thess. 2:11-12).
 - d. The believer is to obey that message (I Pet. 1:22; Acts 17:30; 8:37; 10:48; 2:38).
 - e. The state of justification is then given.
 - 1) "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (I Cor. 6:11).
 - 2) The person is added to the church (Acts 2:47), or, which is the same thing, is translated into the kingdom (Col. 1:13), and receives salvation (Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7; 2:1-13).
 - 3) Every spiritual blessing is provided in Christ (Eph. 1:3).
 - 4) The individual has become a new person (II Cor. 5:17). As he walks in the light of the Gospel (I John 1:6-10), he lives daily with the hope of passing through the gates of Heaven, which stand ajar for him (Rev. 22:14). "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).

ADAM & EVE’S FALL and OUR RESTORATION

SAVED CONDITION ☆ IN CHRIST ☆ STATE OF PURITY	
Lie Preached: Gen. 3:1-5	Truth Obeyed: Acts 2:36-47
Lie Heard: Gen. 3:6	Truth Believed: Acts 2:36
Lie Believed: Gen. 3:6	Truth Heard: Acts 2:36
Lie Obeyed: Gen. 3:6	Truth Preached: Acts 2:1-36; Mark 16:15-16
LOST ☆ SEPARATED FROM GOD ☆ TAINTED WITH SIN	

How Does One Call On The Name Of The Lord?

I. INTRODUCTION:

- A. The prophet Joel foretold the time when all who call on the name of the Lord would be delivered.
 1. "And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call" (Joel 2:32).
 2. This was a change from Mosaic Law, which demanded perfect obedience to a complex system which had many detailed and specific requirements in its code.
- B. This prophecy was fulfilled beginning in Acts chapter two.
 1. "But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel....And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Acts 2:16,21).
 2. The idea of calling on the name of the Lord was made a central part of the gospel system: "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved" (Rom 10:9-13).
- C. What Does it Mean to Call on the Lord's Name?
 1. Some say it literally means:
 - a. "To call out to God and ask for salvation."
 - b. To say, "Lord, come into my heart and save me."
 2. The statement itself does not tell HOW:
 - a. "Whosoever crosses the Atlantic Ocean shall be in Europe." (But HOW is one to cross the ocean?).
 - b. "Whosoever cuts down a tree shall have lumber." [But HOW does not cut down the tree and how is the lumber produced?].

II. DISCUSSION:

- A. The statement has a universal application—Whosoever.
 1. Romans 10:13: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."
 2. It includes Gentiles, Jews, and all races. There is no separate plan of salvation for different races, nations, or political orientation.
 - a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b. John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - c. John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
 - d. Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened his mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - e. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - f. Romans 10:12-13: "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

- g. Revelation 22:17: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
- 3. We are told that the offer is given to all and why it is given.
 - a. Isaiah 53:6: "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."
 - b. Romans 3:23: "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God."
 - c. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."
- B. The statement has a condition attached—Must call.
 - 1. Most people say this call is prayer, but they also say that salvation is unconditional.
 - a. They reject baptism as a work, saying it makes salvation dependent on the preacher.
 - b. They contradict themselves by saying one **MUST CALL** on the name of Lord, but one must not be baptized for the remission of sins! In their view, baptism is a work or human merit, but their position requires that one must call on the name of the Lord, which itself is a work.
 - c. Their system has this formula: preaching + belief + call = Salvation (thus is self-contradictory!).
 - 2. Before salvation is obtained, there must be a desire for it (Rev. 22:17); one must see the need and make the call; the burden is on the individual.
 - 3. Thus, some action is required: but what is that action?
 - a. The action is described as "calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. This calling grows out of faith in Christ.
 - 1) John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins."
 - 2) John 6:68-69: "Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God."
 - 3) Acts 4:12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
- C. But HOW does one call on the name of the Lord?
 - 1. This calling is not:
 - a. Prayer, for God hears only the obedient.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination."
 - 3) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 4) Luke 6:46: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?"
 - 5) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 - b. Merely uttering words with the lips.
 - 2. Calling on the name of Lord is explained in Romans 10:13-17: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by

hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

- a. Romans 1:16, which affirms that the gospel of Christ is the power God uses to save us, is the theme of the book of Romans; therefore, the gospel is an essential part of this calling.
- b. To grasp what it means to call on the name of the Lord reverse the order of the key items of Romans 10:14,17: call → believe → hear → preaching.
- c. In Romans 10:13,16, Paul speaks of "calling on the name of the Lord" and "obeying the gospel." These two statements are identical in meaning (interchangeable). To call on the name of the Lord is to obey the gospel of Christ. "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved....But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report?" (Rom. 10:13,16).

3. One is saved at point he obeys the gospel.

- a. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
- b. Romans 6:16-18: "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness."
- c. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
- d. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

D. Peter explains how to call on the name of the Lord in Acts 2.

1. In Acts 2:22-36, he shows why Jesus could be called on and why we should call.
2. The process followed this pattern: The apostles preached the gospel → the audience heard the message → many in the audience believed the message → they asked how to call.
 - a. In verse 21, they had been told that those who call on the name of the Lord would be saved.
 - b. They now understood that they needed to be saved, thus they asked how they should call on his name: "Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (2:37).
 - c. The apostles told them how to call: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost" (2:38).
 - d. They called on the name of the Lord by obeying Gospel—they repented and were baptized.
3. Saul of Tarsus fasted and prayed after becoming convinced that Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah; but he remained unsaved until he obeyed the gospel.
 - a. Acts 9:6: "And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
4. Romans 10:13 ["calling on the name of the Lord"] is an Old Testament description; Mark 16:15-16 ["He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved"] is the New Testament description; the expressions are parallel and equivalent.
5. The statement simply means to obey gospel.
 - a. Acts 6:7: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."
 - b. Acts 9:14,21: "And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name....But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which

called on this name in Jerusalem, and came hither for that intent, that he might bring them bound unto the chief priests?"

III. CONCLUSION:

A. Salvation is a personal matter.

1. We are saved one-by-one as we obey the gospel. "...Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word" (Eph. 5:25-26).
 - a. John 3:5: "Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God."
 - b. Titus 3:5: "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost."
2. Ultimately, no one is responsible for an individual's soul but the person himself.

B. Salvation means everything to the soul.

1. It gives deliverance from the guilt of his sins of the past.
 2. It brings the individual into new life and fellowship with God and his people.
 3. It opens the door to God's providential help in meeting the demands, the problems and the temptations we must face in life.
 4. It gives the hope and promise of eternal life as the ultimate reward!
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Acts: Conversion Demonstrated

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. The aim of any book must be kept in mind if we are to use it properly.
1. This is true of books written by men. Some are written to entertain, and are not to be taken as a rule of life. Louis LaMour wrote many books of fiction about the Old West. Agatha Christie wrote many mystery books. These we understand to be merely works of fiction, the aim of which is to furnish the reader with entertainment.
 2. Some books are designed to show us how to do certain things. In their field, these are authoritative. These are accurate as far as the knowledge and honesty of the author allows.
- B. If we do not know the purpose of a book, we might misunderstand and misuse it.
1. A Pontiac car repair manual is not likely to help us to repair a John Deere tractor.
 2. A parts listing for a Zenith Television is not designed to give the right parts list for a Sony VCR.

II. DISCUSSION.

- A. We must likewise consider the aim of the Bible to understand it correctly.
1. The Bible shows God's dealings with mankind through the ages.
 2. It reveals man's origin, purpose, condition, eternal destiny, and needs.
 3. It is designed primarily to show man how to live here so as to be prepared for eternity, to avoid torment and gain heaven.
 4. It is not designed to be a book of science or history, although it is neither unscientific nor inaccurate in its reports of historical events.
 5. We must also keep in mind the aim of each of the books which comprise the Bible if we are to understand them and be fully profited by a study of them.
- B. Acts is one of the most significant books in the Bible, and its second chapter is the hub of the Bible.
1. Acts gives a practical meaning to the gospel accounts provided by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.
 - a. It fulfills the expectancy of the first four books.
 - b. It connects them with the epistles.
 2. Acts 2 is properly called "The Hub of the Bible." The hub of a wheel is, of course, the center about which the rest of the wheel rotates. The focal point of the entire wheel is the hub; it is its practical center. Acts 2 marks the practical turning point in the Bible, the transition from Judaism to Christianity.
 3. It marks the fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies, chiefly the establishment of the kingdom and the giving of the Holy Spirit.
 - a. Isaiah 2:2-4: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, *that* the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
 - b. Micah 4:2: "And many nations shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways, and we will walk in his paths: for the law shall go forth of Zion, and the word of the LORD from Jerusalem."
 - c. Daniel 2:44: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, *but* it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever."
 - d. Joel 2:28-32: "And it shall come to pass afterward, *that* I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of

smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the LORD come. And it shall come to pass, *that* whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call."

4. Events and information in the Bible before Acts 2 point to that Pentecost Day; after Acts 2, events and information point back to that Pentecost Day.
5. Acts 2 is the beginning point of several important things.
 - a. It was on that occasion that the gospel was preached in its completeness for the first time; the full plan of salvation was publicly presented for the first time.
 - b. New Testament worship began then.
 - 1) Matthew 15:9: "But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men."
 - 2) John 4:23-24: "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 - 3) Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - c. Unlimited remission of sins was offered for the first time to all: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls."
 - d. People were added to the church for the first time: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved" (Acts 2:41,47).

C. Acts gives many examples of conversions, which is its real purpose.

1. It shows the importance of conversion.
 - a. We cannot enter heaven without being converted:
 - 1) Matthew 18:2-3: "And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven."
 - 2) Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
 - 3) Acts 13:46: "Then Paul and Barnabas waxed bold, and said, It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you: but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles."
 - 4) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. Acts gives practical demonstrations of conversions:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 8:26-39: "And the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go toward the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert. And he arose and went: and, behold, a man of Ethiopia, an eunuch of great authority under Candace queen of the Ethiopians, who had the charge of all her treasure, and had come to Jerusalem for to worship, Was returning, and sitting in his chariot read Esaias the prophet. Then the Spirit said unto Philip, Go near, and join thyself to this chariot. And Philip ran thither to *him*, and heard

him read the prophet Esaias, and said, Understandest thou what thou readest? And he said, How can I, except some man should guide me? And he desired Philip that he would come up and sit with him. The place of the scripture which he read was this, He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; and like a lamb dumb before his shearer, so opened he not his mouth: In his humiliation his judgment was taken away: and who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus. And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."

- 3) Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - 4) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- c. Many who are unfamiliar with the purpose of Acts are as apt to go to the book of Psalms to find the plan of salvation as to the book of Acts.
 - d. Acts gives clear, concrete, practical examples of conversions which demonstrates the conversion process in a manner that cannot be missed by the perceptive eye.
2. Acts shows the power of example.
 - a. It is much easier to teach by example than by precept; the human mind is more attuned to the practical than to the theoretical. It is impossible to develop the skill of driving a car without actually driving a car (cf. learning how to operate a computer or learning how to write).
 - b. God gives clear pictures of how to be converted in the book of Acts.
 3. Acts shows the importance of being sure of our conversion.
 - a. Being certain of our salvation cannot be over-emphasized.
 - 1) 2 Peter 1:10-11: "Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."
 - 2) Acts 18:24-26: "And a certain Jew named Apollos, born at Alexandria, an eloquent man, *and* mighty in the scriptures, came to Ephesus. This man was instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in the spirit, he spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the baptism of John. And he began to speak boldly in the synagogue: whom when Aquila and Priscilla had heard, they took him unto *them*, and expounded unto him the way of God more perfectly."
 - 3) Acts 19:1-6: "And it came to pass, that, while Apollos was at Corinth, Paul having passed through the upper coasts came to Ephesus: and finding certain disciples, He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost. And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye baptized? And they said, Unto John's baptism. Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard *this*, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. And when Paul had laid *his* hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied."
 - b. There is only one way to heaven:
 - 1) John 14:6: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the

- Father, but by me."
- 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) Ephesians 5:23-27: "For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
- c. There is the gravest danger if we are wrong about our conversion:
- 1) Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 - 2) Matthew 15:14: "Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 1:9: "For they themselves show of us what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God."
 - 4) Revelation 14:11: "And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name."
4. Acts shows the superiority of these examples over supposed examples.
- a. Sectarian preachers lean heavily on personal testimonies and experiences. But these are subjective, uncertain, and unreliable—they are given by fallible men.
 - 1) "The Lord spoke to me and told me I was saved."
 - 2) "I had this experience...."
 - b. Personal testimonies are products of the fallible human mind, and are unreliable: "The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer. 17:9). If we follow such feelings and experiences we will be misled.
 - c. Holy Spirit inspired the conversion accounts in Act: each case is described clearly; the results are plainly stated. If we follow these examples we can be sure about our conversion:
 - 1) Psalms 119:105: "Thy word *is* a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."
 - 2) Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - d. If we follow a spiritually blind man, we will fall into the ditch with him.
5. Acts furnishes a pattern for the entirety of the Christian age.
- a. A pattern for the tabernacle was given to Moses for Israel.
 - 1) Exodus 25:40: "And look that thou make *them* after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount."
 - 2) Hebrews 8:5: "Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, *that* thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount."
 - b. But Israel did not know the real meaning of the holy and most holy parts of the tabernacle, or the real significance of animal sacrifices.
 - 1) Colossians 2:12-17: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with *him* through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us,

which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross; *And* having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it. Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body *is* of Christ."

- 2) Hebrews 10:1: "For the law having a shadow of good things to come, *and* not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect."
 - 3) 2 Corinthians 3:11-15: "For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth *is* glorious. Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: And not as Moses, *which* put a veil over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same veil untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which *veil* is done away in Christ. But even unto this day, when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart."
- c. Hebrews 8-10 gives the meaning of these things.
- 1) The holy place represented the church; the most holy pictured heaven: "Now of the things which we have spoken *this is* the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man" (Heb. 8:1-2; cf. 9:11-24).
 - 2) Those Old Testament bloody sacrifices prefigured the sacrifice of Christ.
 - 3) For the first time in history, a Jewish father who was converted to Christ, could explain this to his son.
- d. Since God was very particular over the pattern of the tabernacle, how much more so with the New Testament pattern!
- 1) Hebrews 10:28-29: "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"
 - 2) The Mosaic System was the shadow and the Gospel System is the real substance.
- e. If Acts is not the pattern for conversion, then we can never know we are converted or even how to be converted.

D. Our conversion is right only if it is in accordance with the examples in Acts.

1. What was the pattern for their conversion?
 - a. They believed:
 - 1) Acts 2:36-37: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do?"
 - 2) Acts 16:30-31: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."
 - b. They repented:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 3:19: "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord."
 - c. They confessed Christ: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God" (Acts 8:37).
 - d. They were baptized for the remission of sins:
 - 1) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 2) Acts 2:41,47: "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there

were added *unto them* about three thousand souls....And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." The Lord added only the baptized to the church; he added only the saved to the church; therefore, only the baptized were saved.

- 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
2. At the point of baptism they received remission of sins, salvation:
 - a. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - b. Acts 2:47: "Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved."
3. We are not converted if we follow another pattern. If we can be converted by some other plan, how do we know it? Why the difference? Who invented it? How can we explain these matters?

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Some things are done out of necessity.

1. We pay income tax and sales tax because they are required, not because they are optional.
2. We are converted in accordance with God's pattern because he requires it.
3. We are converted or we will be barred from the kingdom and heaven: "And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 18:3).

B. God will measure the population of our world by the gospel of Christ.

1. This judgment will be done individually:
 - a. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men...."
2. The standard will be the word of God:
 - a. John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - b. Revelation 20:12: "And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works."
 - c. Psalms 119:172: "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments *are* righteousness."
 - d. Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - e. Acts 17:30-31: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead."
 - f. Titus 2:11-12: "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world."
 - g. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."

STRONG DRINK

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. What is the proper outlook on the drinking of wine?

1. Drunkenness is one of the most serious national problems in the United States. [The following statistics have worsened in recent years].
 - a. It has been called the number 1 social problem ("Gospel Advocate," 3/29/73).
 - b. It is called the third most serious health problem (ibid., 9/12/68).
 - c. There are upwards of 30 million alcoholics and problem drinkers in our nation.
 - d. In 1974 there were 450,000 child alcoholics (Memphis "Commercial Appeal," 10/20/74).
 - e. The state of Mississippi sold 1,640,151 cases of liquor in 1974 (ibid., 2/2/75).
2. The lines dividing right from wrong are being erased in our society.
 - a. It is more difficult now to show people the difference between sin and righteousness, and between truth and error.
 - b. More and more are advocating "moderate" drinking—even members of the Lord's church.

B. We must be seriously concerned about the purity of the church.

1. 1 Corinthians 3:16-17 : "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are."
2. Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
3. Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
4. Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
5. Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Young people are especially vulnerable to the enticements of the world.

1. We must teach the young (and older) the truth on "doctrinal" issues and moral issues. Drunkenness is plainly forbidden in the Bible.
 2. The Old Testament gave prohibitions against drunkenness.
 - a. Leviticus 10:9: "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: *it shall be* a statute for ever throughout your generations."
 - b. Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - c. Proverbs 23:29-31: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright."
 - d. Isaiah 28:7: "But they also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way; the priest and the prophet have erred through strong drink, they are swallowed up of wine, they are out of the way through strong drink; they err in vision, they stumble *in* judgment."
 - e. Isaiah 28:11,13: "For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people....But the word of the LORD was unto them precept upon precept, precept upon precept; line upon line, line upon line; here a little, *and* there a little; that they might go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared, and taken."
 3. The New Testament gives prohibitions against drunkenness.
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- a. Luke 21:34: "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and *so* that day come upon you unawares."
 - b. Romans 13:13: "Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 5:9-11: "I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat."
 - d. 1 Corinthians 6:10: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
 - e. Galatians 5:21: "Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - f. Ephesians 5:18: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit." Where the KJV has "excess," the ASV uses the word "riot." The same Greek word is used in Luke 15:13: "And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living." Drunkenness leads to riotous, shameful, reckless living.
4. To be drunken is to commit sin, for sin is the transgressing of God's law: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4).
- a. To become guilty of sin and die in that condition means that the individual is separated from God in eternity (Jas. 1:15; Rom. 6:23).
 - b. This condition affects one's body, his mind, and his relations with others.
 - c. It has its most awful effects on the soul!
- B. When is one drunk?
1. At which point:
 - a. When his speech is slurred and his movements unsteady?
 - b. When he sees double?
 - c. When he passes out?
 2. What point is meant in these verses:
 - a. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10: "Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God" (NKJV). *Methusos* is used in 1 Corinthians 6:10; it means "one softened with drink" (Young). The word *soften* means "to weaken the resistance or opposition."
 - b. Ephesians 5:18: "And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit" (NKJV). *Methuskos* is used in Ephesians 5:18 (a different form of the same word); it means "to begin to be softened" (Young).
 3. The difference between social drinking and drunkenness is a difference in degree, not in kind.
 - a. One is drunk when he *begins* to be softened (according to definition).
 - b. 0.005% (1 drop:20,000 drops of blood) causes the will power, the judgment, and self-control to be weakened ("Gospel Advocate," 3/29/73). One-half can of beer or one-half cocktail provides this level of contamination.
 - c. One drink makes a man one drink drunk; if 10 drinks makes him falling-down drunk, 1 drink makes him one tenth drunk; a difference in degree, not in kind.
- C. Objections.
1. "Wine is mentioned in the Bible, sometimes without opposition. So wine must be all right with God."
 - a. But *wine* does not always mean intoxicating wine.
 - b. Sometimes intoxicating wine is meant:

- 1) Genesis 49:12: "His eyes *shall be* red with wine, and his teeth white with milk."
- 2) Luke 1:15: "For he shall be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink; and he shall be filled with the Holy Ghost, even from his mother's womb."
- c. Non-alcoholic wine is indicated in other passages.
 - 1) Isaiah 16:10: "And gladness is taken away, and joy out of the plentiful field; and in the vineyards there shall be no singing, neither shall there be shouting: the treaders shall tread out no wine in *their* presses; I have made *their vintage* shouting to cease." The word "wine" is used in reference to the grape juice as it is pressed from the grapes.
 - 2) Isaiah 65:8: "Thus saith the LORD, As the new wine is found in the cluster...." The liquid contents of a cluster of grapes is called "wine."
 - 3) Matthew 9:17: "Neither do men put new wine into old bottles: else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved." Freshly-pressed grape juice is called "wine" when it is first put in containers.
 - 4) In each case where the Bible speaks of "wine press" it is using "wine" as a reference to grape juice—called wine but without any intoxicating character.
- d. *Yayin* (Hebrew—Old Testament) and *oinos* (Greek—New Testament) are the original words; one must consult the context to learn if it is intoxicating or non-intoxicating. In English, *wine* only has reference to an intoxicating drink.
2. "Jesus turned water into alcoholic wine (John 2:1-11). Therefore, it must be all right for us to drink wine, even though it has an intoxicating power."
 - a. If so, then how do you reconcile that action with those passages which clearly warn against (and forbid) the imbibing of intoxicants?
 - 1) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
 - 3) Habakkuk 2:15: "Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that puttest thy bottle to *him*, and makest *him* drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!"
 - 4) 1 Corinthians 6:10: "Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God."
 - b. If our Lord encouraged drinking alcoholic wine, he encouraged drunkenness. Six waterpots of wine were produced; each container held 2-3 firkins each, which equals to 100-150 gallons (8½ gallon per firkin). These waterpots were handmade, thus would not all be exactly the same size. This amounts to several hundred gallons of wine. Although we do not know the number of guests attending the feast, the guest list is not likely to number many hundreds. By supplying such a large amount of wine, Christ encouraged those present to drink their fill. If the drink was alcoholic, some would become drunken (even to the passing-out state).
 - c. Ancient writers said the best wines were unintoxicating; that the ordinary Roman drink was grape juice mixed with spices ("Gospel Advocate," 5/9/74). To preserve grape juice, they boiled it down into a substance like molasses; it was consumed by spreading it on bread; or mixed with water and spices or herbs, and drunk either hot or cold (ibid.).
 - d. The guests could recognize the high quality of the wine Jesus produced even after having "drunk freely" (John 2:10). One who is intoxicated is not apt to recognize a higher quality of taste, while in a drunken state. It is clear, therefore, that these guests were not intoxicated; hence, what they

- were imbibing must not have been wine with an alcoholic content.
- e. There is no proof that Jesus made intoxicating wine; we have good reason to say that he did not.
3. "Paul told Timothy to partake of wine for its medicinal properties: 'Drink no longer water, but use a little wine for thy stomach's sake and thine often infirmities' (1 Tim. 5:23). If it was right for Timothy to drink wine, it is all right for us to drink wine."
 - a. This use of wine is specifically stated to be for medical purposes, not for social or recreational reasons.
 - b. Timothy was told to **use a little** wine for his stomach's sake, and for other ailments. Clearly Paul's prescription was intended to be for medical purposes, and that Timothy was to use it sparingly. The apostle is not advocating a drunken party or any heavy or continual use of wine.
 - c. Notice also that it was necessary for Paul to instruct Timothy to use wine; this was an inspired directive. The implication is that Timothy had not been using wine, even for the medicinal purposes for which the apostle here prescribes it. Obviously, therefore, Timothy had been avoiding the use of wine.
 - d. The context does not indicate whether the wine mentioned was intoxicating or non-intoxicating. We have no information that demands that we understand it as intoxicating wine. Their argument "begs the question." Assuming it had an alcoholic content, it was prescribed by the apostle for its medicinal qualities, not for its intoxicating power.
 4. "Jesus drank wine: 'For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children' (Matt. 11:18-19)."
 - a. Was this intoxicating or intoxicating wine? It must be reconciled with the strong prohibitions of Proverbs 20:1 and 23:29-35, which strongly forbid the use of these strong drinks. How could the Bible say our Lord was without sin if he violated these parts of God's word?
 - 1) Hebrews 10:7: "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God."
 - 2) 1 Peter 2:22: "Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:15: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin."
 - 4) John 8:46: "Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"
 - b. The source of the statement was his enemies—they say. The same people said that John had a devil! Christ's enemies also said he had a devil and was mad (John 10:20). Were these people right? If they were right in one case, we may presume they were right in the other case! If they were wrong in one case (and they were), they we must presume they were wrong in the others also.
 - 1) If they were right in saying Jesus was a winebibber, they were also right in saying he was a glutton. But they were wrong in both charges! The Bible strongly affirms that our Lord did no sin of any kind (1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15).
 - 2) John ate locust and wild honey (a strange diet); Jesus ate regular food. This is the contrast the Lord made in the passage.
 5. "In 1 Timothy 3:8, much wine is forbidden of deacons; this implies they can be given to a little wine. If they could imbibe some wine, so can we."
 - a. 1 Timothy 3:8: "Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre."
 - b. But how much is *much* and how much is *little*? What is the safe course? Total abstinence.
 - c. To "be given to" is from the Greek *prosecho* which means: "to give one's self up to, be addicted to, engage in, be occupied with" (*Analytical Greek Lexicon*, p.349). Is a Christian right if he is addicted to a little wine? What is forbidden is being addicted to any wine.
 - d. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,

nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God" (1 Cor. 6:9-10).

D. Excerpt from my commentary on Proverbs:

1. Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - a. "The history of the world from the days of Noah (Gen. 9:21) proves, that the love of *wine and strong drink* is a most insidious vice. The wretched victims are convinced too late, that they have been *mocked* and grievously *deceived*. Not only does it overcome them before they are aware, but it promises pleasures which it can never give. And yet so mighty is the spell, that the besotted slave consents to be *mocked* again and again, till 'at last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder.' (Chap. 23:29-32.)" [Bridges, Charles A., *A Commentary on Proverbs*, The Banner of Truth Trust, Edinburgh, Carlisle, PA, 1968, pp.334f]. "It is not for kings, O Lemuel, *it is* not for kings to drink wine; nor for princes strong drink: Lest they drink, and forget the law, and pervert the judgment of any of the afflicted" (Prov. 31:4-5).
 - b. If one wonders whether a Christian can partake of alcoholic beverages in a social setting, let him consider 1 Corinthians 8. Paul shows that even an action that of itself is all right (the eating of meat which had been used earlier in an idol's temple) is wrong if it influences a brother to stumble (8:9-13). When our example influences another Christian to do something that violates his conscience, we sin by causing him to sin!
 - 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - 3) Romans 14:21: "*It is* good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor *any thing* whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak."
 - 4) Philippians 2:14-16: "Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 5) 1 Thessalonians 5:22: "Abstain from all appearance of evil."
 - 6) If one thinks he can drink in the privacy of his own home and thus avoid evil influence, let him ask how he can buy the product and dispose of the containers without others learning of it. And what about the influence on his wife and children?
 - c. Drunkenness is forbidden as sinful. But the word translated *drunken* is from *methusko* [from *methuo*] which "signifies to make drunk, or to grow drunk (an inceptive verb, marking the process of the state expressed [in *methuo*]" (Vine, vol. 1, p.341). The word "inceptive" means: "beginning; introductory; initial." Drunkenness is sinful from its beginning, introductory, initial stage: i.e., with the first swallow!
 - d. The Greek word "oinos" is the general term for all wine, including grape juice. It is used in the term "winepress" (Rev. 19:15). Grape juice is pressed from the grapes; it is called *oinos*. From the word itself one cannot determine what kind of *wine* is meant—intoxicating or non-intoxicating. It is noteworthy that the Bible never speaks of the contents of the cup in the Lord's Supper as "wine." It is identified as "the fruit of the vine." Though it might be scriptural to serve real wine in the Supper, it is unwise (to say the least) to do so. Reformed alcoholics have been overcome again by alcohol by being reintroduced to it by partaking of the Lord's Supper in which alcoholic wine was served.

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- e. One who thinks he can control his appetite for alcoholic beverages while partaking of it "moderately" is playing the fool!
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 9:27: "But I keep under my body, and bring *it* into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 10:12: "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."
 - 3) 1 Thessalonians 5:21-22: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. Abstain from all appearance of evil."
 - f. Solomon says that one is "unwise" (i.e., is foolish) who allows himself to be deceived by wine or strong drink. One cannot play with fire without being burned! (Prov. 6:27-28). The first effect of alcohol is against the higher faculties of the mind: breaking down inhibitions, muddling the judgment, and weakening the will.
2. Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say*, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
 - a. The wise man graphically depicts the awful danger of strong drink. He lists six questions in verse 29. He describes one who has woe, sorrow, contentions, babbling, wounds without cause, and redness of eyes. He identifies this individual as the one who tarries long at wine; that go to seek mixed wine. This is the longest single passage on the subject of alcohol in the Bible; its information should not be ignored or depreciated. The "mixed wine" of verse 30 is said to be the strongest kind (Bridges, p.442).
 - b. Those who come under the influence of alcohol are prone to exaggerate their troubles, become contentious, speak without making sense, get into brawls which cause injuries for no purpose, and develop redness of eyes. When a man begins a bout of drinking, he may be calm and composed for a while, without any apparent effect to the casual observer. But before long, the power of the drug is unleashed in the man, and its presence cannot be denied. Some men turn into crying babies; others become obnoxious or belligerent; some who are usually quiet will become extremely talkative. The end result is the unconscious state and the hangover.
 - c. Scientific studies have shown that the higher faculties of the mind are first affected by alcohol. The individual's ability to make accurate judgments becomes diminished. A drunken person will speak foolish things; he will attempt feats he would not consider when sober. His will power is overridden, breaking down his inhibitions. Hence, one under the influence of alcohol will do things he would not do if sober: curse, commit fornication, gamble, take drugs, rob, murder, etc. One who has imbibed sufficient alcohol for these faculties to be adversely affected will deny that they have been affected. He simply is in no condition to understand his true condition. How can any person think that he can "hold his liquor" or that he "knows his limit?"
 - d. Verse 31 commands that we keep ourselves away from the temptation of wine. There is something pleasant and appealing to the advertisements of the liquor industry. The glass filled with sparkling wine has a certain appeal. The passage describes the wine as moving "itself aright" in the cup, which pictures its *life, texture, and body*. The saliva glands can even be activated by a quick look, for the mind vividly recalls the pleasing taste! If there were nothing wrong with drinking alcoholic beverages, why was this warning issued? To those who think the Savior produced alcoholic wine (John 2), could the Lord have remained sinless while directly opposing the sentiment of this verse? If he produced alcoholic wine for the wedding feast, he most assuredly would have been encouraging the very thing Solomon is forbidding! If he drank alcoholic beverages, he would have been violating the very precept Solomon gives here!
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- e. Verse 32 graphically describes its end result: It bites like a serpent and stings like an adder! The results of any drinking bout that leads to drunkenness include redness of eyes, plus the effects of a hangover. The results of a life of such bouts is the intense craving for the effects of alcohol, in many cases the effects of "Dts" result, and often times an early death. Some of the by-products of drunkenness are: lives which are destroyed in accidents caused by drunk driving; economic hardships on the family of the drinker; lost jobs and wages; abuse of family members; destroyed health and happiness. But the worst consequence is the lost soul of the drunkard. "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
- f. Verse 33 shows some of these side effects of drinking. One who is under the influence of this drug will often take interest in other women (or men); they are also prone to speak perverse things. The natural product of sin is more sin. Before one starts drinking, he needs to be aware of the fact that he may be led to do things he would not even consider doing when he is in his right mind. Stopping for a "little drink with the boys" can easily lead to a destroyed marriage and home!
- g. Verse 34 points out the foolishness that characterizes many who become drunken. They are as apt to try to sleep in the sea or lie down on the mast of a ship. How many men have lost their lives by going to sleep on a railroad track or on a busy highway, not realizing their great danger? We would know a man was playing the fool if he thought he could lie down in water for a little nap, or that he could sleep on the horizontal part of a ship's sail structure. How many people have committed robbery, or rape, or murder while under the influence of alcohol, never comprehending the criminal nature of their actions?
- h. Verse 35 discusses some of the things that others can do to a man who has passed out from drunkenness. He can be beaten, and never be aware of it at the time. Drunks are the prime targets of petty crooks; they can be "rolled" with hardly any danger of arrest. The foolhardiness of a man given to alcohol is seen by the wise man's final thought: "When shall I awake? I will seek it yet again." Drunks find it hard to learn the simplest lessons!

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. The arguments made in defense of drinking alcoholic beverages can all be answered.
 1. We have done so with the primary arguments that we usually hear.
 2. Any other argument can be handled with equal clarity and force.
 3. As with all confrontations, we need to exercise as much kindness as possible.
- B. The teachings of the Bible are clear on this and every other significant subject.
 1. We can know the truth on any subject that affects the soul.
 2. Psalms 119:160: "The sum of thy word is truth; And every one of thy righteous ordinances *endureth* for ever" (ASV).
 3. John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 4. John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 5. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
- C. God's grace is expressed in the gospel and offers salvation to all.
 1. Regardless of the degree of our depravity, if we are willing to meet the conditions God sets, pardon is available to anyone, even those who have been alcoholics (1 Cor. 6:9-11).
 - a. Acts 18:8: "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were baptized."
 - b. John 8:24: "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am *he*, ye shall die in your sins."
 - c. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every

- where to repent."
- d. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 - e. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
2. Saul of Tarsus was able to overcome his sinful past: "Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did *it* ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This *is* a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (1 Tim. 3:13-15).
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What About Attendance?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Christian life is the greatest way to live ever known in our world.

1. It has the greatest blessings ever made available to any human being.
2. It is the best way to live; it keeps us from harmful words, deeds and attitudes.
3. It makes great demands on us; we have awesome obligations, which we cheerfully discharge.

B. We need to be encouraged in living the Christian life.

1. We tend to overlook or forget the great blessings we have.
2. We may let sinful words, actions and dispositions to cause us to rebel against God, to our own hurt.
3. We must be reminded of our obligations and urged to fulfill our duty.

C. One of the greatest obvious problems we have relates to our attendance.

1. It is one of the plainest ways by which we show our faithfulness or unfaithfulness; our presence at the assemblies shows the world where our heart is; our absence also declares what we treasure most.
2. Every Christians is apt to neglect attendance on some occasion, sometime during his lifetime. Many do so with regularity.
3. Every congregation has those who do not attend at all, or only attend infrequently, or who do not attend as they ought; every conceivable excuse is offered, including:
 - a. Family reunions.
 - b. Company (present or expected).
 - c. Exaggerated ailments.
 - d. Perceived offenses (evil surmises—1 Tim. 6:4).
 - e. Sick puppy.
 - f. Visiting relatives, knowing that the trip will make worship impossible.
4. Therefore, there is a great need for preachers and teachers to present lessons on the very important subject of attendance.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. There are some problems which arise when we fail to attend as we ought.

1. We become a source of discouragement to those who attend faithfully.
 - a. Our absence declares that we have little or no real interest in the progress of the church, the worship of the Almighty, the edification of the saints, or the salvation of souls.
 - b. The greatest cause on earth suffers at our hands when we willfully absent ourselves from the services of the Lord's church.
2. We tell the world that attendance is unnecessary and unimportant.
 - a. But God never planned any unnecessary item; he planned the assemblies!
 - b. God gave certain ordinances that are to be observed in the assemblies; therefore, attending every service of the church we are able to attend is greatly important.
 - c. Non-attendance says to the world that obeying God is not important.
 - 1) We glorify God in the church (assemblies). "Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen" (Eph. 3:21).
 - 2) God says to attend (Heb. 10:25); if we willfully miss, we are willfully disobedient.
 - 3) We show that we love God less than we love the world by willfull absences. "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).
3. We tell the world by our failure to attend that we do not want to go to heaven.
 - a. Generally, the world thinks of attenders as being heaven-bound, and non-attenders are not thought of as heaven-bound.
 - b. Non-attenders are not generally thought of as faithful Christians.
 - c. When we willfully absent ourselves from the assemblies, we give the world cause to doubt that we

are serious about going to heaven.

4. We tell the world that we think we can be saved by our own works.
 - a. We say by our actions, "I don't need to attend; I don't need to worship; I can do just as well by being somewhere else."
 - b. But we cannot save ourselves, either as an alien sinner or as a Christian.
 - 1) Matthew 7:21: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) Luke 17:10: "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."
 - 3) Romans 5:9: "Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him."
 - 4) Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *it is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 - 5) Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - 6) Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
 5. We hinder the work by not giving, when we willfully miss the Lord's day assemblies.
 - a. The church may still do a great work, but with our help it could do more.
 - b. Many good works have to be turned down because of a lack of funds or a lack of workers.
 6. We tell the world that the Bible is not important.
 - a. In the assemblies, faithful saints study and follow the Bible; God's word and the assemblies are inseparably connected.
 - b. When we willfully absent ourselves from the assemblies, we show disrespect for God's word.
 7. We tell the world that honoring Christ is not important.
 - a. He died to bring the gospel and the church into existence.
 - b. We honor Christ by obedience, which includes assembling with the saints.
 8. We tell the world that preaching is foolishness.
 - a. But preaching is God's way to save the lost: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Cor. 1:21).
 - b. Preaching and learning God's word is an important part of worship. The preacher (or teacher) is not the only one worshipping when he preaches the Bible in the assemblies; each one in the assembly who is faithful will meditate on the truths being presented and thereby worship God.
 - c. When we willfully absent ourselves from the services, we vote against preaching and teaching the word of God by our absence.
 9. We make it impossible for us to teach our children and neighbors the importance of the church and obedience to the truth.
 - a. The world is quite able to perceive our inconsistency when we say that the Lord's church is his spiritual body, and the Bible is his inspired word, and do not demonstrate our claims by being faithful in attendance.
 - b. Paul denounced the Jewish unbelievers who were inconsistent: "Thou therefore which teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? thou that preachest a man should not steal, dost thou steal?" (Rom. 2:21).
- B. When we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss certain important matters.
1. If we willfully miss, we miss eating the Lord's Supper.
 - a. Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - b. Acts 20:7: "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."
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- c. 1 Corinthians 11:24-30: "And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink *this* cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of *that* bread, and drink of *that* cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep."
 - d. A 3-fold reason is given to attend and eat the Lord's Supper:
 - 1) We are commanded to do so.
 - 2) We have examples of our brethren in the first century doing so.
 - 3) A penalty is given for failing to do so.
2. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss singing praise to God with our brethren.
- a. Plain Bible statements:
 - 1) Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
 - 2) Hebrews 13:15: "By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of *our* lips giving thanks to his name."
 - b. We are commanded to sing, it is a privilege to sing, and it is beneficial to our souls to sing.
 - c. It is for our own good to attend and sing; it gives encouragement and strength, as the messages in these songs suggest.
 - 1) "Never Grow Old."
 - 2) "I Know My Redeemer Lives."
 - 3) "How Great Thou Art!"
3. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss praying with the saints.
- a. Prayer is especially influential with God when united with others.
 - 1) Matthew 18:19-20: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them."
 - 2) James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Because of Abraham's request, God spared Lot when he destroyed Sodom (Gen. 18-19).
 - b. Prayer is a vital part of our faithfulness, in both private and public settings.
 - 1) Luke 18:1: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
4. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss giving to God as he has prospered us.
- a. There are very few members who did not attend who send their contributions. They may go for many years without having given a penny to the cause of Christ.
 - b. It is a direct command that we give, it is for our own benefit that we give, and it is a privilege to give.
 - 1) Acts 20:35: "I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come."
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- 3) 2 Corinthians 9:6-7: "But this *I say*, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, *so let him give*; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
- c. Giving helps us to develop a sacrificial disposition, without which we are babes in Christ, to say the least.
 - 1) Philippians 4:17: "Not because I desire a gift: but I desire fruit that may abound to your account."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 6:17-19: "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life."
5. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss being a good influence on others, which is one of our many obligations and privileges.
 - a. Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
6. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss learning more of God's word.
 - a. The way to God is the way of knowledge.
 - 1) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father that sent me draw him: and I will raise him up in the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall all be taught of God. Every one that hath heard from the Father, and hath learned, cometh unto me" (ASV).
 - 2) John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."
 - 3) John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth."
 - 4) 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 - b. Being ignorant of God's word opens the door to sin and error of all kinds.
 - 1) Psalms 119:11: "Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee."
 - 2) 1 John 2:1: "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not...."
 - 3) Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thou hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me: seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget thy children."
 - 4) Romans 10:1-3: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved. For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God."
7. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we miss exhorting our brethren to faithfulness, and miss being exhorted to faithfulness ourselves.
 - a. Hebrews 10:24-26: "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some *is*; but exhorting *one another*: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins."
 - 1) The command of the passage is stated positively and negatively: we are told to provoke one another unto love and good works; we are told not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together, which would make it impossible for us to provoke and exhort to this faithfulness.

- 2) We are required to provoke unto love and good works; we are forbidden to miss the assemblies wherein this is done.
 - b. If we do not attend, we have let our brethren down; they might fall into sin without this help.
 - c. By attending and worshipping in spirit and in truth, we encourage our brethren to follow our example and practice.
8. If we willfully miss the assemblies, we have failed to keep the appointment to meet with the Lord at his designated place and situation. Compare: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20). This passage deals with the case of a few brethren deciding to meet for the purpose of praying for some specific need or problem; the Lord promises to be in their midst, to hear their petition. Since he does this, we may likewise be sure that his presence is in the regular assemblies of the saints, where many of his followers are present.

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. In view of the foregoing, it is manifest that those who are unfaithful in attendance are in great peril.
1. They are lukewarm, as were the Laodiceans: "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Rev. 3:16).
 2. They transgress God's will by not eating the Supper, not giving, nor singing, and not joining their brethren in the other acts of prescribed worship.
 3. They have failed to put the Lord first.
 - a. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Matthew 8:19-22: "And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest. And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head. And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead."
 4. Their conduct shows a disregard for God's word, unconcern about the growth of the Lord's church, and indifference toward lost souls.
 5. Their influence is hindering the work and progress of the church.
 6. They are a hindrance to the whole cause of Christ.
- B. Let each of us ask ourself these questions:
1. Do I willfully miss?
 2. Since my heart is where my treasure is, where is my real treasure? "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matt. 6:19-21).
 3. Have I left my first love? "Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love. Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent" (Rev. 2:4-5).
 4. Do I need to be restored?
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WHERE ARE THE DEAD?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Where are the dead? A fascinating and absorbing question!

1. Men have always been interested in the question, and have sought the answer. No doubt, every person in the Bible who was brought back to life was asked questions about their *other world* experiences. "And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Cor. 12:3-4).
2. Thousands of years of effort by scores of brilliant men cannot answer the question.
3. But you can learn the answer in a few minutes of Bible study.

B. First, we need to know something about man: What is he?

1. He is a physical being:
 - a. Genesis 2:7: "And the LORD God formed man *of* the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was...."
2. He is a spiritual being:
 - a. Job 32:8: "But *there is* a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth them understanding."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:5: "...man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets."
 - c. Daniel 7:15: "I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of *my* body, and the visions of my head troubled me."
 - d. Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - e. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. What constitutes life and death?

1. If the body and spirit are separated, death is the result: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:26).
2. When the body and spirit are united, life is the result.
3. *Death means separation:*
 - a. Colossians 3:3: "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God."
 - b. 1 Timothy 5:6: "But she that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth."
 - c. James 2:26: "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

B. Soul or spirit is the word used to identify the immortal part of man.

1. Passages:
 - a. Genesis 35:18: "And it came to pass, as her soul was in departing, (for she died) that she called his name Benoni: but his father called him Benjamin."
 - b. 1 Kings 17:21-22: "And he stretched himself upon the child three times, and cried unto the LORD, and said, O LORD my God, I pray thee, let this child's soul come into him again. And the LORD heard the voice of Elijah; and the soul of the child came into him again, and he revived."
 - c. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - d. Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise."
 - e. Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
2. The spirit lives on after the body is dead:

- a. Acts 7:59: "And they stoned Stephen, calling upon *God*, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 4:16: "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward *man* is renewed day by day."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:1-10: "For we know that if our earthly house of *this* tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in *this* tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing *is* God, who also hath given unto us the earnest of the Spirit. Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord: (For we walk by faith, not by sight:) We are confident, *I say*, and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord. Wherefore we labour, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
3. What part of man departs at death to be "with Christ"?
- a. Philippians 1:20-24: "According to my earnest expectation and *my* hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but *that* with all boldness, as always, *so* now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether *it be* by life, or by death. For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain. But if I live in the flesh, this *is* the fruit of my labour: yet what I shall choose I wot not. For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better: Nevertheless to abide in the flesh *is* more needful for you."
 - b. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - c. Hebrews 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
 - d. God is the God even of those who are dead: "I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matt. 22:32).
4. There was no need for the Bible to specifically say *immortal soul* (spirit) for its very nature is implied in the word itself.
- C. Where does the spirit go at death?
1. The body goes into the grave and returns to the elements of the earth, but where does the spirit go?
 2. The spirit does not cease to exist when the body dies.
 - a. Exodus 3:6: "Moreover he said, *I am* the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And Moses hid his face; for he was afraid to look upon God."
 - b. 1 Samuel 28:7-15: "Then said Saul unto his servants, Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her. And his servants said to him, Behold, *there is* a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me *him* up, whom I shall name unto thee. And the woman said unto him, Behold, thou knowest what Saul hath done, how he hath cut off those that have familiar spirits, and the wizards, out of the land: wherefore then layest thou a snare for my life, to cause me to die? And Saul sware to her by the LORD, saying, *As* the LORD liveth, there shall no punishment happen to thee for this thing. Then said the woman, Whom shall I bring up unto thee? And he said, Bring me up Samuel. And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried with a loud voice: and the woman spake to Saul, saying, Why hast thou deceived me? for thou *art* Saul. And the king said unto her, Be not afraid: for what sawest thou? And the woman said unto Saul, I saw gods ascending out of the earth. And he said unto her, What form *is* he of? And she said, An old man cometh up; and he *is* covered with a mantle. And Saul perceived that it *was* Samuel, and he stooped with *his* face to the ground, and bowed himself. And Samuel said to Saul, Why hast thou disquieted me, to bring

me up? And Saul answered, I am sore distressed; for the Philistines make war against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more, neither by prophets, nor by dreams: therefore I have called thee, that thou mayest make known unto me what I shall do." [Samuel continued to live, retained his memory, and was the same person in death as in life]/

- c. Matthew 17:1-5: "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." [Moses and Elijah continued to live and retain their identity even in eternity].
3. The spirit does not go into the grave. The body of Jesus was buried, but his spirit was elsewhere.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - b. Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 12:3-4: "And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." [Paul was enabled to peer into the hadean realm of Paradise, in the episode he described here. This was undoubtedly the same place the Lord's spirit resided while his body was entombed in the earth].
4. The spirit does not go into some purgatorial realm in which it is purged from sin through temporary suffering.
 - a. John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." [When one dies, his eternal fate is sealed; it cannot be changed].
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad." [The spiritual condition of the spirit at death will be the same condition it will have in the Judgment].
 - c. Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - d. Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be." [As death finds us, so will the Judgment—nothing can be done to change our spiritual condition once we die].
5. The spirit does not go directly to its eternal destiny, for everyone will be in the Judgment together.
 - a. It would be foolish for God to send everyone directly to their eternal destiny at the time of their death, and then, at the end of time, bring them all forth to stand in the Judgment to pass sentence on them.
 - b. Many who died thousands of years ago have not yet faced the Judgment.
 - 1) Matthew 11:23: "And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day."
 - 2) Matthew 12:41-42: "The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas *is* here. The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here."

- c. If we go directly to our destiny, why must there be a resurrection?
 - d. But what about Philipians 1:23 ["For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better"] and 2 Corinthians 5:6 ["Therefore *we are* always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord"]? These only tell part of the story; other verses fill in the details.
 - 1) Luke 14:14: "And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just."
 - 2) John 14:2-3: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, *there* ye may be also." [The Lord said he would receive his saints when he returned—he did not say he would do so the instant of their death].
 - 3) 2 Timothy 4:7-8: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished *my* course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." [Paul said he would receive the crown of righteousness **at that day**—the last day].
 - 4) Revelation 6:9: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held." [These martyrs were still in their disembodied state when John beheld them; they had not been resurrected].
 - e. Thus, the ultimate destiny of each soul will not be affirmed until the end of the world.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:10: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up."
- D. Evidence pointing to the answer is given in the case of Christ.
1. Where did the Lord go when he died?
 - a. Luke 23:39-43, 46: "And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise....And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - b. His body went into the tomb: "And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus: and Pilate gave *him* leave. He came therefore, and took the body of Jesus. And there came also Nicodemus, which at the first came to Jesus by night, and brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound *weight*. Then took they the body of Jesus, and wound it in linen clothes with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden; and in the garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus therefore because of the Jews' preparation *day*; for the sepulchre was nigh at hand" (John 19:38-42).
 - c. His spirit went into Paradise.
 - 1) Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - 2) Luke 23:43: "And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in

paradise."

- 3) Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 2. His spirit did not return to heaven while his body was in the grave: "Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not; for I am not yet ascended to my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and *to* my God, and your God" (John 20:17).
 - a. "Touch me not" (*hupto*: to fasten to; to cling to; to lay hold of).
 - b. He would not allow Mary to cling to him for he must go to his Father, which implies he had not yet gone there.
 - c. God is in heaven; Christ went to Paradise; he had not yet gone to his Father; therefore, this Paradise is not heaven.
 - d. Since this Paradise is not heaven and not the grave, where and what is this **Paradise**?
 3. Additional evidence is given in Acts 2:25-31: "For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: Therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also my flesh shall rest in hope: Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men *and* brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."
 - a. *Hell*: in the original the Greek word *hades* is used. The spirit of Christ was in a place called *hades*, while his body was in the tomb.
 - b. Peter showed that the prophecy was fulfilled which said his body would not remain in the tomb and his spirit would not remain in *hades*.
 4. We have the following evidence from these passages:
 - a. His spirit was not in the tomb.
 - b. His spirit was in Paradise.
 - c. Paradise (in this case) is not heaven.
 - d. Paradise is located in *hades* (*place of the unseen dead*).
- E. Evidence pointing to the answer is given in the case of Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31).
1. Some will object to using this story, by claiming that it is "only a parable."
 - a. There is no proof it is a parable; it still teaches the truth even if it were a parable.
 - b. A parable was taken from the common occurrences of life, from things that either did happen or could happen.
 - c. Lazarus is given a regular name. If the story is parabolic, it is the only one in all the Bible in which a character is given a name.
 - d. Actually, Lazarus, the rich man, and the rich man's five brothers, were real human beings, just as real as Abraham! Lazarus still resides in the place of comfort and the rich man still writhes in the agony of the punishment the Lord described.
 2. We have seen that at death the body returns to the earth and the spirit passes into God's keeping.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 12:7: "Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."
 - b. Daniel 12:2: "And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt."
 - c. Luke 23:46: "And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."
 - d. Philippians 1:23: "For I am in a strait betwixt two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ; which is far better."

3. Where did God keep these men?
 - a. He kept Lazarus in *Abraham's bosom*, which was a place of comfort and happiness.
 - 1) In ancient terminology, the guest of honor at a feast occupied the highest place of honor, which was at the right hand of the host; this was called "the bosom" of the host. Christ used the term figuratively.
 - 2) To be in the "bosom of Abraham" in Jewish thought was to have the greatest honor (for a Jew). Hence, Lazarus (a Jew) is described as having the highest possible honor and blessing.
 - b. He kept the rich man in a place of torment, called *hades* (verse 23).
 - c. The rich man could see Lazarus, but could not join him because of the great gulf fixed between the two places.
4. Putting the evidence together, we have this information at hand:
 - a. At death, Christ entered *hades*.
 - b. He also described this place as Paradise.
 - c. The evil rich man also went to *hades*, but into a place of punishment.
 - d. Lazarus entered the spirit world, into a place called Abraham's bosom, a state of comfort and happiness.
 - e. Lazarus and Christ entered a different place from that of the rich man, yet both places are called *Hades*.
5. Some conclusions can be reliably reached from this evidence.
 - a. The spirits of the individuals involved in these stories were disembodied.
 - b. They were all in the place called *hades* (the *hadean realm*).
 - c. Christ left the *hadean realm* at his resurrection; these others were not raised.
 - d. The rich man, Lazarus, and every other dead person resides in this *hadean realm* awaiting the resurrection and Judgment.
 - 1) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 15:52: "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."

F. The Hadean Realm.

1. It is called *Hades*, a Greek word meaning "the place of the unseen dead."
 - a. The word occurs in these passages:
 - 1) Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
 - 2) Luke 16:23: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom."
 - 3) Revelation 1:18: "I *am* he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."
 - b. The KJV uses the word *hell* to translate *hades*. This old word in English means "to cover up." Thus, "He *hell*ed the potatoes." The place of eternal punishment is translated from the Greek word *Gehenna*.
 - 1) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 2) Mark 9:43: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched."
 - c. The equivalent Hebrew word for *hades* in the Old Testament is *Sheol*.
 - d. The KJV uses *hell* to translate *hades*, *Gehenna*, *sheol*, and *tartarus*; it was the only available English word at the time. Since then, the Hebrew and Greek words have been adopted as English words.
2. The word *Paradise* means "pleasure garden" or "pleasure park."
 - a. It is a Persian word which has also been transliterated into both Greek and English.

- b. Any place of pleasure could be called *paradise*. The word is applied to heaven (Rev. 2:7) and to that place of comfort in hades called "Abraham's bosom."
 - c. Paradise is a general term like *city*; heaven is called a city, but every time the word *city* is used heaven is not meant.
 - d. Paradise is used to describe a place of comfort and pleasure, where the holy dead await the resurrection and Judgment of the last day.
3. The Greek word *Tartarus* is used to describe the place where the unholy beings are kept.
- a. Passages:
 - 1) 2 Peter 2:4: "For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment." The word *hell* is *tartarus* in the Greek text.
 - 2) 2 Peter 2:9: "The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished."
 - 3) 2 Peter 3:7: "But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men."
 - b. Tartarus is not the final abode, but is the place of retention and punishment of those who await the end of time, the resurrection, and the Judgment.
 - c. If tartarus is the final destiny of the condemned, why remove them for the Judgment, and then return them to the same place?
 - d. This Greek word means "an abyss, a dungeon, a prison house." It is described in Luke 16:23-24 as a state of intense discomfort [torment]: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:23-24).
4. In hades, a great gulf is fixed (*made fast*) between paradise and tartarus: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence" (Luke 16:26). This gulf is a chasm, a broad yawning space (Barnes).
- a. It is impossible to pass over this great chasm; thus, once a lost person is confined to *tartarus* at death, there is no leaving until the resurrection and Judgment.
 - b. One's fate is forever sealed the instant he enters the hades realm; if he is righteous when he dies, he will never be lost; if he dies unrighteous, he cannot be saved.
 - 1) Luke 16:26-31: "And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that *would come* from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead."
 - 2) Revelation 22:11-12: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still. And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be."
5. The Greek word *Gehenna* (hell) describes the place of final punishment for the wicked.
- a. This Greek word represents the Hebrew word, *Ge-hinnom*, which is derived from the valley Hinnom just outside Jerusalem, which was used as the city dump. It had a horribly foul odor and a continual smoldering fire: "And he defiled Topheth, which *is* in the valley of the children of Hinnom, that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Molech" (2 Kings 23:10).
 - b. The repulsiveness and horrors of the place was a fitting depiction for the place of final punishment
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- for rebellion against God.
- c. The word occurs twelve times in the New Testament, of which Christ used it eleven times.
- 1) Matthew 5:22: "But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."
 - 2) Matthew 5:29-30: "And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell."
 - 3) Matthew 18:8-9: "Wherefore if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire."
 - 4) Matthew 23:15: "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves."
 - 5) Matthew 23:33: "*Ye* serpents, *ye* generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"
 - 6) Mark 9:43-48: "And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
 - 7) Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 8) James 3:6: "And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."
- d. It is into this dreadful place the ungodly will be ultimately cast.
- 1) Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - 2) Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
 - 3) Matthew 25:46: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
 - 4) Luke 12:5: "But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
 - 6) 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9: "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that
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know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power."

6. Heaven is that place of eternal reward, which includes nothing unpleasant, and everything that is glorious, pleasant, and joyful.
 - a. Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - b. Revelation 21:4: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

G. Since our eternal destiny is known immediately after death, why have the Judgment?

1. That great day is set aside for the final and formal sentencing.
2. The Judgment will not be for the purpose of determining guilt or innocence.
 - a. It is to show all why the lost are lost and the saved are saved: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matt. 7:21-23).
 - b. It is to give each the opportunity to give account of himself: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God" (Rom. 14:10-12).
 - c. It is to vindicate the saints before all mankind.
3. One's influence will continue to the end of time, hence Revelation 14:13: "And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them."
 - a. Paul has been gone from the earth more than 1900 years, but his influence is still alive and powerful through his inspired writings.
 - b. Your influence will remain behind when you leave earth; it is part of your legacy to your family and friends.
 - c. The sum total of your life's influence will not be fully accomplished until the very end of time.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The dead are conscious.

1. The rich man was very much aware of his condition: "And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame" (Luke 16:23-24).
2. This rich man remembered his earthly connections: "But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented....For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment" (Luke 16:25,28).
3. The martyred saints were conscious: "And when he had opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of them that were slain for the word of God, and for the testimony which they held: And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?" (Rev. 6:9-10).
4. Some teach that the wicked dead are annihilated at death, and are not punished further. This is false, as we have seen.
5. Some teach that the soul sleeps between death and the resurrection.
 - a. It is only the physical body that sleeps—it has the appearance of only being asleep when the spirit departs from it.
 - b. The part that sleeps is the part that resides in the grave following death: "And many of them that

sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame *and* everlasting contempt" (Dan. 12:2).

- c. The report of Lazarus and the disobedient rich man of Luke 16 establishes the following facts regarding the soul of one who has departed from this life:
- 1) The rich man could see both Abraham and Lazarus—this requires consciousness.
 - 2) Lazarus was in a state of happiness—he was comforted, which requires consciousness.
 - 3) The rich man was in a tormented state—his anguish requires consciousness.
 - 4) The rich man could communicate with Abraham across the great gulf that separated the place of torments where the rich man was, and the place of comfort where Lazarus and Abraham were—consciousness is necessary in order for communication to be possible.
 - 5) The rich man recognized Lazarus and called him by name—which requires consciousness.
 - 6) The rich man made two requests of Abraham—which requires consciousness.
 - 7) The rich man's requests for the services of Lazarus necessitated consciousness.
 - 8) The rich man could remember his earthly status and his five disobedient brothers—memory requires consciousness.
 - 9) The rich man was concerned over the spiritual status of his wicked brothers back on earth—any emotion requires consciousness.

B. Memory can be both wonderful and terrible.

1. We can recall and relive happy moments and joys of the past.
 2. We can recall things we had rather forget but cannot.
 - a. There are many aspects of punishment in *Gehenna*, including darkness, intense pain, weeping—and memory.
 - b. They will be able to remember sermons they heard, invitations they spurned, songs that were sung to encourage obedience, prayers offered in their behalf, and the tears their loved ones shed over their lost condition.
 3. No doubt memory was and continues to be a great torment to the lost rich man of Luke 16.
 4. And Lazarus yet rests in the bosom of Abraham, joyfully anticipating the full glory and joy of heaven!
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We Are Not The Enemy

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. We are charged with the universal and timeless mission of changing our world.

1. This can only be done by changing individuals through teaching them the gospel.
2. As individuals are changed, our society, the nation and the world are improved.

B. But trying to effect changes arouses resistance and opposition.

1. Many thought Paul was their enemy: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).
2. No teacher of the truth is the enemy of any man, despite the fact that the world opposes our godly efforts..
 - a. John 7:7: "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, because I testify of it, that the works thereof are evil."
 - b. John 15:18-19: "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before *it hated* you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."
3. Paul was their best friend; he wanted what was in their best interest.
4. Jesus had many hard things to say to the people of his generation; some considered him their enemy because of what he said, but no one could have a better friend!
 - a. John 1:11: "He came unto his own, and his own received him not."
 - b. John 3:19-21: "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reprov'd. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God."
 - c. John 6:60,66: "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?....From that *time* many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him."
 - d. John 8:45-46: "And because I tell *you* the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?"

C. Many think we are an enemy because truth is often unpleasant and demanding.

1. If we preach and teach only the truth of God's word, we are the enemy of no man.
2. If our motives and desires are proper, we are no one's enemy!

II. DISCUSSION: We are not an enemy when we tell the truth about the following subjects:

A. God.

1. Psalms 19:1-3: "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. *There is* no speech nor language, *where* their voice is not heard."
2. We mean to help and not harm anyone when we tell them the truth about the **Existence of God**.
 - a. This truth is offensive to atheists, agnostics, and other infidels.
 - b. Psalms 14:1: "The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, *there is* none that doeth good."
 - c. Acts 17:24-28: "God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands; Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us: For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."

3. We mean to help and not harm anyone when we tell them the truth about the **Identity of God**.
 - a. When we identify to living God of the Bible, Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, and the adherents of the New Age religion are offended.
 - b. 1 Corinthians 8:4-6: "As concerning therefore the eating of those things that are offered in sacrifice unto idols, we know that an idol *is* nothing in the world, and that *there is* none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us *there is but* one God, the Father, of whom *are* all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom *are* all things, and we by him."
 - c. The founders of our nation professed a belief in the God of the Bible, but many in modernist America are pluralistic in their religious outlook; instead of believing in the living God, many in our generation profess to believe in all "gods."
4. Many today are offended when we announce the **Justice of God**.
 - a. This offends their concept of the Almighty as possessing only love; it ignores the the fact that he is also the God of infinite justice. When we tell them the truth on this matter, we are counted by them as enemies.
 - b. Romans 11:22: "Behold therefore the goodness and severity of God: on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in *his* goodness: otherwise thou also shalt be cut off."
5. When we proclaim the **Mercy of God**, those who are harsh and unconcerned consider this an attack against their Calvinistic disposition. The mercy (grace) of God is intended for all, not for only a hand-picked few.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:4: "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth."
 - b. Hebrews 2:9: "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

B. Christ.

1. John 20:26-27: "And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: *then* came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace *be* unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust *it* into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."
2. His **Virgin Birth** offends the modernists.
 - a. Isaiah 7:14: "Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."
 - b. Matthew 1:21-23: "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."
 - c. Galatians 4:4: "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law."
3. When we proclaim his deity, Jews and many others take offense.
 - a. Matthew 22:41-46: "While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, Saying, What think ye of Christ? whose son is he? They say unto him, *The son* of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord, saying, The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool? If David then call him Lord, how is he his son? *46* And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask him any more *questions*."
 - b. Romans 1:3-4: "Concerning his Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
 - c. Hebrews 1:5: "For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?"

4. Many unbelievers consider us the enemy when we tell them of his **Death, Burial and Resurrection**.
 - a. Romans 1:4: "And declared *to be* the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 1:23: "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness."
 - c. 1 Corinthians 15:1-4: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:"
 5. When we affirm the **Authority of Christ**, there are many who take strong offense.
 - a. Matthew 28:18: "And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
 - b. Acts 2:36: "Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ."
 - c. Philippians 2:10-11: "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth; And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
- C. Holy Spirit.
1. John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 2. The reality of the **Miracles in the Bible**, produced by the Holy Spirit, is offensive to many who reject the supernatural.
 - a. Mark 16:17-20: "And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover. So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God. And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen."
 - b. Hebrews 2:3-4: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard *him*; God also bearing *them* witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?"
 3. The **Inspiration by which the Holy Spirit gave the Bible** is offensive to many.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 2:9-13: "But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. But God hath revealed *them* unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God. Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God. Which things also we speak, not in the words which man's wisdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghost teacheth; comparing spiritual things with spiritual."
 - b. 2 Peter 1:19-21: "We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the Holy Ghost."
 4. That the Holy Spirit does not **operated directly** today offends many "direct operation" people.
 - a. Ephesians 5:18-19: "And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;
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Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord."

- b. Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord."
- c. James 1:18, 21, 25: "Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures....Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls....But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

D. Bible.

1. Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
2. We are considered an enemy by those who reject the **inspiration of the Bible**.
 - a. It is not a human: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works" (2 Tim. 3:16-17).
 - b. The only way we can know anything God has ever said is by what is revealed in the Bible.
3. Some are offended when we speak of the **inerrancy** of the Bible.
 - a. Some think that it contains errors and contradictions; even some misguided brethren have written of "clashes and jars" in the scriptures.
 - b. No one has ever been able to sustain a charge of error against the Bible.
 - c. James 1:25: "But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."
4. That the Bible is the **final authority** in religious and spiritual matters many deny today, but it still maintains this claim (with undeniable evidence).
 - a. Mark 13:11: "But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." [The same guidance and control the Holy Spirit wrought upon those inspired men in defending the truth, was also upon them when they wrote down the revelation].
 - b. John 16:12-13: "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he speak: and he will show you things to come."
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - d. 2 John 9: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son."
 - e. Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."

E. Church.

1. Matthew 16:18: "And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."
2. It truth about the **origin** of the church offends some.
 - a. Its beginning was on the Pentecost Day of Acts 2, not hundreds of years before or after.
 - b. It is the Lord's church; man has no right to a church of his own choice.
3. The **exclusive nature** of the church offends many.
 - a. Man has no no right to counterfeit the Lord's church.

- 1) Psalms 127:1: "Except the LORD build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the LORD keep the city, the watchman waketh *but* in vain."
 - 2) Matthew 15:13: "But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up."
 - b. The Lord adds the saved to His church, not to some man-made religious organization (Acts 2:47; Col. 1:13-14).
 4. **Heaven's blessings** are given to the members of the Lord's church.
 - a. Ephesians 1:3: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ."
 - b. Ephesians 1:7: "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace."
 - c. Ephesians 1:22-23: "And hath put all *things* under his feet, and gave him *to be* the head over all *things* to the church, Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."
 - d. Colossians 1:13-14: "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated *us* into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins."
 - e. 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - F. Plan of salvation.
 1. Mark 16:16: "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 2. Faith in Christ is essential (John 8:24).
 3. Repentance is required (Acts 17:30).
 4. Confessing Christ is mandated (Rom. 10:9-10; Acts 8:37).
 5. Baptism into Christ is absolutely necessary (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Rom. 6:3-4; Gal. 3:26-27).
 6. Nothing less will do; nothing more is required.
 - G. Worship of God.
 1. John 4:24: "God *is* a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship *him* in spirit and in truth."
 2. Studying God's word is an avenue of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7).
 3. Partaking of the Lord's Supper is an avenue of worship (Acts 2:42; 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:20-30).
 4. Praying is an avenue of worship (Acts 2:42).
 5. Giving of our means is an avenue of worship (1 Cor. 16:1f; 2 Cor. 9:6-7).
 6. Singing is an avenue of worship (Col. 3:16; Eph. 5:19).
 7. Nothing less is sufficient; nothing more is allowed: "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:8-9.).
 - H. Christian Life.
 1. Romans 12:1-2: "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, *which is* your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what *is* that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."
 2. Some things are to be excluded: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: For which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: In the which ye also walked some time, when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds" (Col. 3:5-9).
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3. Some things are to be cultivated and practiced: "And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:5-11).
 4. The Beatitudes are to be adopted: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Matt. 5:3-12).
- I. Religious Error:
1. The pure gospel is to be proclaimed: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).
 2. Religious error condemns the soul: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 Th. 2:10-12).
 3. Error must be exposed, refuted, and rejected: "Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake.... Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith" (Tit. 1:9-11, 13).
 4. The soul of each member and the church itself must kept pure, for only those who are pure can enter heaven.
 - a. Acts 20:28: "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood."
 - b. Ephesians 5:25-27: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish."
 - c. 1 Timothy 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 - d. Hebrews 12:14: "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."
 - e. Matthew 5:8: "Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God."
 - f. Revelation 21:27: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book

of life."

J. Death.

1. Romans 5:12: "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned."
2. It is once appointed for all: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation" (Heb. 9:27-28).
3. There will be no second chance for salvation after death: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still" (Rev. 22:11).
4. Death fixes our eternal destiny: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29).

K. Judgment.

1. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As I live*, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
2. The Judgment will include every accountable human being.
 - a. Matthew 25:31-32: "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats."
 - b. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."
3. Only two destinies are available: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).
4. Our destiny will be determined by comparing our lives with God's word: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day" (John 12:48).

L. Hell.

1. Matthew 25:41: "Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."
2. Hell is unspeakably awful!
 - a. Matthew 25:30: "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."
 - b. Mark 9:48: "Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched."
3. Hell is eternal in its scope: "In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Th. 1:8,9).
4. Hell is just: those consigned there will have earned that fate:
 - a. Matthew 7:21-23: "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."
 - b. 2 Thessalonians 1:6-10: "Seeing *it is* a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you; And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; When he shall come

to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day."

M. Heaven.

1. Matthew 25:34: "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."
2. Heaven is a wondrous and beautiful place: "And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away" (Rev. 21:4).
3. Those tainted by sin will not be permitted to enter: "And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev. 21:27).
4. Heaven is an eternal place: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).

III. **CONCLUSION.**

A. No one has reason to consider us an enemy when we tell them the truth.

1. Our motive is pure: we sincerely want to help them.
2. Our aim is sincere: to tell them only the truth.
3. Our desire is true: we want them to enjoy God's blessings.
4. Our effort is intended for their good: we want them to avoid hell and to enter heaven.

B. Galatians 4:16: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?"

1. Our greatest friend will point out our sins and weaknesses.
 2. Our greatest friend will tell us the whole truth.
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Attitude Toward the Truth

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. God requires that our whole hearts be directly and fully involved in our relationship with him.

1. With human religions and politics, one can usually get by with outward service.
2. The Lord requires whole commitment.
 - a. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - b. Matthew 12:30: "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."
 - c. Mark 12:30: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment."
 - d. Luke 9:23: "And he said to *them* all, If any *man* will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."
 - e. Luke 13:24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate: for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able."
 - f. Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."

B. What should be our attitude toward God's truth?

1. The Bible is filled with strong statements and commands which require us to love the truth.
2. In the sectarian world, lipservice is paid to the truth and love for the truth; it is easy to claim to love the truth, but it is another matter to demonstrate that love. If one truly loves the truth:
 - a. He will believe the truth.
 - b. He will be obedient to the truth.
 - c. He will follow the truth in his life.
 - d. He will teach only the truth.
 - e. He will defend the truth.
 - f. God's truth will be preeminent in his thinking: Never would he willingly violate it!
3. In our great brotherhood, there are many who love a good presentation of the truth.
 - a. This is the right attitude. It is both commendable and right.
 - b. It is the truth that is being presented; one who loves the truth will rejoice whenever the truth is presented. If the presentation is clear, the audience will be able to understand the truth better; if the presentation is striking and emphatic, the audience will be more apt to be moved to act.
4. Even when the preacher or teacher has the wrong motive or attitude in the presentation, if the truth is presented, good can still be accomplished.
 - a. Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper *in the thing* whereto I sent it."
 - b. Philippians 1:14-18: "And many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear. Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: But the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the gospel. What then? notwithstanding, every way, whether in pretence, or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea, and will rejoice."
 - c. The one who presents the truth from the wrong motive or with the wrong attitude will not be benefitted because of that motivation, but the audience can be helped in their understanding.
5. If one loves the truth, he will not be concerned with the appearance or the presentation of the speaker.
 - a. The preacher might be poorly educated and use bad grammar. But if he presents the truth, we will rejoice that the truth is presented—if we love the truth.
 - b. The preacher's appearance might not be up to our standards of dress or looks; he might be poorly

dressed or even homely in appearance—these will be of concern only to those who do not love the truth.

6. One can love a good presentation of the truth, but have little or no love for the truth. There is a great difference between loving the truth and loving a good presentation of the truth. A good presentation of the truth centers on the talent and learning of the speaker.
 - a. Love for the truth will always be present without regard to the presentation—whether well-done or poorly-done.
 - b. There are situations and lessons found in the Bible which illustrate this important subject.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Ezekiel 33:30-33.

1. Verses 30-33: "Also, thou son of man, the children of thy people still are talking against thee by the walls and in the doors of the houses, and speak one to another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what is the word that cometh forth from the LORD. And they come unto thee as the people cometh, and they sit before thee *as* my people, and they hear thy words, but they will not do them: for with their mouth they show much love, *but* their heart goeth after their covetousness. And, lo, thou *art* unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not. And when this cometh to pass, (lo, it will come,) then shall they know that a prophet hath been among them."
2. The Lord warned Ezekiel, when he called him to prophesy to the Israelites who were in Babylonian confinement, that his work would not be easy: "And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, *even* unto this very day. For *they are* impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they *are* a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them. And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns *be* with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they *be* a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they *are* most rebellious. But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee" (Ezek. 2:3-8). It seems mighty strange to us how they could still be rebellious after the awful experiences of the Babylonian invasion of Palestine; many had been slain and others had been taken to Babylon; there were many who were still back home.
3. The Lord told Ezekiel in our text (33:30-33) that they would begin to conspire against him, since they could not refute his word and would not obey what he revealed. The indictment was against some of the present exiles in Babylonia.
4. Outwardly, they would be believers, but they were neither sincere nor committed to the truth. They are pictured as conspiring against Ezekiel, whispering behind his back among themselves to his hurt, thinking they could avoid any repercussions from Jehovah. Faithful prophets then and loyal gospel preachers now are often opposed by those who reject the truth; since they cannot refute the truth, they must resort to attacking the proclaimer and his character. All such efforts, although oftentimes successful in the short run, will inevitably fail in the Judgment.
 - a. John 12:48: "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day."
 - b. Romans 2:16: "In the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ according to my gospel."
 - c. Romans 14:10-12: "...for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 - d. 2 Corinthians 5:10: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad."

5. From all discernable indicators, these people were serious in the accolades they heaped upon the prophet. His words were like a beautiful song, or the pleasant sound of an accomplished musician. They heaped praises upon him for the message he spoke, but their hearts were not attuned to obeying the demands made on them by the message. Outwardly, they were appreciative of what he said, but they would not allow the truth to have any effect on their hearts and lives. Preachers and teachers today find their messages often meet with the approval of their audiences, but there is no change in the way the individuals live. They enjoyed Ezekiel's delivery, but disliked his message.
 6. They spoke of their love for him, but their hearts were filled with covetousness. Covetousness (or *Mammon*, Mt. 6:24) is the direct enemy of God. Their greatest desires were earthly; they only paid lipservice to the heavenly.
 7. **Lesson:** It is one thing to love a good presentation of the truth; it is quite another to love the truth. Let us be sure that we cultivate in our hearts a sincere love for the truth, and be little concerned about the mechanical means of its presentation. One who merely loves a good presentation might enjoy the presentation of gross error as much as a presentation of the truth. Our interests must focus on the message rather than the way it is displayed.
- B. Acts 17:16-21.
1. "Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him. Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection. And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)."
 2. While Paul waited in Athens for Silas and Timothy, his spirit was stirred in him when he beheld how widespread idolatry was practiced in this *intellectual center*. As Jerusalem was the great center of divine revelation, so Athens was the center of human philosophy. The relative value of each is seen by considering the morality of the two peoples involved. Jerusalem was free of idolatry, and its people generally of a high moral character; Athens was filled with idol worship, fornication, and most of the moral ills of the pagan world (cf. Rom. 1:18-32).
 - a. We cannot imagine, given our background and experience, the awful sinful conduct that was acceptable to the people of Athens, and other such pagan cities. Suicide, infanticide, fornication, idolatry, homosexuality, political persecution, etc., were common. Biblical morality was the exception. No wonder Paul was so stirred over what he saw!
 - b. It was no exaggeration that Athens was wholly given to idolatry. "Pretonius satirically said it was easier to find a god than a man in Athens; Zenophon calls the city one great altar, one great offering to the gods" (Boles, *Commentary on Acts*, p.276).
 3. "Therefore disputed he in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him" (Verse 17).
 - a. Paul reasoned with the Jews in their synagogue. The word translated *disputed* is *reasoned* in the ASV, and means: "to think different things with oneself, to ponder, then, to dispute with others, is translated to reason in Acts 17:2..." (Vine, Vol. 3, p.252). When religious truth is presented, a simple discussion often grows into a dispute. There were other devout persons present who were doubtless the Gentile proselytes. The apostle continued his discussions with those who met with him daily in the marketplace (1 Cor. 1:21; Rom. 1:16-32).
 - b. There is no mention made here of any success the apostle had from these discussions with the Jews and others. A great clash of ideology is imminent, between the human wisdom which the Grecians had cultivated and the divine revelation which had come from God. The ultimate outcome of the conflict may be seen by the ruins of Athens and the continuing presence of the glorious gospel!

4. "Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection" (Verse 18).
 - a. Paul was met by some of the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers. Some referred to Paul as a babbler, and others said he seemed to be setting forth strange gods. "Babbler" is from the Greek word *spermo-logos*, used primarily as an adjective, but it came to be used as a noun signifying a crow or some other bird, picking up seeds (*sperma*—a seed; *lego*—to collect). "Metaphorically it became used of a man who picks up scraps of information and retails them secondhand, a plagiarist, or of those who make a show, in unscientific style, of knowledge obtained from misunderstanding lectures (Vine, Vol. 1, p.93).
 - 1) The Epicureans were named after Epicurus (342-270 B.C.) who founded this system. They thought the universe was the result of accidental combination of atoms—no supernatural source was involved. They believed in *gods*, but these were mere phantoms. There was nothing in the universe, seen or unseen, which should disturb a man. Their greatest aim was to gratify their every desire—to do by diligent effort what animals do instinctively. Their philosophy led many of the adherents into the practice of the vilest kinds of immorality, sensuality, and crime. Its mildest effect was to promote a life of extreme selfishness.
 - 2) The Stoics thought God was the soul of the world—the world was God. They believed that everything was governed by fate; they denied the immortality of the soul. In their view, virtue was its own reward and vice its own punishment—that pleasure was not good and pain was not evil.
 - b. The philosophies of these two groups were at odds with the basic tenets of the gospel. Neither of the two systems saw any need of a Savior and the resurrection did not fit their views. The Stoic was indifferent to the circumstances of life, and the Epicurean did not want his selfish desires restrained.
 5. "And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*? For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean. (For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing)" (Verses 19-21).
 - a. These philosophers took hold of Paul and brought him to Areopagus, demanding that he present before them all this new doctrine. This place to which they escorted him was known as "Mars' Hill." [Mythology had it that it was here that Mars (the god of war) was executed for murdering the son of Poseidon].
 - b. The great orators, politicians, and philosophers assembled at this place to discuss and debate their various philosophies. Paul did not quail before this august gathering; it afforded him an excellent opportunity to discourse upon the greatest theme of the ages, Jesus Christ and him crucified.
 - c. The interest the philosophers had in the doctrine Paul preached was only a surface curiosity—it was only a new and different idea that amused them momentarily. Luke informs us in the parenthetical statement of verse 21 that this was the basic characteristic of the Athenians—to tell or learn some new thing. This trait has not died out, for many Americans are interested in those doctrines that are new and sensational. This explains the success of the Millennialists, "miracle workers," and others who deny or pervert plain Bible truths to their own selfish ends.
 6. **Lesson:** Let us cultivate a genuine love for the truth, and have little interest in those subjects which are only faddish in their nature, and have nothing to do with the salvation of the soul. Oratory is easy to hear, but the greatest good to be obtained from a religious presentation is the truth that is taught.
- C. Philippians 3:17-21.
1. "Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample" (Verse 17).
 - a. Paul directs the saints to follow his example, and to mark those who do not walk according to the truth. His statement here is not of his own invention; rather, he is writing by inspiration. The Holy

- Spirit knew that his life was worthy of imitating, thus used it as an example.
- 1) 2 Thessalonians 3:7-9: "For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves disorderly among you; Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you: Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us."
 - 2) Instruction guides us into the right way; a proper example illustrates that way. Every faithful Christian is to be an example of Christianity. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).
 - 3) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
- b. For the good of the gospel and precious souls, we are commanded to mark and avoid those who teach error. "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple" (Rom. 16:17-18).
2. "For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things" (Verses 18-19).
- a. Paul had frequently warned the brethren about false teachers. In this parenthetical statement, he issues another reminder of these enemies of Christ. To describe these wayward brethren was painful to the apostle. When we expose error or sin, we must do so with a grieving heart, not with any gladness. Sin and error mean that the precious souls involved are lost.
- 1) 2 Peter 2:20-22: "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire."
 - 2) Jude 4: "For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - 3) Jude 8-10: "Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves."
- b. One who leads another astray into sin or religious error is not a friend to the gospel of Christ; such a one is a grievous enemy, not only of truth but of the immortal souls of those who are deceived by him. There are always some, within the church and on the outside, who follow this evil practice.
- 1) Some of these are deceived themselves, and others knowingly deceive the unsuspecting. In other words, some are sincere in their error and sin, while some are fully aware they teach and practice error and sin.
 - 2) Generally, false teachers and sinners are primarily concerned about material matters. Fulfilling the lusts of the flesh is of paramount importance to them. Errorists such as premillennialists

- and Pentecostals place great emphasis on earthly concerns (e.g., an earthly kingdom; physical healings).
- 3) The end of those who follow sin or error is perdition (destruction). They live in disobedience in this life, and hence their reward is only that which may be gleaned from this world. They serve their own belly (satisfying fleshly lusts—1 John 2:15-17), thus are not interested in serving the will of God.
- c. The things in which these errorists glory bring only shame to them. Instead of serving spiritual concerns, they are filled with earthly things.
- 1) Matthew 6:24: "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon."
 - 2) Romans 8:5-8: "For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace. Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God."
 - 3) 1 John 2:15-16: "Love not the world, neither the things *that are* in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world."
- d. The very fact that there are so many warnings in the Scriptures against sin and error is proof that the Bible is the absolute standard of truth. And there are many such warnings.
- 1) Matthew 7:15-20: "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them."
 - 2) Acts 20:29-31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:1-5: "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."
- e. We are not left defenseless against such people.
- 1) Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - 2) Acts 17:11: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."
 - 3) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - 4) 1 John 4:1: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world."
 - 5) 2 Corinthians 10:4-5: "For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God

to the pulling down of strong holds; Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

3. **Lesson:** Let us be resolved to follow the truth, despite the pleasing presentations given by the false teachers or the apparent strength of their surroundings. Truth is all-important to the soul; truth will ultimately prevail; it is to our advantage to cultivate and maintain a strong, vibrant love for the truth.

D. 2 Corinthians 10:7-10: Paul and His Enemies.

1. "Do ye look on things after the outward appearance? If any man trust to himself that he is Christ's, let him of himself think this again, that, as he *is* Christ's, even so *are* we Christ's. For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed" (Verses 7-8).
 - a. He asks whether they passed judgment on how things appeared on the outside. Anyone with even a little experience in life should know that things are not always as they appear to be. Each observant person who has lived several years could give scores of examples. "Judge not according to the appearance, but judge righteous judgment" (John 7:24).
 - 1) Without considering the whole story, it might have appeared to some in Corinth that Paul was weak when he was present but wrote strong letters when he was absent. He is asking them here to examine all the evidence before making a rash or shallow judgment.
 - 2) When he was present with them, he exhibited the spirit of Christ; this is what the Lord requires of every follower. Paul demonstrated for his own good and for their emulation the kind of disposition that every Christian is to develop, and practice sincerely. However, when sin or error challenges the truth, God's people are to be strong and courageous in opposing it. Our Lord was not being inconsistent when he showed love and kindness to many, but was as a lion when he exposed sin and error (Matt. 23). He was (and is) the Lamb of God (Rev. 13:8) and the Lion of the Tribe of Judah (Rev. 5:5). Both of these features are to characterize Christians.
 - 3) The false teachers who opposed Paul claimed to belong to Christ; their claims rested only on their assertions. Paul can make the same assertion, and does so here. The mere outward claim to be a Christian does not prove the contention. If the claim to righteousness is verified only by assertion, then Paul's opponents have not proved their allegation, of their own righteousness or of Paul's supposed unrighteousness. "But the LORD said unto Samuel, Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; because I have refused him: for *the LORD seeth* not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7).
 - b. Paul's authority, including the power to perform those supernatural works which only an apostle could do (2 Cor. 12:11-13), had been amply demonstrated in fact; he had proved the reality of his authority by the arguments he had set forth; the miracles he wrought proved irrefutably that he was a real apostle of Christ. But he could say much more concerning this authority.
 - 1) He was given this apostolic authority and power for the edification of men, not to bring about their destruction. An apostle's authority was the greatest on earth given to men; if he were to boast to the most extreme degree, his boasting would not have surpassed the glory of his authority. Whatever authority the false teachers at Corinth claimed to have had, it was nothing in comparison to that employed by any of Christ's apostles!
 - 2) Paul is not to be understood as exalting himself by this argumentation; rather, he is showing the false teachers that their charges against him were empty. When he directly identified the awesome power he was enabled to exercise, he stated plainly that he was not behind any of the apostles in authority, and then added, "though I be nothing" (2 Cor. 12:11).
2. "That I may not seem as if I would terrify you by letters. For *his* letters, say they, *are* weighty and powerful; but *his* bodily presence *is* weak, and *his* speech contemptible" (Verses 9-10).
 - a. Paul did not write to strike terror in the hearts of his faithful readers. He had no such reservations with respect to the false apostles at Corinth (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

- b. Uninformed men usually place great emphasis on outward appearances with respect to gospel preachers. As long as the man looks and sounds good in the pulpit, he is a good preacher. This attitude was especially true with the pagan Greeks. One who was a great orator was sure to be well-received by both the Greeks and the Romans.
- 1) Corinth was part of the Grecian entity. The city was a commercial crossroads of the ancient world, and was influenced by many worldly factors. Chiefly, the Corinthians were Grecian in fact and in disposition. What is in the world will eventually make its way into the church, for there are many who obey the outward forms of the gospel without being converted, and many who are converted do not grow to spiritual maturity but return to the world in life. To the extent of the influence of these weak members, the local church is contaminated.
 - 2) Paul's enemies, the false teachers at Corinth, asserted that his physical presence was weak; this was their view of his private and public presence. Furthermore, his speech-making was contemptible. In their perverted view of gospel preachers and preaching, they thought the point of emphasis was the delivery and presence; the message was not the primary matter to these weak people.
 - 3) The Great Commission, however, does not say that we are to go into all the world and deliver orations; neither does it require preachers to exude personality and presence! It is the gospel that brings salvation, not the speech-making ability of the preacher.
 - a) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - b) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - c) Hebrews 4:12: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
 - d) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
 - c. Paul was willing to admit being "rude in speech," but he was absolutely sure concerning the knowledge he possessed. "But though *I be* rude in speech, yet not in knowledge; but we have been thoroughly made manifest among you in all things" (2 Cor. 11:6).
 - d. **Lesson:** An enemy of the truth can never be made to respect and love the gospel preacher who exposes his sin and error. Preachers of the gospel must be able to recognize the difference between a false charge from an enemy of the truth and a charge of sin or error levied against us by a concerned fellow saint.

E. The importance of having the truth.

1. The truth makes us free: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32).
2. The truth converts: "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple" (Ps 19:7).
3. The truth purifies.
 - a. 1 Peter 1:22: "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently."
 - b. 1 John 1:7: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
4. The truth furnishes all our needs.
 - a. 2 Timothy 3:16-17: "All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

- b. 2 Peter 1:3: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue."
 5. A serious penalty is brought against those who pervert the truth: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed" (Gal. 1:6-9).
 6. Christ's attitude toward error: "Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men. For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death: But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* Corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do ought for his father or his mother; Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye" (Mark 7:7-13).
- F. We should never be offended at the truth.
1. God's word is his representative.
 - a. John 8:47: "He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear *them* not, because ye are not of God."
 - b. John 16:15: "All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall show *it* unto you."
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:18-20: "And all things *are* of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech *you* by us: we pray *you* in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God."
 2. To receive the truth is to receive God.
 - a. Matthew 10:40: "He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me."
 - b. Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 3. To reject truth is to reject salvation: "And if any man hear my words, and believe not, I judge him not: for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day. For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. And I know that his commandment is life everlasting: whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto me, so I speak" (John 12:47-50).
 4. The Galatians were offended at correction, even though it was intended for their good: "Am I therefore become your enemy, because I tell you the truth?" (Gal. 4:16).
 5. Some were offended at Jesus: "Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" (Matt 15:12-14).
- G. To love the truth is to love God.
1. Love is demonstrated in obedience:
 - a. John 14:15: "If ye love me, keep my commandments."
 - b. John 14:21: "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him."

- c. John 14:23-24: "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."
- d. 1 John 2:3-4: "And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him."
- e. 1 John 5:3: "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
2. A failure to love the truth brings condemnation: "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness" (2 The. 2:10-12).
3. Therefore, we must receive truth without prejudice.
 - a. The wayside hearer was not receptive: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them....When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Matt. 13:14-15,19).
 - b. The good ground hearer was receptive: "But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty" (Matt. 13:23).
 - c. We must open the door of our heart to receive the truth: "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; Even the righteousness of God *which is* by faith of Jesus Christ unto all and upon all them that believe: for there is no difference: For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:20-22).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. We must believe and obey the truth.

1. Obedience makes us acceptable:
 - a. Acts 10:34-35: "Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons: But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."
 - b. Hebrews 5:9: "And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him."
2. The demands of the Scripture: "For Moses truly said unto the fathers, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear in all things whatsoever he shall say unto you. And it shall come to pass, *that* every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:22-23).
3. Grace alone is insufficient.
 - a. Ephesians 2:8-9: "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: *It is* the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."
 - b. Philippians 2:12: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."

4. Faith alone insufficient: "Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone....Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only....For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also" (Jas. 2:17,24,26).
- B. Every person should examine his heart.
1. Every saint and every sinner must do so.
 2. Proverbs 23:23: "Buy the truth, and sell *it* not; *also* wisdom, and instruction, and understanding."
 3. What is our disposition of mind toward truth? Receptive? Indifferent? Oppose it?
- C. Knowing the terror of God, we persuade men.
1. Romans 14:10-12: "But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, *As* I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God."
 2. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11: "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things *done* in *his* body, according to that he hath done, whether *it be* good or bad. Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are made manifest unto God; and I trust also are made manifest in your consciences."
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GOSPEL PREACHERS

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. This Study Focuses on the Bible's Teachings on the Qualification and Work of Gospel Preachers.

1. The purpose is to better acquaint each of us with what God expects from preachers of the gospel and to see the qualifications which God has set for them.
2. These are important matters, for no preacher can please God unless he knows what God demands of him; and Christians might demand the wrong thing from preachers if they do not know what God requires.
3. Most people do not understand what the work of a preacher is. This subject, as many other Bible topics, has been misunderstood and abused so much by sectarianism and some brethren so that it has become a mystery to many.
 - a. The average person thinks of a preacher as a denominational *pastor*, a *do-gooder*, a *personality* who spends his time attending morning *coffees* and afternoon *teas*, and whose most serious duty is visiting the sick.
 - b. Gospel preachers are looked on with reverence by some and in disdain by others; neither is right. Gospel preachers are neither to be revered nor held in contempt.
4. A gospel preacher is one who proclaims the gospel, that body of truths, commands, and promises by which God saves the souls of the lost. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:16-17).

B. A Gospel Preacher is an Evangelist (*euaggelistas*).

1. The term means: "A bringer of good tidings, an evangelist. The name is given in the New Testament to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles" (Thayer, p.257).
2. The term refers specifically to an office or work which is separate from that of elders and deacons (Eph. 4:11). Philip was called an "evangelist" (Acts 21:8). What was his function? What did he do?
3. Timothy was told to do the work of an evangelist, for that was his work (2 Tim. 4:5).
4. There is a special work for which evangelists (gospel preachers) are qualified and set apart to do. The work of a preacher is separate from other works, even as elders have their special work and deacons are assigned their special work. Elders are to oversee the flock; deacons are to serve the flock; and preachers are to preach the word (publicly and privately as opportunities arise).

II. DISCUSSION.

A. There are Certain Specific Misconceptions that Most People have Concerning Evangelists.

1. Some think that an evangelist and a gospel preacher have different works; that the evangelist is an evangelist only if he travels from place-to-place, having no local base of operations. However, by definition, an evangelist is one who brings good tidings (the gospel); this is done even when he works only in a local area. The local preacher brings the gospel to those in his local area who will give ear. One does not have to be constantly traveling in order to be an evangelist.
2. Most people in the sectarian world have the idea that a preacher must receive a special, direct call from God before he is eligible to be a preacher.
 - a. God did call certain men miraculously during the day of miracles to become prophets. He does not do so now. No one on earth today can prove that he has received a miraculous call!
 - b. Where is the verse that says that anyone today must receive such a call before he is qualified to preach? The same gospel that calls one to become a child of God also calls on us to preach the gospel.
 - c. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-15: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the

- obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore, brethren, stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle."
- d. Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - e. Acts 8:4: "Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word."
3. Increasingly, many are asserting the right for women to preach the gospel publicly. But in his wisdom, God determined that those who preach or teach the gospel publicly must be men; women are not permitted to do so.
- a. 1 Corinthians 14:34-35: "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but *they are commanded* to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church."
 - b. 1 Timothy 2:8-15: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; But (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety."
4. Some think that a gospel preacher must have a college degree before he is qualified to serve in that capacity. Just because one owns some degree does not insure that he either knows or lives the gospel, or has any ability to preach it. The absence of a degree guarantees nothing either.
- a. A preacher should get as much formal education as he is able to acquire, but it is far more important that he know the Book of God!
 - b. The apostles were unlearned and ignorant men (Acts 4:13), but they possessed a knowledge of God's word and had the courage to proclaim it fully. Of necessity, they obtained their knowledge by miraculous revelation; we can obtain our knowledge only by diligent, unceasing study of the Scriptures.
 - c. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
 - d. 2 Peter 3:18: "But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen."
5. Many think that the preacher must be a *good mixer*, having polished *social skills*. Knowing the Bible and being able to teach it are often considered unimportant as long as social visits are made.
- a. The Lord placed the emphasis on knowledge and belief of the word. Luke 10:38-42; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 20:17-35; 1 Timothy 4:6-16.
 - b. Every Christian (including preachers) is to talk privately to the alien sinner and the erring saint. Matthew 5:13-16; Acts 8:4; 18:24-26.
 - c. A preacher visits the sick, teaches the lost, worships God, and studies the Bible because he is a Christian, not merely because he is a preacher.
 - d. In order to preach and teach the word, he must spend many hours in study each week. There is no other way that he can keep the Scriptures alive in his mind and life, and help others to do the same.
6. There are many who mistakenly think the preacher is the *pastor* of the congregation he serves.
- a. The oversight and direction of the congregation has been given to the elders (who are also called *bishops, pastors, overseers*); these men meet special qualifications (1 Tim. 3; Tit. 1) which prepare them for this demanding work. The preacher works under the oversight and authority of
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these men. Their authority is restricted to matters of expedience; they see that God's work is done, but they cannot change God's will. Acts 20:28; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4. See Acts 20:17,28 and Titus 1:5,7 for proof that elders are the bishops and pastors.

- b. In the case of a congregation which has no elders, the preacher is just "one of the flock." He possesses no greater authority or responsibility in the affairs of the congregation than any of the other men. The only logical and scriptural way such a church can function is by the men meeting together to decide on matters of expediency.
 - c. The preacher is an important part of any congregation, but he is not to replace the elders or the deacons.
 - d. The preacher is not to be the center of attention; he is not to be the power to attract outsiders. Too often, when we think of a congregation, our minds automatically focus on the preacher, instead of Christ. The power to draw men to Christ is not the preacher or some other human personality; it is the gospel of Christ!
 - 1) John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - 2) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 3) Hebrews 4:12-13: "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do."
 - 4) James 1:21: "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."
7. Again, a preacher visits the sick, talks to the lost, worships God, and studies the Bible because he is a Christian, not merely because he is a preacher. In order to preach and teach the word, he must spend many hours in preparation and study each week. There is no other way that he can keep the Scriptures alive in his mind and life, and help others to do the same.

B. Gospel Preachers Derive Their Commission from Christ.

1. It is not man who sets the standards to which preachers are to be held accountable: "For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ" (Gal. 1:10).
 - a. Christ has set the standard by which gospel preachers operate; it is he that must be pleased.
 - 1) 2 Timothy 2:2: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 4:1-2: "I charge *thee* therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom; Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
 - b. Gospel preachers must give themselves wholly to the Lord's cause, being willing to suffer whatever hardship that dedicated service entails.
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:13-16: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 2) 2 Timothy 2:3: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."

- 3) 2 Timothy 4:5: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."
 - c. In small, struggling congregations, the local preacher must many times spend precious time tending to details; this cannot always be helped; thus, much time is spent on incidentals that could be better devoted to greater matters.
 - d. Unless there are others who are able and willing to aid, the preacher's primary work will suffer. Nevertheless, the preacher is also a Christian, and he bears as much responsibility to perform his Christian duties as every other Christian must.
 - e. Therefore, preachers will very often furnish transportation to people who need to visit a doctor, repair some item in a widow's house which she cannot afford to hire someone to do, check on someone's property while they are away, provide food and clothing to the needy, and hundreds of other such activities.
 - f. These things he does gladly! It is his **Christian** duty! If he refused to do them, he would be committing sin (Jas. 4:17; Matt. 25:31-46). Christ gave him his Christian duties just as he gave them to all Christians. The Judgment scene of Matthew 25 includes every follower of Christ!
 2. The gospel preacher's primary obligation in his work is to Christ; it is to his Lord he must answer if he fails to preach the gospel, publicly and privately, to the best of his ability and opportunity; he must proclaim the whole counsel of God, not just the parts that please him or his audience.
- C. The Bible Gives Several Qualifications Which a Gospel Preacher Must Meet.
1. Remember, that these qualifications came from Christ; they did not originate with the preacher or with any other human. These are traits and activities which came from God. They cannot be amended or ignored. The following are qualifications and requirements imposed on every gospel preacher.
 2. He must keep himself pure:
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 5:22: "Lay hands suddenly on no man, neither be partaker of other men's sins: keep thyself pure."
 - b. His life must be free from any practice of sin:
 - 1) 1 Thessalonians 5:21: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."
 - 2) Titus 2:8: "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."
 - c. He must be free from the blood of others by preaching God's entire message: "Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:26-27).
 3. He must be unashamed of the gospel:
 - a. Romans 1:16: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."
 - b. 2 Timothy 1:8: "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner: but be thou partaker of the afflictions of the gospel according to the power of God."
 4. He must be able to teach the gospel so as to make others understand it: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).
 5. He must be able to discern character and faithfulness in others: "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also" (2 Tim. 2:2).
 6. He must be willing to suffer for the Lord:
 - a. 1 Timothy 1:18: "This charge I commit unto thee, son Timothy, according to the prophecies which went before on thee, that thou by them mightest war a good warfare."
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:12: "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also
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- called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses."
- c. 2 Timothy 2:3: "Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ."
7. He must have sufficient wisdom to refrain from worldly affairs that would hinder him in his God-given work:
- a. 1 Timothy 6:11: "But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness."
- b. 2 Timothy 2:4: "No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of *this* life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier."
8. He must be diligent to study and properly apply God's word (2 Tim. 2:15). This familiar passage was given directly to preachers! (1 Tim. 4:13). Since every Christian needs to know God's will, we all must study.
- a. 1 Timothy 4:13: "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine."
- b. 2 Timothy 2:15: "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."
9. He must not be contentious (quarrelsome) over matters of opinion: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all *men*, apt to teach, patient" (2 Tim. 2:24).
10. He must keep his life in harmony with the gospel:
- a. 2 Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."
- b. Titus 2:8: "Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you."
- c. Titus 3:8: "*This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men."
11. He must be gentle toward all sincere people (2 Tim. 2:24), but strong toward false teachers and their evil product.
- a. Titus 1:13: "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."
- b. Titus 2:15: "These things speak, and exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no man despise thee."
- c. Titus 3:10-11: "A man that is an heretic after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."
12. He must be willing and able to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with God's word:
- a. 1 Timothy 5:20: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear."
- b. 2 Timothy 4:2: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."
- c. He has no right to reprove anyone in matters of opinion.
- d. He has authority and responsibility to reprove, rebuke, and exhort in matters of truth.
- e. His work of preaching is to be done by teaching; a process which may take a long time.
- f. His work of preaching is to be done with patience (longsuffering). Time and seasoning are necessary for men to learn their duties and to grow spiritually. We must be patient.
13. He must be willing and able to do the work of an evangelist: "I charge *thee* in the sight of God, and of Christ Jesus, who shall judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be urgent in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure the sound doctrine; but, having itching ears, will heap to themselves teachers after their own lusts; and will turn away their ears from the truth, and turn aside unto fables. But be thou sober in all things, suffer hardship, do the work of an evangelist, fulfil thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:1-5, ASV).
14. He must be an example of believers (1 Tim. 4:12). This familiar verse was first given to preachers;

it applies to every Christian since no one has the right to live in rebellion to the moral and spiritual standard of the gospel. "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity" (1 Tim. 4:12).

15. He must be sincere: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus 2:7).
16. He must be sound in doctrine:
 - a. 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:20: "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called."
 - c. Titus 2:7: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity."
17. He must be serious-minded: "In all things showing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine *showing* uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity" (Titus. 2:7).

D. The Duties of a Gospel Preacher.

1. To train himself and other Christians how to behave as children of God: "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:14-15).
2. To remind brethren of the truths of the gospel:
 - a. 1 Timothy 4:6: "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."
 - b. 1 Timothy 4:16: "Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee."
 - c. 2 Timothy 3:14: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned *them*."
3. To indoctrinate the members in God's word:
 - a. Titus 1:13: "This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith."
 - b. Titus 2:1-5: "But speak thou the things which become sound doctrine: That the aged men be sober, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity, in patience. The aged women likewise, that *they be* in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed."
4. To warn against apostasy:
 - a. Acts 20:29-31: "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears."
 - b. 1 Timothy 1:3: "As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine."
 - c. 1 Timothy 4:1-6: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, *and commanding* to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth. For every creature of God *is* good, and nothing to be refused, if it be received with thanksgiving: For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer. If thou put the brethren in

- remembrance of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished up in the words of faith and of good doctrine, whereunto thou hast attained."
- d. 1 Timothy 4:14-15: "Neglect not the gift that is in thee, which was given thee by prophecy, with the laying on of the hands of the presbytery. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all."
 - e. 1 Timothy 6:4-5: "He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."
5. To charge the rich concerning their wealth: "I give thee charge in the sight of God, who quickeneth all things, and *before* Christ Jesus, who before Pontius Pilate witnessed a good confession; That thou keep *this* commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ: Which in his times he shall show, *who is* the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; Who only hath immortality, dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen, nor can see: to whom *be* honour and power everlasting. Amen. Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; That they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate" (1 Tim. 6:13-18).
 6. To reprove, rebuke, and exhort the church: "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Tim. 4:2).
 - a. Reprove: "Convince, refute, confute, convict, bring to light, to expose, find fault with, correct, reprehend severely, chide, admonish, to call to account, show one his fault, chasten, punish" (Thayer, on *elegcho*).
 - b. Rebuke: "To tax with fault, rate, chide, reprove, censure severely; admonish or charge sharply" (Thayer on *epitamao*).
 - c. Exhort: "To incite by words or advice; to advise or warn earnestly" (Thayer on *parakaleo*).
 7. To expose sin without partiality: "Them that sin rebuke before all, that others also may fear. I charge *thee* before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (1 Tim. 5:20-21).
 8. To edify the church by preaching the whole counsel of God: "And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the church. And when they were come to him, he said unto them, Ye know, from the first day that I came into Asia, after what manner I have been with you at all seasons, Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews: *And* how I kept back nothing that was profitable *unto you*, but have showed you, and have taught you publicly, and from house to house, Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. And now, behold, I go bound in the spirit unto Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: Save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me. But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. And now, behold, I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more. Wherefore I take you to record this day, that I *am* pure from the blood of all *men*. For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified" (Acts 17:17-32).

9. To hold the pattern of sound words:
 - a. 1 Timothy 1:10: "For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."
 - b. 1 Timothy 6:3: "If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness."
 - c. 2 Timothy 1:13: "Hold fast the form of sound words, which thou hast heard of me, in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus."
10. To Christian servants and masters how to deal with each other in the work place: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and *his* doctrine be not blasphemed. And they that have believing masters, let them not despise *them*, because they are brethren; but rather do *them* service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort" (1 Tim. 6:1-2).
11. To reject profane and old wives' fables: "But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise thyself *rather* unto godliness" (1 Tim. 4:7).
12. To be watchful in all things: "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:5).
13. To give themselves wholly to the truth: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15).
14. To maintain good works, doing his duty as a Christian and as a preacher: "*This is* a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men" (Titus 3:8).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Gospel Preachers and Gospel Preaching Have Fallen into Disrepute in Our World.

1. The church has become so worldly in our time that young men are strongly discouraged from committing their lives to preaching the gospel; consequently, many of our brightest people pursue their life's work in secular fields where job security and wealth are to be found.
2. Many in the church speak evil of preachers and their work, leaving the impression that preachers are after money and that their work is unimportant. Liberal churches emphasize singing and other activities in their worship, and relegate preaching to only a brief talk; and such preaching as is done is not a proclamation of the gospel, but the telling of sweet little stories and human psychology. When the people hear a genuine gospel sermon, they are shocked and even angered!
3. The preacher in today's church is often expected to be an expert as an administrator, organizer, promoter, social specialist, marriage counsellor, priest, teacher, song leader, and preacher. In what other work would an individual be expected to be an expert in such an assortment of duties? If the preacher does not measure up to these human standards, he is an outcast.

B. There is No Greater Work in the World Than That of a Gospel Preacher.

1. The only work that compares favorably is that of elders.
2. Gospel preaching is a way of life; he must be totally committed to the work: "Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (1 Tim. 4:15).
 - a. A preacher never reaches the level where he no longer needs to study.
 - b. A preacher cannot punch a time-clock and go home, leaving his work at the office.
 - c. A preacher's time belongs to his Master, and to those whom he seeks to serve.
3. Gospel preachers spend their lives in learning and teaching God's soul-saving word! Alien sinners are shown the way of salvation, and urged to obey. Saints are taught their duty, preparing them for eternity. Christians are also shown their blessings, thus urging them on to faithfulness and heaven.

SEVEN ATTRIBUTES OF SAINTHOOD

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. There are certain qualities, characteristics, and traits required of those in the military.

1. They must know how to dress, to salute, to speak, and to use a weapon.
2. These are some of the requirements demanded of all; some are naturally more advanced than others.

B. There are certain qualities, characteristics, and traits required of those in Christ's church.

1. These basic traits are summed up in the Beatitudes: "Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled. Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God. Blessed *are* the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you" (Mt. 5:3-12).
2. Others are stated in other passages, including Romans 12:12-14: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; Distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not."

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Rejoice in hope.

1. Rejoice does not mean "kicking up our heels, shouting, and raving."
2. To rejoice is to be happy, contented, and reconciled to life.
 - a. Philippians 4:4: "Rejoice in the Lord alway: *and* again I say, Rejoice."
 - b. Philippians 4:11: "Not that I speak in respect of want: for I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, *therewith* to be content."
 - c. Philippians 4:13: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."
 - d. Philippians 4:19: "But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
3. We rejoice because of our blessings and hope:
 - a. Romans 8:17-18: "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with *him*, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - b. 1 Peter 1:3-5: "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time."
 - c. 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
4. We rejoice because we have nothing to fear:
 - a. Matthew 10:28: "And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell."
 - b. 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind."

B. Patient in tribulation.

1. They had overt, physical persecution then—they especially needed this truth: "My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations; Knowing *this*, that the trying of your faith worketh patience" (Jas. 1:2-3).
 2. To be patient is to be steadfast, enduring—to remain faithful despite our outward ordeals.
 3. To be patient in tribulation, we need the dedication that is produced by strong faith.
 4. We have very little physical persecution today, but false teachers and evil people assail our faith and oppose our work—the offer powerful opposition. "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution" (2 Tim. 3:12).
 5. We are given good reason to remain steadfast and enduring.
 - a. Hebrews 12:1-15: "Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of *our* faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live? For they verily for a few days chastened *us* after their own pleasure; but he for *our* profit, that *we* might be partakers of his holiness. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees; And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed. Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord: Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble *you*, and thereby many be defiled."
 - b. 2 Peter 1:3-12: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know *them*, and be established in the present truth."
- C. Continuing instant in prayer.
1. In peace or persecution, this injunction remains in effect; it protects and aids us in every case.
 2. To be instant in prayer is equal to the injunction to pray without ceasing:
 - a. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
 - b. Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
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- c. 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
3. A spiritually-mature, loyal saint prays with regularity and fervency.
 - a. Psalms 42:1-2: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?"
 - b. Psalms 43:1: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation: O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man."
 - c. Psalms 119:164: "Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments."
 - d. Acts 2:42: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."
 - e. Acts 6:4: "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."
 - f. Acts 12:5: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him."
 - g. Acts 12:12: "And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying."
 - h. Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving;"
 - i. James 5:16-18: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit."
 - j. Daniel 6:10: "Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime."
 - k. Philippians 4:6-7: "Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."
- D. Distributing to the necessity of saints.
 1. We are to help each other. There are many ways we can follow the requirements of the passage: we can provide food, clothing, shelter, protection, medical care, and transportation.
 - a. In times of persecution, saints often lost their jobs, businesses, houses, possessions, and freedom. There were many ways in which the brethren could help.
 - b. God helped them by having others provide for their needs.
 - c. We have no severe persecution today, but economic hard-times regularly fall on many.
 - d. Matthew 25:33-46: "And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee*? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in? or naked, and clothed *thee*? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me. Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I

- say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal."
- e. Acts 2:44-45: "And all that believed were together, and had all things common; And sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all *men*, as every man had need."
 - f. Acts 4:32-37: "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any *of them* that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all. Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, And laid *them* down at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need. And Joses, who by the apostles was surnamed Barnabas, (which is, being interpreted, The son of consolation,) a Levite, *and* of the country of Cyprus, Having land, sold *it*, and brought the money, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet."
 - g. Moses E. Lard made some pointed remarks about the brethren of a hundred years ago, which may remind us of many in our own day: "I have never seen it practiced except upon a scale so parsimonious as to render it a virtual nullity. The scanty manner in which the rich disciples of the present day share the wants of the poor is a sham. From their thousands, they dole out dimes; and from storehouses full, mete out handfuls. This is no compliance with the precept; and it were better for a Christian that we were without a coat to his name than to have two, and not give to his brother who has none. Such precepts as the present will, in the day of eternity, prove the fatal reef on which many a saintly bark has stranded" (*Commentary on Romans*, p.391).
2. Good Samaritan pictures Christianity in action: "And Jesus answering said, A certain *man* went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded *him*, and departed, leaving *him* half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked *on him*, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion *on him*, And went to *him*, and bound up his wounds, pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave *them* to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee. Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves? And he said, He that showed mercy on him. Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise" (Luke 10:30-37).
- a. Faith without works dead (Jas 2:14-26).
 - 1) Mark 12:29-31: "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment. And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - 2) 1 John 3:17-18: "But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth."
 - 3) 1 John 5:2-3: "By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous."
 - 4) James 2:14-26: "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be *ye* warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit? Even so faith, if it hath not
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works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent *them* out another way? For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also."

- b. This help we offer to others is based on our ability and opportunity. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all *men*, especially unto them who are of the household of faith" (Gal 6:9-10).

E. Given to hospitality.

1. In those days of persecution and no motels, this was a trait that was especially needed.
2. Saints could provide shelter and food for those without money or a place to stay.
 - a. 1 Timothy 5:10: "Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work."
 - b. Hebrews 13:2: "Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."
 - c. 1 Peter 4:9: "Use hospitality one to another without grudging."
3. Old Testament examples:
 - a. Abraham: "And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; And he lift up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw *them*, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,³ And said, My Lord, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant: Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree: And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do, as thou hast said. And Abraham hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead *it*, and make cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave *it* unto a young man; and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had dressed, and set *it* before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat" (Gen 18:1-8).
 - b. Lot: "And there came two angels to Sodom at even; and Lot sat in the gate of Sodom: and Lot seeing *them* rose up to meet them; and he bowed himself with his face toward the ground; And he said, Behold now, my lords, turn in, I pray you, into your servant's house, and tarry all night, and wash your feet, and ye shall rise up early, and go on your ways. And they said, Nay; but we will abide in the street all night" (Gen 19:1-2).
 - c. Job: "If I have withheld the poor from *their* desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail; Or have eaten my morsel myself alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof" (Job 31:16-17).
 - d. Shunemite woman: "And it fell on a day, that Elisha passed to Shunem, where *was* a great woman; and she constrained him to eat bread. And *so* it was, *that* as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread. And she said unto her husband, Behold now, I perceive that this *is* an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither" (2 Kings 4:8-10).

4. New Testament examples:

- a. Mary and Martha: "Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10:38-42).
- b. Simon the Tanner: "And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:5-6).
- c. Lydia: "And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard *us*: whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought *us*, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide *there*. And she constrained us" (Acts 16:14-15).
- d. Philip: "And the next *day* we that were of Paul's company departed, and came unto Caesarea: and we entered into the house of Philip the evangelist, which was *one* of the seven; and abode with him. And the same man had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy. And as we tarried *there* many days, there came down from Judaea a certain prophet, named Agabus" (Acts 21:8-10).
- e. Publius: "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously" (Acts 28:7).
- f. Brethren at Puteoli: "Where we found brethren, and were desired to tarry with them seven days: and so we went toward Rome" (Acts 28:14).

F. Bless them which persecute you.

1. One of the chief differences between Christians and those of world is the attitude of non-retaliation. A worldly-minded individual will attack when he is attacked.
2. A Christian is one who returns good for evil—in words or deeds. Who but a faithful saint would have this as a primary trait of life?
3. The under-lying precept promoting this trait is love for all men, even enemies.
4. If we love another, despite his attitude toward us, we will treat him as we wish to be treated:
 - a. Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - b. Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - c. Luke 6:31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."
5. The Golden Rule in practice is love in action.

G. Bless, and curse not.

1. The usual action of men is to attack when they are attacked; to retaliate with equal or greater gusto.
 2. Instead of blow for blow, a child of God will bless the attacker.
 3. A follower of Christ is willing to endure persecution for the Lord's sake:
 - a. Matthew 5:10-12: "Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you."
 - b. Matthew 5:44-48: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what
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reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

4. To turn other cheek is a willingness to endure abuse for righteousness' sake—without retaliation.
5. There is good reason to rejoice when we are assaulted and do not retaliate:
 - a. Acts 5:29-42: "Then Peter and the *other* apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand *to be* a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things; and *so is* also the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him. When they heard *that*, they were cut *to the heart*, and took counsel to slay them. Then stood there up one in the council, a Pharisee, named Gamaliel, a doctor of the law, had in reputation among all the people, and commanded to put the apostles forth a little space; And said unto them, Ye men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what ye intend to do as touching these men. For before these days rose up Theudas, boasting himself to be somebody; to whom a number of men, about four hundred, joined themselves: who was slain; and all, as many as obeyed him, were scattered, and brought to nought. After this man rose up Judas of Galilee in the days of the taxing, and drew away much people after him: he also perished; and all, *even* as many as obeyed him, were dispersed. And now I say unto you, Refrain from these men, and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it; lest haply ye be found even to fight against God. And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten *them*, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ."
 - b. Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are not worthy to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Polycarp.

1. This gentleman was an elder in church of Christ at Smyrna.
2. He was arrested for being Christian, but was offered freedom if would revile Christ.
3. In refusing the offer, he stated: "For 86 years I have been serving him, and he has done no wrong to me. How then dare I blaspheme my king who saved me?"

B. Seven Characteristics:

1. Rejoice in hope.
 2. Patient in tribulation.
 3. Continuing instant in prayer.
 4. Distributing to the necessity of saints.
 5. Given to hospitality.
 6. Bless them which persecute you.
 7. Bless, and curse not.
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THE GREAT DESIGN OF THE GOSPEL

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. What is man that God is mindful of him?

1. Psalms 8:3-4: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
2. Ecclesiastes 5:1-2: "Keep thy foot when thou goest to the house of God, and be more ready to hear, than to give the sacrifice of fools: for they consider not that they do evil. Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
3. What does God want to accomplish in us on earth?
4. If each one did and was exactly what He wanted, what would be the result?

B. Is his purpose for us:

1. To baptize as many as possible? True, but what then? Why be baptized? Merely to add to the number in the local church?
2. To get as many to attend as possible? True, but this is not the supreme purpose.
3. To get all to read the Bible, to sing, to pray, to give? Yes, but this is not the supreme purpose.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. God's supreme purpose is suggested in Genesis 1:26.

1. Genesis 1:26: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."
2. Adam was made exactly as all men ought to be.
 - a. Man corrupted himself; Satan had gained control and changed man into his evil image.
 - 1) Genesis 6:5: "And God saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:29: "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions."
 - 3) Ezekiel 28:15: "Thou *wast* perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee."
 - b. Israel was told to be like God: "For I *am* the LORD that bringeth you up out of the land of Egypt, to be your God: ye shall therefore be holy, for I *am* holy" (Lev. 11:45).
3. God's purpose is to restore man to his original image.
 - a. We have developed evil practices, attitudes, and desires; we live in rebellion to God, we love the world, we have become selfish, and are filled with hatred and strife. Some of those outside of Christ are not as far into these sinful dispositions and practices as others, but every accountable person has departed from that perfect image into which God created Adam and Eve.
 - b. These are in Satan's image, not God's.
 - c. The Gospel is able to change us back.
 - 1) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - 2) 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14: "But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth: Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."
 - d. Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."
 - e. Ephesians 3:19: "And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled

- with all the fulness of God."
- f. 1 Peter 1:14-16: "As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."
 - g. 2 Peter 1:3-4: "According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue: Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust."
4. The supreme purpose is summed up in these words: to develop in us God-like attitudes, personalities, and life.
- B. But how can we know what God is like?
1. One purpose of Christ's coming was to reveal God to us.
 - a. John 14:6,9: "Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me....Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?"
 - b. It is easier to show how to do a certain activity than to verbally describe how to do it.
 - 1) It would be very difficult to tell someone how to form the letter "G" but it would be very easy to demonstrate it.
 - 2) It might be hard to tell a student how to work a math equation, but a demonstration of the process written on the blackboard can clearly teach how it is done.
 - c. Christ revealed God:
 - 1) Matthew 1:23: "Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us."
 - 2) John 14:9: "Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou *then*, Show us the Father?"
 - 3) Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - 4) Colossians 2:9: "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."
 - 5) Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
 - d. When we see Jesus showing compassion, weeping over sin, or showing real humility—we see a picture of the Father.
 2. Christ is the perfect standard to which we are to be conformed:
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Romans 8:29: "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate *to be* conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren."
 - 2) 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - b. Matthew 11:28: "Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." What did the Lord mean? "Be like me, put my principles into your life, be changed into my likeness." "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth: Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously: Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls" (1 Pet 2:21-25).
 - c. The most expensive watch is no good unless it is properly set and keeps good time. If a Christian

is not like Christ, he is not serving God's purposes.

3. We must not use the wrong standard: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Cor 10:12; cf. Jer. 10:23).
 - a. A sawmill operator blew the noon whistle by the clock on the courthouse; but the janitor at courthouse set the courthouse clock by 5 p.m. sawmill whistle.
 - b. Christ is the true, infallible standard: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

C. How is this purpose accomplished?

1. By education:
 - a. Matthew 28:19-20: "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen."
 - b. John 6:44-45: "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, And they shall be all taught of God. Every man therefore that hath heard, and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me."
 - c. Hebrews 8:10-11: "For this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: And they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest."
 - d. We cannot grow into the likeness of God without knowing what He is like.
 - e. It is a great challenge to teach people, adults and children, to know God, and to be transformed into his image.
2. By application:
 - a. Matthew 7:24-27: "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it."
 - b. John 13:17: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."
 - c. James 1:22-25: "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed."

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Christ is the model, the New Testament is the negative, and a true Christian is the picture.
 1. 2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 2. The ugly caterpillar is transformed into a beautiful butterfly.
 - a. An alien sinner, contaminated and stained by a multitude of sins, can be transformed into the likeness of Christ: "Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new" (2 Cor. 5:17).
 - b. God proposes to change us from old image of Satan into the new, beautiful, glorious image of his Son.
- B. Here are some questions for each of us:
 1. Have you accepted Jesus as your model?
 2. Can you sing the following songs with their true meaning?

- a. "I can hear my Savior calling; I'll go with him all the way."
 - b. "All to Jesus I surrender, all to him I freely give."
 - c. "Take my life and let it be, consecrated Lord to thee."
 - d. "O How I love Jesus!"
- C. Even the best Christian is not in the exact likeness of his perfect Lord.
1. But each can daily grow toward his perfect example.
 2. 2 Corinthians 7:1: "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."
 3. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
 4. 1 John 3:2-3: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."
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Prayer

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. There is much skepticism and ignorance about prayer.

1. Infidels say it is waste of time. J.W. McGarvey told of one such fellow who proposed a test by which the efficacy of prayer might be put to the test. He suggested that the patients in one hospital ward should be prayed for, while no prayers were to be offered for patients in another ward. If those who had prayers offered in their behalf fared better than the other group, then the power of prayer would have been demonstrated. If there was no difference in the outcome, the effectiveness of prayer would be exposed.
2. But to pray for one group and intentionally avoid praying for the other group would be wicked. To put God to the test is also sinful. No right-thinking person could expect God to respond to such hypocritical prayers.
3. Prayer is not a mystical incantation which results in a miraculous or mysterious cure.
4. Some saints never or seldom pray due to lack of faith in prayer, or a failure to see a need for prayer.

B. Why do we not always pray as we should?

1. It might be due to short-sightedness, a lack of faith, or a lack of diligence.
2. There is much in the Bible on the subject of prayer.
3. We are given much assurance that God hears; we have good reason to pray.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The Bible sets forth the meaning of prayer.

1. Prayer is the expression of our heart's desire spoken to God.
 - a. Romans 10:1: "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
 - b. 1 Samuel 1:10-11,13,17: "And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head....Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken....Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him."
2. Prayer reveals something about us.
 - a. It shows our closeness to God: we are willing to share our innermost thoughts and desires with him.
 - b. It shows that we believe he can answer and is willing to help us.
3. Lack of prayer also shows something about ourselves.
 - a. If we do not pray we show a lack of faith in prayer.
 - b. If we do not pray we show we do not want or need God's help and blessings.
 - c. If we do not pray we may show our laziness or indifference.
 - d. If we do not pray we live at a distance from God.

B. The Bible sets forth conditions for acceptable prayer.

1. Acceptable prayer comes from one who is willing to obey.
 - a. Cornelius was heard because he sought to know God's will: Acts 10.
 - b. Prayers of rebellious or disobedient hearts are not heard.
 - 1) Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - 2) Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - 3) John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshiper of God,

and doeth his will, him he heareth."

- c. God hears prayers offered by pure hearts.
 - 1) 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - 2) 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 2. Acceptable prayer must be offered with full assurance of faith.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:8: "I will therefore that men pray every where, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting."
 - b. James 1:5-8: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. or let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord. A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways."
 3. Acceptable prayer must have the endorsement of Christ.
 - a. 1 Timothy 2:5: "For *there is* one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."
 - b. Hebrews 4:14-16: "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast *our* profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are, yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
 - c. We have no personal credit in the Bank of Heaven, but with Christ's endorsement our requests are honored.
 4. Acceptable prayer must be fervent and sincere.
 - a. Psalms 17:1: "Hear the right, O LORD, attend unto my cry, give ear unto my prayer, *that goeth* not out of feigned lips."
 - b. Colossians 4:12: "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
 - c. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 5. Acceptable prayer must be unselfish. "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (Jas 4:3).
 6. Acceptable prayer must be regularly, not a mere emergency measure.
 - a. Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."
 - b. Colossians 4:2: "Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving."
 - c. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
 7. Acceptable prayers are offered in accordance with God's will: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
 - a. God's will is revealed in the Bible (cf. Numbers 12; Luke 23:34; Acts 2:38; 9:1-9; 22:16). God answered the prayer of Christ when those people obeyed the gospel.
 - b. God's will in our daily affairs may be expressed by his providence.
- C. Prayer is powerful.
1. James says prayer avails much (Jas 5:16).
 - a. He does not say the full extent of our requests are always given; our requests may not be given when or in the manner we desire.
 - b. A carefully aimed bullet may miss the exact target, but it still accomplishes something.
 - c. We cannot track down the full effect of every prayer. Our prayers for the sick, for peace, for the spread of the kingdom, for missionaries, for the lost, for saints may be answered without our being appraised of the details.

2. Elijah's prayers were powerful. "Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit" (Jas 5:17-18).
 - a. Why did he pray that it might not rain? Not because they had had too much rain, or that the rivers overflowing, but to cause repentance. The full narrative of this event is found in 1 Kings 17:1—18:40.
 - b. He prayed again, and rain fell (1 Kings 18:41-45; Jas 5:17-18, 16).
 3. James did not say every prayer will be heard and answered.
 - a. Formal word-speaking prayers are not heard.
 - b. The prayers of rebellious, disobedient men are not heard.
 4. God hears the prayers of righteous people.
 - a. If we are sick, we do not call for some wicked person, or a hypocrite, or a lukewarm member to pray for us.
 - b. We want the prayers of the most devout and righteous people.
 - c. A righteous person must pray fervently, sincerely, and often.
- D. There is a great need for prayer in this time of discouragement and uncertainty.
1. Every Christian needs to pray.
 - a. We need to pray personally and privately. We ought to set aside a regular time and place to pray.
 - b. We need to pray fervently, sincerely, daily, and scripturally.
 2. Each family needs to pray together.
 - a. We need to pray when we sit down to eat, and at other times when possible.
 - b. Hearing the father pray should be familiar sound to children.
 3. Christians need to pray together.
 - a. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matt. 18:20).
 - b. We ought to pray when special needs arise.
 - c. We ought to pray for our country, its leaders, for the gospel to have free course in the world, and for the work of kingdom.
 - 1) 2 Thessalonians 3:1: "Finally, brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have *free* course, and be glorified, even as *it is* with you."
 - 2) 1 Timothy 2:1-2: "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, *and* giving of thanks, be made for all men; For kings, and *for* all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty."
 4. We need to have great faith in the power of prayer.
 - a. The Lord indeed hears and is touched by our prayers. "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do....For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, *yet* without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need" (Heb. 4:13,15,16).
 - b. God is our caring, loving, and reachable Father; he is interested in hearing and answering our prayers.
 - c. God is powerful; he is able to answer since he is the Living God; he does not have to work a miracle to answer prayer.
 - d. God is wise enough to answer in the right way; he does not always respond in our way.
 - e. We ought to be fully persuaded in the effectiveness of prayer, and pray accordingly.

III. CONCLUSION.

- A. Erring saints need to pray for forgiveness.
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1. Acts 8:22: "Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee."
 2. James 5:16-20: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit. Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins."
 3. 1 John 1:7-10: "But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us."
- B. Alien sinners need to obey the gospel; prayer does not save such a person.
1. Acts 16:30-33: "And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed *their* stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway."
 2. Acts 17:30: "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent."
 3. Acts 8:37: "And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."
 4. Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 5. Saul of Tarsus came to believe on Christ, repented from his sins, and confessed his faith; at this point he spent many hours praying fruitlessly; he was told to arise and obey the gospel (Acts 9:1-11; 22:16).
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Principles and Precepts from Proverbs

I. INTRODUCTION.

- A. There has never been any book like the Bible.
1. It alone was inspired of God.
 2. Only the Bible provides man with the best possible guidance for life.
 3. The Bible is the only source book of information about how to get to heaven.
- B. The Bible is unique also in that it gives many meaty and profound principles.
1. The aim of this study is to investigate some of these precepts.
 2. It is always profitable to study God's word, from any viewpoint.
 3. These precepts are things that have ever been true and applicable to man.

II. DISCUSSION: We shall look at several from the book of Proverbs.

- A. Proverbs 15:1: "A soft answer turneth away wrath..."
1. Death and life are in the power of the tongue (Prov. 18:21). Severe wounds can be administered to the defenseless by it; or words which strengthen and encourage.
 2. This text shows that in many cases trouble and strife can be averted by a kind, soft response to hard words spoken to us. It is easy to give back hard and harsh words; it is more difficult to answer humbly and kindly.
 - a. Matthew 5:44-45: "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - b. Proverbs 25:11: "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver."
 - c. Romans 14:19: "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another."
 - d. Colossians 4:6: "Let your speech *be* always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."
 3. It is in our best interest to speak kindly to and about each other.
 - a. This must be done if we are to have friends: "A man *that hath* friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend *that sticketh* closer than a brother" (Prov. 18:24).
 - b. It must be done if we are to have a good name.
 - 1) Proverbs 22:1: "A *good name is* rather to be chosen than great riches, *and* loving favour rather than silver and gold."
 - 2) Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A *good name is* better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."
 - c. We must cultivate humility to have favor with God: "The fear of the LORD *is* the instruction of wisdom; and before honour *is* humility" (Prov. 15:33).
 - d. It must be followed to be obedient to God.
 - 1) Ephesians 4:31: "Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice."
 - 2) Titus 3:2: "To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, *but* gentle, showing all meekness unto all men."
- B. Proverbs 23:7: "As he thinketh in heart, so is he."
1. Matthew 12:34-35: "O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things."
 - a. What comes from a man's lips is what is stored up in his heart.
 - b. Those who speak evil of others have treasured up malice within themselves; those who speak

- good of others have the same stored up in their heart of hearts.
2. Matthew 15:18-20: "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."
 - a. That with which we fill our minds will come forth sooner or later. One is not likely to commit murder without first contemplating it in his mind; the same is true with blasphemy, theft, fornication, etc.
 - b. James 1:13-15: "Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death."
 3. If we would avert as much sin as possible, we will fill our minds with only those things that are good and wholesome. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things *are* honest, whatsoever things *are* just, whatsoever things *are* pure, whatsoever things *are* lovely, whatsoever things *are* of good report; if *there be* any virtue, and if *there be* any praise, think on these things. Those things, which ye have both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do: and the God of peace shall be with you" (Phil. 4:8-9).
 - a. But many Christians will watch filthy movies, read sin-filled books, frequent places where all manner of sin is practiced, and talk about subjects which are productive of no good (Eph. 5:12).
 - b. It is far better to be around other faithful Christians, share in their fellowship, and build up and encourage each other.
 4. Broaden the scope of this text and see how the principle fits a nation or society.
 - a. If the laws of a nation are righteous and the general attitude of the people is to reject degrading practices, the nation is strong and will endure. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34).
 - b. But if the laws of a nation tend to break down the morals of the people, and if the minds of the people are filled with evil thoughts and motives, that nation is only a short distance from disaster. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God" (Ps. 9:17). The national gambling frenzy is productive of no good, but much evil. Any fair-minded examination of this plague will show that it is evil. State-run lotteries prey on the vices of its citizens, and will doubtless prove to be disastrous to our nation.
 - c. A nation that becomes indoctrinated in unbelief will soon find itself enslaved to sin and corruption. Consider all the nations of Noah's generation; Egypt; Assyria; Babylon; Israel; Rome. These rejected the God of heaven and his Law; they plunged into sin and were destroyed.
 - d. A nation that accepts strong drink without a pang of conscience will soon be filled with alcoholics and all of its evil effects.
 - 1) Proverbs 20:1: "Wine *is* a mocker, strong drink *is* raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise."
 - 2) Proverbs 23:29-35: "Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine; they that go to seek mixed wine. Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, *when* it moveth itself aright. At the last it biteth like a serpent, and stingeth like an adder. Thine eyes shall behold strange women, and thine heart shall utter perverse things. Yea, thou shalt be as he that lieth down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast. They have stricken me, *shalt thou say, and* I was not sick; they have beaten me, *and* I felt *it* not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."
 - e. A nation that accepts a human standard of morality will soon be wallowing in degradation. This means the weakening of marriage and the home, pornography, and all manner of fornication.

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- f. A nation that accepts a system which countenances injustice will soon find itself accepting all manner of inconsistency and crime.
 - 1) Thus, we have laws allowing and supporting abortion, but have other laws providing criminal punishment on those who break an eagle's egg or disturb a turtle's nest.
 - 2) We free criminals from prison due to "overcrowding," but prosecute a man for protecting his family and his property.
 - 3) Things that once were unlawful, have later been allowed by the law (e.g., abortion, alcoholic drinks). Efforts have been fostered to legalize drugs which are now outlawed. Legalizing sin will only lead to a nation's end.
 - 4) Amos 2:6: "Thus saith the LORD; For three transgressions of Israel, and for four, I will not turn away *the punishment* thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes."
 - 5) Micah 6:8: "He hath showed thee, O man, what *is* good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"
 5. What an individual or a society fills it mind with, sooner or later becomes the governing principle by which it operates. "As we think in our hearts, so shall we be."
- C. Proverbs 14:12: "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but...."
1. In religion, ever since Cain substituted his own offering for what God ordained, men have sought to please themselves in their spiritual activities. The hardest lesson on earth for many to learn is the simplest: "Fear God and keep his commandments" (Eccl. 12:13).
 - a. God's authority must be held supreme if a man is to have the approval of the Almighty.
 - 1) 1 Samuel 2:30: "Wherefore the LORD God of Israel saith, I said indeed *that* thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before me for ever: but now the LORD saith, Be it far from me; for them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall be lightly esteemed."
 - 2) Psalms 89:7: "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all *them that are* about him."
 - b. Since God speaks to man today through the message of Christ (Heb. 1:1-2), we must honor and obey the word of Christ.
 - 1) Hebrews 1:1-2: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds."
 - 2) Luke 10:16: "He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you despiseth me; and he that despiseth me despiseth him that sent me."
 - 3) Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - 4) 1 Thessalonians 2:13: "For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received *it* not *as* the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe."
 2. But the common tendency of mankind is to insist on his own way in religion. Cain, Nadab and Abihu, Jeroboam, and countless others in ancient and modern times all illustrate man's desire to please himself in religious functions.
 3. In this proudful attitude, man shows his foolishness.
 - a. Proverbs 28:26: "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool: but whoso walketh wisely, he shall be delivered."
 - b. Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them."
 - c. Isaiah 30:10: "Which say to the seers, See not; and to the prophets, Prophecy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophecy deceits."
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- d. Isaiah 55:8-9: "For my thoughts *are* not your thoughts, neither *are* your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."
 - e. Jeremiah 10:23: "O LORD, I know that the way of man *is* not in himself: *it is* not in man that walketh to direct his steps."
 - f. Ezekiel 33:13: "When I shall say to the righteous, *that* he shall surely live; if he trust to his own righteousness, and commit iniquity, all his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; but for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall die for it."
 - g. Ezekiel 33:20: "Yet ye say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways."
 - h. Luke 16:15: "And he said unto them, Ye are they which justify yourselves before men; but God knoweth your hearts: for that which is highly esteemed among men is abomination in the sight of God."
4. The Lord requires that we follow his will in all our spiritual activities, for he warns us against adding to, substituting for, deleting from, or perverting the word of God!
- a. Galatians 1:6-12: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any *man* preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ. But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught *it*, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ."
 - b. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 - c. Revelation 22:8-9: "For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book."
- D. Proverbs 13:15: "The way of the transgressor is hard."
1. This is a truth often expressed by the Divine Record.
 - a. The northern kingdom of Israel (called "Ephraim") discovered it.
 - 1) Hosea 4:17: "Ephraim *is* joined to idols: let him alone."
 - 2) 2 Kings 17:5-7, 13-15, 20-23: "Then the king of Assyria came up throughout all the land, and went up to Samaria, and besieged it three years. In the ninth year of Hoshea the king of Assyria took Samaria, and carried Israel away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor *by* the river of Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes. For *so* it was, that the children of Israel had sinned against the LORD their God, which had brought them up out of the land of Egypt, from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt, and had feared other gods....Yet the LORD testified against Israel, and against Judah, by all the prophets, *and by* all the seers, saying, Turn ye from your evil ways, and keep my commandments *and* my statutes, according to all the law which I commanded your fathers, and which I sent to you by my servants the prophets. Notwithstanding they would not hear, but hardened their necks, like to the neck of their fathers, that did not believe in the LORD their God. And they rejected his statutes, and his covenant that he made with their fathers, and his testimonies which he testified against

them; and they followed vanity, and became vain, and went after the heathen that *were* round about them, *concerning* whom the LORD had charged them, that they should not do like them....And the LORD rejected all the seed of Israel, and afflicted them, and delivered them into the hand of spoilers, until he had cast them out of his sight. For he rent Israel from the house of David; and they made Jeroboam the son of Nebat king: and Jeroboam drave Israel from following the LORD, and made them sin a great sin. For the children of Israel walked in all the sins of Jeroboam which he did; they departed not from them; Until the LORD removed Israel out of his sight, as he had said by all his servants the prophets. So was Israel carried away out of their own land to Assyria unto this day."

- b. Many times, people suffer from their sins in various ways in this life; in every case, the ungodly will suffer in the eternity to come.
 - 1) Isaiah 28:20: "For the bed is shorter than that *a man* can stretch himself *on it*: and the covering narrower than that he can wrap himself *in it*."
 - 2) Amos 5:19: "As if a man did flee from a lion, and a bear met him; or went into the house, and leaned his hand on the wall, and a serpent bit him."
 - 3) Matthew 7:1-5: "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."
 - 4) Luke 12:47-48: "And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not *himself*, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many *stripes*. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few *stripes*. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more."
 - 5) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - 6) Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
2. Consider some of the common transgressions and how they often punish those who do them.
 - a. The one who uses alcohol often suffers: if he gets caught driving under the influence, he can be punished; he brings hardship on his own family and himself by his drinking; when his conduct become unruly, he can be arrested; his livelihood suffers when his drinking affects his work; his health suffers from drinking; he can injure or kill himself or others by driving under the influence; and most grievous of all, his drinking is sinful and will cause him to lose his soul. In addition to these awful consequences, he leaves behind a legacy of evil which will encourage his own children and others to follow his pernicious way.
 - b. The same consequences await those who use other drugs.
 - c. The fornicator sets himself up for various physical maladies; he places himself in possible jeopardy of a jealous suitor; he can destroy his marriage and home; and he will lose his soul.
 - d. The blasphemer, the liar, the worldly-minded, the covetous, the selfish, the hater, the gossip, the one who holds malice in his heart, the criminal, the false teacher, the follower of false doctrine—all of these have many woes to endure in this life and must face horrible penalties in eternity!
3. The way of the transgressor is truly hard! How much better it is to humbly and sincerely follow the will of God and be blessed! Faithful saints have difficulties to face in this world, and the sinner may appear to have a better lot in life, but chastening is for our good, and God does not give the full

harvest in "October."

- a. The story is told of an unbelieving farmer who boasted to his Christian neighbors that his crops were just as bountiful as theirs, even though he did not believe in God or attempt to serve him. One wise saint replied, "God does not give his full harvest in October." "Behold, these *are* the ungodly, who prosper in the world; they increase *in* riches. Verily I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning. If I say, I will speak thus; behold, I should offend *against* the generation of thy children. When I thought to know this, it *was* too painful for me; Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *then* understood I their end. Surely thou didst set them in slippery places: thou castedst them down into destruction. How are they *brought* into desolation, as in a moment! they are utterly consumed with terrors" (Ps. 73:12-19).
- b. As the blessings of the unrighteous are only apparent and not real, so also are the hardships we suffer as Christians insignificant when compared to the glory awaiting us in heaven!
 - 1) Romans 8:18: "For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory which shall be revealed in us."
 - 2) Hebrews 12:11: "Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby."

E. Proverbs 22:1: "A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches..."

1. Ecclesiastes 7:1: "A good name is better than precious ointment; and the day of death than the day of one's birth."
 - a. What advantage is it to have great wealth and be held in contempt by others? Man is a social creature, and generally can only be happy if he is around others of his kind, and has their approval.
 - b. What advantage is it to have great wealth and position, and stand under the curse of God? Is it not better to have no great wealth or position or popularity (if need be), and have the approval of God? "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" (Matt. 16:26).
2. To have a "good name" means that we are held in high esteem by our fellow man; to have a "good name" before God means that we have his full endorsement.
3. To have a "good name" means also that we have a good influence on other people, especially our children and grandchildren. What kind of influence will our lives have on our descendants who are to live a hundred years, or two hundred years in the future? This becomes an extremely important proposition when we consider the cases of two men who lived several generations ago: Max Jukes; Jonathan Edwards.
4. For these reasons, what God said long ago still bears great meaning.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Proverbs 27:1: "Boast not thyself of to morrow...."

1. We have no reason to be boastful about anything. God provided our life, he gives us air to breath, water to drink, food to eat, clothing to wear, and the means to have a roof over our heads.
 - a. Not one of these essentials could a man provide for himself without God's bounty.
 - 1) Matthew 5:45: "That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."
 - 2) Acts 14:17: "Nevertheless he left not himself without witness, in that he did good, and gave us rain from heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."
 - 3) James 1:17: "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning."
 - b. Certainly, no one can boast about saving his own soul (Rom. 3:23; 6:23; Tit. 3:5; Eph. 2:1-9).
 - c. No one can declare correctly that heaven is his home because he has earned it and God is obligated to give it to him.

- d. Even the continuation of our lives depends on God. We have no right to boast of what we shall do or have tomorrow. "Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain: Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. For that ye *ought* to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that" (Jas. 4:13-15).
2. Faith, humility and reverence for God which lead to our obeying his will is our chief obligation and greatest advantage.
 - a. "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him" (Heb. 11:6).
 - b. "The fear of the Lord is the instruction of wisdom; and before honour is humility" (Prov. 15:33).
 - c. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil" (Eccl. 12:13f).
 - d. Hosea 13:1: "When Ephraim spake trembling he exalted himself in Israel: but when he offended in Baal, he died."
 - e. Matthew 5:3: "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven."
- B. Isaiah 41:10: "Fear thou now; for I am with thee: be not dismayed...."
 1. This was a promise to God's faithful people in ancient Judah. But the same kind promises are for us today.
 - a. Hebrews 13:5-6 "*Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.*"
 - b. 1 Peter 5:6-7: "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."
 2. God's promises are for those who obey his will.
 - a. He promises forgiveness of sins to those who will obey the gospel.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 2:38: "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."
 - 3) Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 - b. He promises heaven for those who follow his will in Christ.
 - 1) Mark 10:29-30: "And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."
 - 2) Revelation 22:14: "Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city."
 3. If we walk in the light of Christ's gospel, there is no reason for us to be fearful of the world, of our enemies, of the future, of our daily needs, or of the great Judgment to come.
 - a. Matthew 10:42: "And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."
 - b. 1 Corinthians 10:13: "There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God *is* faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear *it.*"

- c. Hebrews 6:10: "For God *is* not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister."
 - d. 1 John 4:17-18: "Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love."
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The Sin of Gambling

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. The word "gamble" is not in the Bible but its sinfulness we shall show.

1. Many sinful practices are not called by name in the Bible: manslaughter; rape; larceny; bootlegging; embezzlement; dope peddling; racketeering; kidnapping, etc.
2. A thing is sinful if it violates a direct statement, principle, or any other teaching given in the Bible:
 - a. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."
 - b. James 4:17: "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth *it* not, to him it is sin."
 - c. 1 John 3:4: "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - d. 1 John 5:17: "All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death."
 - e. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

B. Many states have inaugurated a government-run lottery, a form of gambling.

1. Is participation in a state-run lottery gambling? Is gambling sinful?
2. If gambling, including a legal lottery, violates God's word, it is indeed sinful!

II. DISCUSSION.

A. What does the Bible teach on the subject?

1. The Bible teaches that man is to provide for his own needs through honest work.
 - a. This was true in Eden (Gen. 2:15) and remained true after man's expulsion from the garden (Gen. 3:19).
 - 1) Genesis 2:15: "And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it."
 - 2) Genesis 3:19: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou *art*, and unto dust shalt thou return."
 - b. God requires that we work for our living: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies. Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread" (2 Thess. 3:10-12).
 - c. Honest labor is commanded in order to help the needy: "Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with *his* hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth" (Eph. 4:28).
 - d. Gambling discourages honest labor; it encourages one to risk what he has in order to get something for nothing, at another's expense.
 - e. Gambling does not produce any goods or services; it violates Bible principles which encourage honest labor.
2. Gambling violates the Golden Rule:
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Matthew 7:12: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."
 - 2) Luke 6:31: "And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."
 - b. It tries by trickery, luck, and skill to take from another that which rightly belongs to that other person.

- c. When a man gambles, he is hoping to do something to others that he does not want them to do to him.
- d. "But by buying a lottery ticket I'm hoping to take money from a state-run organization, not from my neighbor!" But who is the loser? Not the organization!
3. Gambling violates the second great commandment.
 - a. Mark 12:31: "And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these."
 - b. Romans 13:10: "Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law." Gambling works ill toward another, thus gambling is sinful.
 - c. Taking money from someone by skill or trickery contradicts this principle.
4. Biblical principles condemn the spirit of materialism and covetousness, which are inherent in gambling.
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Ephesians 5:3: "But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints."
 - 2) Ephesians 5:5: "For this ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, nor covetous man, who is an idolater, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God."
 - 3) Colossians 3:5: "Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 6:5-10: "Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself. But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into *this* world, *and it is* certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and raiment let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows."
 - b. The spirit of materialism includes the love of money and greed.
 - c. One gambles for money because he loves money, which is the root of all kinds of evil (1 Tim. 6:10)
5. In a God-fearing society, gambling greatly harms a Christian's influence.
 - a. Passages:
 - 1) Matthew 5:13-16: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."
 - 2) 1 Corinthians 11:1: "Be ye followers of me, even as I also *am* of Christ."
 - 3) Philippians 2:15-16: "That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain."
 - 4) 1 Timothy 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity."
 - 5) 1 Peter 2:11-12: "Dearly beloved, I beseech *you* as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by *your* good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation."
 - 6) 1 Peter 2:21-22: "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps: Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth."

- 7) 1 Peter 4:1-5: "Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin; That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God. For the time past of *our* life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with *them* to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*: Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead."
 - b. Because of the value of our influence, we must abstain from all appearances of evil.
 - 1) Romans 12:9: "*Let* love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 5:22: "Abstain from all appearance of evil."
 - c. Gambling has the appearance of evil: and evil is to be shunned in all its forms!
 - d. It soils a saint's influence so that he is not a fitting example of a believer.
6. Gambling often causes a man to neglect his family.
- a. Some will spend their pay on gambling instead of paying the rent or buying food.
 - b. Therefore, it stands condemned by 1 Timothy 5:8: "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel."
- B. Many excuses are made to justify gambling.
1. Passages:
 - a. Isaiah 5:20: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight!"
 - b. Proverbs 16:25: "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof *are* the ways of death."
 2. "Other gamblers consent to my taking their money, else they would not gamble."
 - a. They cannot give you the right to violate Biblical principles. No human being has the authority to give anyone other human being the right to disobey any feature of God's will. Could your spouse give you the right to commit adultery? Could a preacher give you the right to take the name of the Lord in vain?
 - b. It is sinful to wrong another even with his consent. Helping someone to commit suicide cannot be construed as right even though he gives his consent for you to assist him.
 - c. Consent does not make it right to kill another in a duel, which is combat between two persons, fought with deadly weapons—by consent.
 3. "Life is a gamble: investing in the stock market, farming, betting on horses, playing bingo for cash, buying a lottery ticket, are only different forms of taking a calculated risk. If one is right, they all are right."
 - a. But the mere presence of risk in an activity does not make it gambling.
 - 1) The outcome of planting a crop or engaging in some other worthy enterprise is determined primarily by the good, honest effort of the individual, and not by risk-taking or mere chance.
 - 2) Honest endeavor has God's approval and assistance; the uncertainty involved teaches us to have greater trust in God and to ask for his help. Would a spiritually-minded person ask God to bless the coin he is about to put into a *one-armed bandit*? Or ask God to bless the cards he is about to be dealt which would enable him to take money from the person sitting across the table?
 - 3) The rewards of honest efforts (farming; cattle-raising; a business investment) do not deprive others of their money or property.
 - b. But gambling is based primarily on pure chance; there is always a loser even though he might not be sitting across the table. The winner of a lottery is paid by all the many losers who contributed unwillingly to his success.
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- c. If the outcome depends entirely or mostly on chance, it is gambling; if the outcome depends on skill and diligence and is a worthy endeavor in which no one is made to be a loser, the activity is not gambling.
4. "If the result of gambling advances a good cause, it is all right: playing bingo at church raises money for orphans, helps feed the needy, etc, thus is permissible. The lottery provides money to operate and improve our school system; therefore this kind of gambling is proper because it supports a worthy cause."
 - a. But why use such a questionable activity as gambling to accomplish a good end? This very "argument" shows that it is questionable since it seeks to justify an activity which is wrong in its usual occurrences.
 - b. Even doing good does not permit us to disregard what God has said.
 - 1) Nadab and Abihu were involved in a good work when they burned incense in the tabernacle, but the means they chose to accomplish it led to their condemnation: "And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he commanded them not. And there went out fire from the LORD, and devoured them, and they died before the LORD" (Lev. 10:1-2).
 - 2) Saul was condemned for offering a sacrifice (1 Sam. 13). "And Samuel said, Hath the LORD *as great* delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey *is* better than sacrifice, *and* to hearken than the fat of rams" (1 Sam. 15:22).
 - c. If serving a good cause justifies gambling, why not set up houses of prostitution? Or make counterfeit money? Or embezzle money from a rich company? None of these appears to hurt anyone directly and much money could be raised for worthy causes thereby! But these activities and gambling are wrong!
 - d. Feeding the poor is a good cause, but it must be accomplished by legal and scriptural means. Educating young people is a good cause, but doing so at the expense of moral principles will do more harm than good.

III. CONCLUSION.

A. Gambling has some grievous side effects which also make it wrong.

1. It is an established fact that gambling and organized crime go together—where gambling is, crime increases, including graft, prostitution, robbery, and murder.
2. Few people can control themselves when they start gambling: "...Makings of a major social and economic problems in U.S." (USN&WR, 1-28-80). Little gamblers become big gamblers; little losers become big losers.
3. Wives, children, employers, the economy, thus the nation, all suffer from gambling.
4. Many compulsive gamblers are eventually driven to suicide.
5. The revenue received by the state is not what is promised; it declines, as recent statistics indicate. The people of Florida were promised a windfall amount of revenue from the lottery which would put the state's school system on "easy street." The opposite was true after less than three years! Many teachers were forced to buy classroom supplies from their own funds.
6. The cost of welfare assistance to gamblers and their families, the increased costs for law enforcement, the added burden of great expense in the penal system, etc., more than equal the funds raked in by this social evil, and show the insidiousness of gambling.

B. Gambling is sinful!

1. We must shun it ourselves, and teach others to avoid this tragic evil.
2. Any government that seeks to raise revenue to fill its financial needs by appealing to the greed of its citizens, is hastening its own demise, and brings upon its subjects greater suffering and loss than any potential good it can ever hope to fulfill.
3. God's word cannot be ignored or repudiated without serious consequences.
 - a. Psalms 9:17: "The wicked shall be turned into hell, *and* all the nations that forget God."

- b. Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin *is* a reproach to any people."
 - c. Isaiah 59:1-1: "Behold, the LORD'S hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid *his* face from you, that he will not hear."
 - d. Romans 1:18-32: "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed *it* unto them. For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, *even* his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: Because that, when they knew God, they glorified *him* not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen. For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet. And even as they did not like to retain God in *their* knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them."
 - e. Romans 6:23: "For the wages of sin *is* death; but the gift of God *is* eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."
 - f. Galatians 5:19-21: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are *these*; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told *you* in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."
 - g. Galatians 6:7-8: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."
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How Does God Answer Prayers?

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Why should the Creator have any interest in lowly man?

1. Psalms 8:3-4: "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"
2. Man is so weak and sinful, and God is so majestic and good, we often wonder how the Almighty could have any interest in us or to listen to our feeble prayers.
3. But God has shown his interest in us in a variety of ways.
 - a. The very fact that we exist is proof of the proposition that God cares.
 - b. The very presence of the Bible is proof that he has an interest in us.
 - c. The fact that he sent his only begotten Son to die for us is proof.
 - d. The promise of salvation from sin is excellent evidence.
 - e. The promise of an eternal home in the mansions of heaven shows it beautifully!

B. Prayer is a wonderful privilege which God grants his people.

1. It is a benevolent and gracious provision in God's plan:
 - a. Matthew 18:19: "Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."
 - b. Matthew 21:22: "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."
 - c. Philippians 4:6-7: "In nothing be anxious; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus" (ASV).
2. One who has a sense of dependence on God will ask for his help and give thanks for the blessings received.
3. The greatest people of the Bible prayed: Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, David, Hannah Solomon, Cornelius, Lydia, Paul, Christ, and a multitude of others.

II. DISCUSSION.

A. The Bible says plainly that God does answer prayers of his people.

1. Passages:
 - a. Psalms 65:2: "O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come."
 - b. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - c. 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
 - d. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 - e. 1 John 5:14-15: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him."
2. God's answer to our prayers might take different forms:
 - a. It might be to turn us down. "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Cor. 12:7-9).

- b. It might be to delay giving the request.
 - c. It might be a partial, modified approval.
 - d. It might be a gift of something more or better than our request.
 - e. It might be a quick, full approval of the request.
3. God does not hearken to prayers of alien sinners.
 - a. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - b. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c. John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 4. He heard and acknowledged the prayers of Cornelius, an honest seeker: "There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of the band called the Italian *band*, A devout *man*, and one that feared God with all his house, which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God alway. He saw in a vision evidently about the ninth hour of the day an angel of God coming in to him, and saying unto him, Cornelius. And when he looked on him, he was afraid, and said, What is it, Lord? And he said unto him, Thy prayers and thine alms are come up for a memorial before God. And now send men to Joppa, and call for *one* Simon, whose surname is Peter: He lodgeth with one Simon a tanner, whose house is by the sea side: he shall tell thee what thou oughtest to do" (Acts 10:1-6).
 5. He did not save Saul of Tarsus in response to prayer.
 - a. Acts 9:1-16: "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, And desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem. And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: *it is* hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought *him* into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth, And hath seen in a vision a man named Ananias coming in, and putting *his* hand on him, that he might receive his sight. Then Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard by many of this man, how much evil he hath done to thy saints at Jerusalem: And here he hath authority from the chief priests to bind all that call on thy name. But the Lord said unto him, Go thy way: for he is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel: For I will show him how great things he must suffer for my name's sake."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
- B. There are conditions to acceptable prayers.
1. One must be righteous:
 - a. James 5:16: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."
 - b. 1 Peter 3:12: "For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* against them that do evil."
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2. One must pray with faith:
 - a. Romans 10:17: "So then faith *cometh* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."
 - b. James 1:6-7: "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord."
 - c. 1 John 5:14: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us."
 3. One must be obedient to God's word:
 - a. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*:"
 - b. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 4. One must pray in accordance with God's will: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us" (1 John 5:14).
 5. One must have a forgiving spirit to be heard: "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:15).
 6. One must have the right spiritual conduct: "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7).
 7. One must pray in Jesus' name:
 - a. John 14:13-14: "And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do *it*."
 - b. John 16:23: "And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give *it* you."
 - c. Hebrews 4:15-16: "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."
 - d. Hebrews 7:25: "Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."
 8. One must pray with the right motive: "Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume *it* upon your lusts" (Jas. 4:3).
 9. One must pray with reverence.
 - a. Ecclesiastes 5:2: "Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."
 - b. James 4:6: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble."
 - c. John 17:11, 25: "And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as *we are*....O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee: but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me."
 10. One must actually pray, not merely desire: "Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not" (Jas. 4:2).
 11. One must be persistent in prayer:
 - a. Luke 11:5-12: "And he said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; For a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of
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his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. *11* If a son shall ask bread of any of you that is a father, will he give him a stone? or if *he ask* a fish, will he for a fish give him a serpent? Or if he shall ask an egg, will he offer him a scorpion?"

- b. Luke 18:1-7: "And he spake a parable unto them *to this end*, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint; Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man: And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary. And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man; Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me. And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith. And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?"
 - c. Romans 12:12: "Rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer."
 - d. 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Pray without ceasing."
- C. Prayer will not cause God to set aside his positive law.
1. God will not answer a man if he is living in sin (Pr. 28:9; Ps. 66:18; Jn. 9:31).
 - a. Psalms 66:18: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear *me*."
 - b. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - c. John 9:31: "Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth."
 2. Numbers 12-14: Miriam incurred God's displeasure and was punished with leprosy.
 - a. She prayed for cleansing; Aaron and Moses prayed for her to be cleansed; God would not hearken to their prayers. Why?
 - b. God had already given a law for the cleansing of leprosy; Miriam had to abide by that law to be cleansed; God would not answer prayers which asked him to set aside his law.
 3. Luke 23:34: "Then said Jesus, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. And they parted his raiment, and cast lots."
 - a. Lord prayed for his enemies to be forgiven; they were not forgiven in direct response to his prayer, but according to God's word 53 days later.
 - b. Salvation is only by the gospel of Christ.
 - 1) Mark 16:15-16: "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned."
 - 2) Acts 4:11-12: "This is the stone which was set at nought of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."
 - 3) Romans 1:16-17: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith."
 - c. When those enemies obeyed the gospel they were forgiven: "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.... Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.... Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls"

(Acts 2:23, 36-38, 41).

4. The Eunuch was saved by his gospel obedience, not through prayer: "And as they went on *their* way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, *here is* water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:36-39).
 5. Cornelius was saved by obedience, not by his prayers:
 - a. Acts 10:44-48: "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost. For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter, Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days."
 - b. Acts 11:13-18: "And he showed us how he had seen an angel in his house, which stood and said unto him, Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon, whose surname is Peter; Who shall tell thee words, whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved. And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost. Forasmuch then as God gave them the like gift as *he did* unto us, who believed on the Lord Jesus Christ; what was I, that I could withstand God? When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life."
 6. Saul of Tarsus had prayed for three days, but his salvation was obtained through his obedience to the gospel.
 - a. Acts 9:9-11: "And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. And there was a certain disciple at Damascus, named Ananias; and to him said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold, I *am here*, Lord. And the Lord *said* unto him, Arise, and go into the street which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for *one* called Saul, of Tarsus: for, behold, he prayeth."
 - b. Acts 22:16: "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 7. Only when Christians walk in the light by obedience are their prayers heard.
 - a. 1 John 1:6-7: "If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth: But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin."
 - b. 1 John 3:22: "And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."
 8. Prayer cannot set aside God's plan of salvation. We are not allowed to ask God to save an alien sinner who will not obey the gospel.
 9. If one goes beyond God's law, his prayers are not heard.
 - a. Proverbs 28:9: "He that turneth away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer *shall be* abomination."
 - b. 2 John 9-11: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."
 10. We are not to ask God to forgive a wayward saint who will not change. "If any man see his brother sin
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a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it" (1 John 5:16).

D. What means does God use in order to answer the prayers of his faithful saints?

1. God used two ways of answering prayers in Bible times—direct and indirect means.
 - a. The direct means was miraculous, and often immediately done.
 - b. The indirect means was non-miraculous, through his providence.
2. Some examples of his miraculous answers to prayers are the following:
 - a. Samuel prayed for thunder and rain during wheat harvest, a time when rain does not fall in Palestine. "Now therefore stand and see this great thing, which the LORD will do before your eyes. *Is it* not wheat harvest to day? I will call unto the LORD, and he shall send thunder and rain; that ye may perceive and see that your wickedness *is* great, which ye have done in the sight of the LORD, in asking you a king. So Samuel called unto the LORD; and the LORD sent thunder and rain that day: and all the people greatly feared the LORD and Samuel" (1 Sam. 12:16-18).
 - b. God sent fire to punish the complaining Israelites, but in response to Moses' prayer, God quenched the fire. "And *when* the people complained, it displeased the LORD: and the LORD heard *it*; and his anger was kindled; and the fire of the LORD burnt among them, and consumed *them that were* in the uttermost parts of the camp. And the people cried unto Moses; and when Moses prayed unto the LORD, the fire was quenched" (Num. 11:1-2).
 - c. God answered Elijah's prayer by sending fire to consume the sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water: "And Elijah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came near unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down. And Elijah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Jacob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Israel shall be thy name: And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed. And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood. And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.⁵ And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water. And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that Elijah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Israel, and *that I am* thy servant, and *that I have* done all these things at thy word. Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again. Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench. And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God" (1 Kings 18:30-39).
 - d. 2 Kings 20:1-7: At the prayer of Hezekiah, God extended his life 15 years. Both direct and indirect means are used in this example: God spoke directly but a lump of figs was used in the healing of his boil: "In those days was Hezekiah sick unto death. And the prophet Isaiah the son of Amoz came to him, and said unto him, Thus saith the LORD, Set thine house in order; for thou shalt die, and not live. Then he turned his face to the wall, and prayed unto the LORD, saying, I beseech thee, O LORD, remember now how I have walked before thee in truth and with a perfect heart, and have done *that which is* good in thy sight. And Hezekiah wept sore. And it came to pass, afore Isaiah was gone out into the middle court, that the word of the LORD came to him, saying, Turn again, and tell Hezekiah the captain of my people, Thus saith the LORD, the God of David thy father, I have heard thy prayer, I have seen thy tears: behold, I will heal thee: on the third day thou shalt go up unto the house of the LORD. And I will add unto thy days fifteen years; and I will deliver thee and this city out of the hand of the king of Assyria; and I will defend this city for mine own sake, and for my

- servant David's sake. And Isaiah said, Take a lump of figs. And they took and laid *it* on the boil, and he recovered" (2 Kings 20:1-7).
- e. The prayer of the church resulted in miraculous demonstrations: "And being let go, they went to their own company, and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said unto them. And when they heard that, they lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord, thou *art* God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and all that in them is: Who by the mouth of thy servant David hast said, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For of a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done. And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:23-31).
 - f. The prayer of the brethren brought about Peter's miraculous release from prison: "Peter therefore was kept in prison: but prayer was made without ceasing of the church unto God for him. And when Herod would have brought him forth, the same night Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison. And, behold, the angel of the Lord came upon *him*, and a light shined in the prison: and he smote Peter on the side, and raised him up, saying, Arise up quickly. And his chains fell off from *his* hands. And the angel said unto him, Gird thyself, and bind on thy sandals. And so he did. And he saith unto him, Cast thy garment about thee, and follow me. And he went out, and followed him; and wist not that it was true which was done by the angel; but thought he saw a vision. When they were past the first and the second ward, they came unto the iron gate that leadeth unto the city; which opened to them of his own accord: and they went out, and passed on through one street; and forthwith the angel departed from him. And when Peter was come to himself, he said, Now I know of a surety, that the Lord hath sent his angel, and hath delivered me out of the hand of Herod, and *from* all the expectation of the people of the Jews. And when he had considered *the thing*, he came to the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together praying" (Acts 12:5-12).
 - g. Publius was healed in response to Paul's prayer: "In the same quarters were possessions of the chief man of the island, whose name was Publius; who received us, and lodged us three days courteously. And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever and of a bloody flux: to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed" (Acts 28:7-9).
3. Some Bible examples of indirect, non-miraculous answers to prayer.
- a. The servant of Abraham prayed and was answered but no miracle was involved: "And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand *here* by the well of water; and the daughters of the men of the city come out to draw water: And let it come to pass, that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink; and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also: *let the same be she that* thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master. And it came to pass, before he had done speaking, that, behold, Rebekah came out, who was born to Bethuel, son of Milcah, the wife of Nahor, Abraham's brother, with her pitcher upon her shoulder. And the damsel *was* very fair to look upon, a virgin, neither had any man known her: and she went down to the well, and filled her pitcher, and came up. And the servant ran to meet her, and said, Let me, I pray thee, drink a little water of thy pitcher. And she said, Drink, my lord: and she hastened, and let down her pitcher upon
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her hand, and gave him drink. And when she had done giving him drink, she said, I will draw *water* for thy camels also, until they have done drinking. And she hasted, and emptied her pitcher into the trough, and ran again unto the well to draw *water*, and drew for all his camels. And the man wondering at her held his peace, to wit whether the LORD had made his journey prosperous or not. And it came to pass, as the camels had done drinking, that the man took a golden earring of half a shekel weight, and two bracelets for her hands of ten *shekels* weight of gold; And said, Whose daughter *art* thou? tell me, I pray thee: is there room *in* thy father's house for us to lodge in? And she said unto him, I *am* the daughter of Bethuel the son of Milcah, which she bare unto Nahor. She said moreover unto him, We have both straw and provender enough, and room to lodge in. And the man bowed down his head, and worshipped the LORD. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of my master Abraham, who hath not left destitute my master of his mercy and his truth: I *being* in the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren" (Gen. 24:12-27).

- b. 1 Samuel 1:10-20: Hannah prayed for a son, then did what she could to bring about the birth of a child. She was in the child-bearing age; thus no miracle is demanded by the details of the case. How did God answer her prayer? "And she *was* in bitterness of soul, and prayed unto the LORD, and wept sore. And she vowed a vow, and said, O LORD of hosts, if thou wilt indeed look on the affliction of thine handmaid, and remember me, and not forget thine handmaid, but wilt give unto thine handmaid a man child, then I will give him unto the LORD all the days of his life, and there shall no razor come upon his head. And it came to pass, as she continued praying before the LORD, that Eli marked her mouth. Now Hannah, she spake in her heart; only her lips moved, but her voice was not heard: therefore Eli thought she had been drunken. And Eli said unto her, How long wilt thou be drunken? put away thy wine from thee. And Hannah answered and said, No, my lord, I *am* a woman of a sorrowful spirit: I have drunk neither wine nor strong drink, but have poured out my soul before the LORD. Count not thine handmaid for a daughter of Belial: for out of the abundance of my complaint and grief have I spoken hitherto. Then Eli answered and said, Go in peace: and the God of Israel grant *thee* thy petition that thou hast asked of him. And she said, Let thine handmaid find grace in thy sight. So the woman went her way, and did eat, and her countenance was no more *sad*. And they rose up in the morning early, and worshipped before the LORD, and returned, and came to their house to Ramah: and Elkanah knew Hannah his wife; and the LORD remembered her. Wherefore it came to pass, when the time was come about after Hannah had conceived, that she bare a son, and called his name Samuel, *saying*, Because I have asked him of the LORD" (1 Sam. 1:10-20).
- c. Elijah prayed several times for rain; a cloud developed, and rain fell. This was not miraculous for the rain came in the usual way: from rain clouds; it would have been miraculous if the rain had come from a clear sky, or if the clouds had immediately appeared and dropped rain.
- 1) 1 Kings 18:41-45: "And Elijah said unto Ahab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain. So Ahab went up to eat and to drink. And Elijah went up to the top of Carmel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees, And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times. And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto Ahab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not. And it came to pass in the mean while, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And Ahab rode, and went to Jezreel."
 - 2) James 5:16-18: "Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months. And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain,

and the earth brought forth her fruit."

E. There are some extreme views today regarding prayers.

1. The Deist says God created the universe, but that he then backed off and allows it to run itself; and that he has no further interest or involvement in its affairs.
 - a. They reject the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Christ, Bible miracles, the New Testament, the church, and all the other things that are so dear to us.
 - b. Their view categorically denies the efficacy of prayer since God is concerned.
 - c. This view is a plain rejection of what the Bible says, and thus is wrong.
2. The Pentecostals think that God answers prayers almost always, if not altogether, by direct miraculous means.
 - a. This view dictates to God the means for him to use in answering their demands.
 - b. They place a limit on God's ability to move and act in his own universe.
 - c. This view would limit the daily providence of God which does so much for man.
3. Others say that since the age of miracles has ceased in the church, that it does no good to pray since the only way God could answer would be directly by miracle.
 - a. One of this persuasion cannot see how God can act without that act being a miracle. Thus for him to answer a prayer would be a supernatural action.
 - b. "But I cannot see how he could answer without a miracle; I cannot understand how the providence of God can work."
 - c. But can anyone explain how a miracle does what it does? How did the angel loose Peter's chains without waking the guards? How did he open the gates? Acts 12.
 - d. Can you explain how water was turned into wine? Bread and fish were multiplied to feed many thousands of people? How a withered arm was restored? How sight was given to the blind? Just HOW does a miracle do what it does?
 - e. It is as hard to explain a miracle as to explain how God's providence works.
4. Then there are others who claim that the only benefit to be obtained by praying is the psychological effect praying can have on the individual's heart and mind.
 - a. But this would make prayer as effective for the infidel as it is for a Christian.
 - b. The Moslem, Hindu, idol worshipper, animalist, et al, would get as much out of prayer as a follower of Christ.

F. How does God answer our prayers today?

1. God is not limited to acting miraculously to bring about his will.
 - a. He rules his universe:
 - 1) Colossians 1:15-17: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether *they be* thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and **by him all things consist.**"
 - 2) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding all things by the word of his power**, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they."
 - b. He controls the storms, the sea, the planets, lightening, etc. by means of his natural laws.
 - c. Since he had the ability and power to create the universe and prescribe the laws by which it operates, he is certainly able to guide these laws and shape and guide human affairs when he deems necessary.
2. It is not our prerogative to tell God how to answer our prayers, but any answer he gives will be in

harmony with his will: "And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John. 5:14-15).

- a. It was the will of God that the age of miracles in the church should cease.
 - 1) Micah 7:15: "According to the days of thy coming out of the land of Egypt will I show unto him marvellous *things*." [The time period during which God planned to use miraculous works was equal to the time Israel spent in the wilderness, between Egypt and entry into Canaan—forty years. This would place the time when miracles would end somewhere in the later part of the first century].
 - 2) Mark 16:20: "And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen." [Since the word has been confirmed, it is confirmed for all time—hence no need for any more miraculous activities].
 - 3) 1 Corinthians 13:8-13: "Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known. And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these *is* charity." [Miracles were no longer necessary once the message of the gospel, the perfect law of liberty, had been fully revealed].
 - 4) Ephesians 4:11-14: "And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we *henceforth* be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, *and* cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." [When the faith (the gospel) was revealed and confirmed, we are to depend on the inspired word to carry out our responsibilities].
 - 5) Hebrews 1:1-4: "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by *his* Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds; Who being the brightness of *his* glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they." [Once the gospel message was confirmed, there was no further need for God to perform miracles; confirming the word was the purpose of supernatural works].
 - 6) 2 Timothy 3:15-17: "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."
 - b. Therefore, it is the will of God that the prayers we utter today will be answered by some means other than by miracles.
 - c. This means that God answers prayers today by means of his providence, since this is the only alternative.
3. The word providence is from the Latin word "providentia" which means "foresight."
 - a. Our English word suggests the idea that God will provide—providence.
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- b. It is used to denote the biblical idea of "the wisdom and power which God continually exercises in the preservation and government of the world, for the ends which he proposes to accomplish" (McClintock & Strong, Vol. VII, p.707).
 - c. Prayers are answered by this special providence God uses in reference to his saints.
 4. By his providential working, the Lord fulfills the promise to his children to provide for our food, clothing, shelter and other necessities. God fulfills this promise by his providence.
 - a. Psalms 37:25: "I have been young, and *now* am old; yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread."
 - b. Matthew 6:11: "Give us this day our daily bread."
 - c. Matthew 6:33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you."
 - d. But who can explain all the details that are involved? "For we walk by faith, not by sight" (2 Cor. 5:7). It is enough for us that God says he will do it; we do not need to know all the details. "The secret *things belong* unto the LORD our God: but those *things which are* revealed *belong* unto us and to our children for ever, that *we* may do all the words of this law" (Deut. 29:29).
 5. Hebrews 13:5-6: "*Let your conversation be* without covetousness; *and be* content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord *is* my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me." How does God fulfill this promise? That he has promised to so is the point of importance; we do not need to be concerned with how his providence operates to fulfill the promise.
 6. We ask God to heal the sick; if God answers our prayers, how does he heal them?
 - a. If he did so miraculously, then no ailing saint should ever die (since God acts without partiality). But the New Testament shows that we all must die and be resurrected at the end of time.
 - 1) Hebrews 9:27: "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment."
 - 2) 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18: "For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive *and* remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord. Wherefore comfort one another with these words."
 - 3) John 5:28-29: "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation."
 - b. How does he answer these prayers then? By means of the doctors, nurses, drugs, medicines, hospital facilities and equipment, various treatments and procedures, by the attitude of the patient, and by our own good interest. God's providence works in conjunction with all of these things, and heals many.
 - c. How else could it be done? We cannot explain exactly how his providence works any more than we can explain how a miracle operates.
 - d. We are not to doubt or worry how he answers these prayers; our lot is to pray fervently that he will provide what is needed—if it is his will.
 7. Suppose a 70-year-old man obeys the gospel after a life of wickedness; his wife reports that she had prayed for his salvation for 40 years.
 - a. The Lord heard and answered her prayers, but he saved her husband by the gospel.
 - b. Perhaps the providence of God led this man through a series of experiences and circumstances which lead to a softening of this man's heart.
 - c. Whatever the details were, they remain beyond our knowledge and comprehension. "...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (Jas. 5:16b).
 8. The disciples prayed for the kingdom to come (Mt. 6:10); they preached that this kingdom was "at

hand."

- a. But they expected an earthly kingdom; they received a spiritual kingdom.
- b. The Lord often brings about more and better things than what we prayed for. "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us" (Eph. 3:20).

III. CONCLUSION.

A. God is able to do some wonderful things for his people.

1. His resources are boundless, his love unlimited, his kindness genuine, his interest unsurpassed, his ear ever open, his hand ever extended, his eyes always alert to our problems, and his heart ever filled with compassion toward his people.
2. Shall we doubt his power, knowledge, skill, or his willingness to aid? Shall we doubt the resources of heaven? Are not all the elements of nature under his control?
3. God is able to see the dangers yet unsuspected by us; he is able by his providential actions to avert trouble.
 - a. We would not have many of our present problems if we had prayed more fervently and often in the past.
 - b. Solutions to our problems are best obtained in preventing their occurrence.
4. Our daily prayer should be, "Lead us not into temptation..." Also, ask him to lead us away from trouble, heartache, danger, anguish and unneeded hardships.

B. The story of Esther illustrates beautifully how God's providence answers prayer.

1. Esther was a Jewess who was born in the land of captivity. She was selected to be the new queen of Ahasuerus, the king of Persian Empire. He was the most powerful ruler on earth at the time.
 2. Haman, a prominent politician, became angry at the Jews and connived to get a law passed which would bring about the utter destruction of the Jewish race.
 3. Esther 4:13-17: "Then Mordecai commanded to answer Esther, Think not with thyself that thou shalt escape in the king's house, more than all the Jews. For if thou altogether holdest thy peace at this time, *then* shall there enlargement and deliverance arise to the Jews from another place; but thou and thy father's house shall be destroyed: and who knoweth whether thou art come to the kingdom for *such* a time as this? Then Esther bade *them* return Mordecai *this answer*, Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which *is* not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish. So Mordecai went his way, and did according to all that Esther had commanded him." Mordecai, Esther's kinsman who had reared her from childhood, came to her with the request that she take action to deliver her people (Esther 4:13-15). She told him to gather all the Jews together and fast (always accompanied with praying) for three days; she and her maidens would do likewise (Esth. 4:16-17).
 4. On the 3rd day, Esther entered the palace and was invited to approach the king.
 - a. If he had not extended the royal scepter, she would have been seized by the guards and slain: "All the king's servants, and the people of the king's provinces, do know, that whosoever, whether man or woman, shall come unto the king into the inner court, who is not called, *there is* one law of his to put *him* to death, except such to whom the king shall hold out the golden sceptre, that he may live: but I have not been called to come in unto the king these thirty days" (Esth. 4:11).
 - b. The king knew that there was something very special in her mind or else she would not have risked death to come before him uninvited. He asked that she present her request and it would be granted, unto half of the kingdom. She merely invited him and Haman to attend a banquet later that day (Esther 5:1-5).
 5. At the banquet, the king asked Esther what her real request was, for he knew that the invitation to the banquet was not the important matter she had in mind. She invited him and Haman to attend yet
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- another banquet the next day.
6. At this latter banquet, he again raised the question about her real request to which she replied: "Then Esther the queen answered and said, If I have found favour in thy sight, O king, and if it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request: For we are sold, I and my people, to be destroyed, to be slain, and to perish. But if we had been sold for bondmen and bondwomen, I had held my tongue, although the enemy could not countervail the king's damage" (Esth. 7:3-4).
 - a. He wanted to know who had caused the evil law to be passed: "Then the king Ahasuerus answered and said unto Esther the queen, Who is he, and where is he, that durst presume in his heart to do so? And Esther said, The adversary and enemy *is* this wicked Haman. Then Haman was afraid before the king and the queen" (Esth: 7:5-6).
 - b. When the king stepped from the room to think, Haman pleaded with the queen; the king returned and thought he was trying to "force" the queen.
 - c. Haman was hanged on the gallows he had prepared for the Jew, Mordecai.
 7. A law of the Medes and Persians could not be repealed, but could be amended. Mordecai, who was exalted to fill Haman's place, suggested that the king cause an amendment to be drawn up by which the Jews would be able to defend themselves when the day of their execution came. They succeeded in resisting their enemies.
 8. The name of God is not found in the book of Esther, yet his hand is seen on every page.
 - a. How were the Jews delivered? By the plans and efforts of Mordecai.
 - b. But those plans would have been useless if Esther had not been queen; how did she get to be queen? God's providence!
 - c. How were the Jews delivered? By that same providence of God! God was not going to allow his promises, plans, and purposes to come to nought.
 - d. Thus, he heard and answered the prayers of Esther, Mordecai, and all the Jews—no miracle was involved; everything seemed as natural as could be, but the providential hand of God was guiding, shaping, and fulfilling the complex experiences that were transpiring.
- C. Has his providence led you to a softened heart that is ready to obey the gospel?
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Counting the Cost of a Lost Soul

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. Picture these common occurrences of life:

1. A man who knows nothing about the Bible, or does not believe it; he lives a sensual, worldly life that focuses only on this world.
2. A man willfully refuses to obey the gospel, even though he knows the penalty for his action.
3. A Christian knowing his duty to God but willfully neglects or refuses to do his duty.
4. One who learns the truth, obeys the gospel, and faithfully follows the Lord daily.

B. What makes the difference between these individuals?

1. Many reasons could be given: he has no knowledge, no faith, no love, is stubborn, loves sin; he does not know, does not believe, or does not care.
2. A more basic cause is this: the value that is placed on the soul.
 - a. Luke 9:25: "For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?"
 - b. Matthew 16:26: "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

II. DISCUSSION.

A. Each of us possesses an immortal nature called soul or spirit.

1. We are made in the image of God.
 - a. Genesis 1:26-27: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them."
 - b. Acts 17:28: "For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring."
 - c. Like begets like; a camel can produce only another camel; a snake can produce only another snake; animals are not made in God's image, but humans are.
 - d. If we can learn what God's nature is, then we can see our own nature. In what sense are we made in God's image?
2. God is everlasting spirit:
 - a. John 4:24: "God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth."
 - b. Romans 16:26: "But now is made manifest, and by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations for the obedience of faith."
3. God has no flesh and bones—he is not a material being: "Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have" (Luke 24:39).
4. It is man's spirit that is made in God's image. But he needs a physical body to live on earth.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 15:50: "Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption."
 - b. Colossians 1:15: "Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature."
 - c. Zechariah 12:1: "The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him."
 - d. Hebrews 12:9: "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?"
 - e. 1 Corinthians 2:11: "For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."
5. The places to which the body and spirit go at death are not the same.
 - a. Matthew 27:59-60: "And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.”

- b. Acts 2:27: “Because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.”
- c. Luke 23:43: “And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.”
- d. Ecclesiastes 12:7: “Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was: and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.”
- e. James 2:26: “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.”
- f. 2 Corinthians 5:6: “Therefore we are always confident, knowing that, whilst we are at home in the body, we are absent from the Lord.”

B. Your soul is your most precious possession.

1. “For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt. 16:26).
2. It is precious because it had a divine origin.
 - a. Zechariah 12:1: “The burden of the word of the LORD for Israel, saith the LORD, which stretcheth forth the heavens, and layeth the foundation of the earth, and formeth the spirit of man within him.”
 - b. Hebrews 12:9: “Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?”
3. It is precious because it can commune with God while on earth.
 - a. We do this through worship.
 - b. No plant or animal has this prerogative! Can you image a corn stalk communing with God? Or a mouse or insect? Or a monkey or a whale?
4. It is precious because of the cost of its redemption.
 - a. The life and blood of Christ was the ransom paid:
 - 1) 1 Peter 1:18-19: “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”
 - 2) Galatians 4:4: “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law.”
 - 3) John 3:16: “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 - b. Just who is Christ? God’s one and only Son.
5. It is precious because it is eternal.
 - a. Psalms 22:26: “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever.”
 - b. Moses and Elijah had been gone from the earth from many centuries, but they were still alive, and appeared in the transfiguration scene: “And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light. And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with him. Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here: if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them: and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him.(Matt. 17:1-5).
 - c. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were still alive although they were gone from the earth even before the time of Moses: “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living” (Matt. 22:32).

- d. Lazarus and the rich man lived on after they died (Luke 16:19-31).
 - e. An eternal destiny awaits every soul: "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matt. 25:46).
- C. You can sell or trade your soul for something else.
- 1. You can exchange your soul for wealth and prosperity as some in the Bible did.
 - a. The rich young ruler (Matt. 19:16ff).
 - b. The foolish farmer (Luke 12:15-21).
 - c. This is done when we engage in unethical or unlawful business, or by putting riches before God: "And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (Mark 10:24-25).
 - 2. You can exchange your soul for the love of the world and worldly pleasures.
 - a. 2 Timothy 4:10: "For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world..." (2 Tim. 4:10).
 - b. Some love pleasure more than they love God: "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (2 Tim. 3:4).
 - c. Moses is a great example: "By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season" (Heb. 11:24-25).
 - 3. You can exchange your soul for popularity or friends.
 - a. Mark 15:15: "And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged him, to be crucified."
 - b. John 12:42-43: "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God."
- D. Exchanging our soul for anything else is always a foolish bargain.
- 1. Satan has no genuinely happy, contented old men.
 - a. What hope does a sinful soul have?
 - 1) Ephesians 2:12: "That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world."
 - 2) Hebrews 10:27: "But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries."
 - b. What consolation can the world offer when we love a loved one?
 - 2. The world will pass away, but the soul does not cease to exist.
 - a. The material world will be destroyed: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up" (2 Pet. 3:10).
 - b. The sinful elements of this world will be destroyed: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2:15-17).
 - c. Even if we were to gain the world and popularity with sin, we would still lose.
 - 3. Worldly gain must be left behind at death.
 - a. "How much did he leave? ALL."
 - 1) 1 Timothy 6:7: "For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out."
 - 2) Job 1:21: "And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither:
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the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of the LORD.”

- b. Alexander the Great was a man who conquered the world, but left it empty-handed.
- c. If we gain the world at the expense of our soul, we lose both!

III. CONCLUSION.

A. The loss of the soul is the most tragic of all losses.

1. The lesser losses are bad enough.
 - a. We might gain the world but lose our health—too sick to enjoy the gain.
 - b. We might gain the world but lose our life—what profit then?
2. The loss of the soul is a double loss.
 - a. We miss out (we lose) on heaven with all its glories.
 - b. We miss the spiritual blessings during this life: Peace, joy of hope, Christian home, fellowship with best people on earth, privilege of prayer, blessings of worship.
3. The loss of the soul is an entire loss.
 - a. We might lose some battle, or lose our wealth, or be deprived of our property: but we still have our life, our family, our health, our friends, and another chance perhaps.
 - b. But if we lose our soul, what else is left?
4. If we lose our soul, there is no compensation.
 - a. Fire might burn our house, but it can be replaced by insurance.
 - b. We might lose our eyesight, but we may gain a greater degree of hearing and feeling.
 - c. But if we lose our soul, that is nothing that can compensate for that loss.
5. A lost soul cannot be reclaimed after death.
 - a. Lost friendship, health, property, money can be restored.
 - b. But no angel in Heaven, no demon in Gehenna, no man on earth can redeem a soul lost in torment.
 - c. Only in life can a sinful soul be saved:
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 6:2: “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.”
 - 2) Hebrews 2:3: “How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him.”
 - 3) John 9:4: “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.”
 - 4) Acts 10:43: “To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.”
 - 5) Acts 16:30-31: “And brought them out, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house.”
 - 6) Acts 17:30: “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent.”
 - 7) Romans 10:10: “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”
 - 8) Acts 22:16: “And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.”

B. Do you value your soul?

1. As an alien sinner?
 2. As an erring saint?
 3. As a faithful child of God?
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