

GROWING IN FAITH



for those NEW to the faith or our church

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

57 S. Main Street – Doylestown, PA 18901

Rev. Jerry Schmoyer, Pastor

215-348-8086 jerry@schmoyer.net

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GROWING IN FAITH

For those new to the faith or our church

Welcome to the beginning of an exciting adventure! There's nothing greater than the Christian life! This booklet is designed to help you grow as a Christian. It is not meant to replace your Bible. That is your guide book, written by your Creator Who knows best how you operate. This study is to help guide you along the path of godly living. It covers the basics you'll need to know to get started and keep going.

You'll need to have an open Bible with you when you use this booklet. Refer to it often. Any translation that you are comfortable with will be fine. Something like the *New International Version* or the *New American Standard Version* are very popular. Try to stay away from paraphrases like *The Message* and *The Living Bible*. They are fine for devotional use but not well suited to Bible study.

Read the first page of each chapter and any supplemental pages that are with it. Then answer the questions given. If you are in a class, bring this booklet along so we can go over the answers together. If you are doing this on your own, please periodically show this booklet to me. Either way you should write down questions you have and we'll talk about them. Feel free to contact me at any time.

Always pray when you start a time of Bible study or reading. Ask God to reveal His truth to you so you can learn what He has for you. Pray as you progress, asking God questions and thanking Him for what you are learning. Keep up a running conversation with Him as you progress.

May God richly bless you as you begin this thrilling venture of getting to know God better.



Jerry Schmoyer, Pastor
Main Street Baptist Church
57 S. Main Street
Doylestown, PA 18901
215-348-8086
jerry@schmoyer.net
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1. FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH 1: GOD EXISTS

How do we know there is a God?

Everyone at one time or another wonders, is there really a God? How can I be sure? We've all heard people say man just made up the idea of a God to be a crutch for emotional cripples. What if they are right? Some even say the idea of a 'god' is harmful because it takes away a person's personal responsibility. They say we have outgrown the need of God in this enlightened, scientific era. How are we to answer these claims? How are we to teach our children? Paul says we must "Be ready always to give an answer to any man who asks you the reason of the hope that is in you." (1 Peter 3:15) What is our answer to those who say we cannot prove the existence of God?

First, we must admit we cannot prove God by the scientific method. But neither can anyone prove Napoleon. There is nothing of either of them to handle, to put under a microscope, but there is plenty of evidence to prove the existence of each one. We're only concerned with God, not Napoleon. There is logical, rational proof that there is a God. These are some of the main arguments:

1. THE COSOMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT is based on cause and effect. There must be an uncaused **cause** for every effect. No **effect** can be produced without a cause that is outside it and greater than it. That book on your table proves there was someone who made it, for it wouldn't have been able to make itself. The same is true of the world around us. This is also true of our subjective emotions like love and hate. There must have been someone beyond and greater than them to create them.

Part of this argument is based on **motion** in the universe. Nothing can move itself. An external agent or force is required. There must be a Being who is the ultimate source of all motion in the universe or it couldn't have gone from non motion to motion by itself.

Everything in nature is **interrelated** and absolutely dependent on the other. There must be a Being who is totally independent of and above this to start it all.

Everything is moving away from **perfection**, breaking down. The second law of thermodynamics states this. This winding down (entropy) points back to a starting time and shows things moving away from perfection. This, too, points back to God.

2. THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT is based on order and design. No one would ever think a wristwatch could come into being on its own. We assume there was an intelligent designer behind it. For this world to just 'happen' would be like the Gettysburg Address resulting from an explosion in a print shop! The fact that there is **order** in the universe points back to Someone causing that order (Hebrews 11:3). Evolution says it took billions of years for the correct it to just 'happen,' recognizing the unlikelihood of it. **Design**, too, shows there is a God. Whatever is composed of parts requires a designer (Romans 1:20). Creation is stamped with beauty and design to show us God (Psalm 19:1).

! GOD !

3. THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT uses the existence of our **moral nature** point to a God. Where did our moral nature come from? Surely our possession of it argues for the existence of a moral governor to whom man feels accountable and responsible. All people everywhere at all times have had moral standards and enforced them. All man always have known there is a right and wrong (Romans 2:14-15), even if they don't always see the same things as right and wrong. In addition, the moral values we hold inside are not always rewarded in this life. Something inside man cries that there must be reward for good and punishment for evil. All men long for justice. Where did this desire come from? Even more, when will it be fulfilled? This, and the basic belief in life beyond this life that all people have always held point to a power and force beyond man that will reward good and punish evil beyond this life. We all know inside there must be something more to life than just these years on this earth. Where did this restlessness and awareness come from if there was nothing there to meet it?

Man everywhere in all time has naturally known there is a **power greater than and outside** himself that he has worshipped. Satan counterfeits this but it is natural in man to look for that which is outside himself and greater than himself.

4. THE SUBJECTIVE INNER AWARENESS ARGUMENT isn't of the same ration basis as the arguments mentioned above, but those who are God's children know inside there is a God. It can't be put under a microscope, or even described, but there is a confident inner awareness that there is a God (Galatians 4:6) deep within us that gives an assurance beyond the need of external proof that there is a God who loves and cares. Where does this come from if not from God Himself?

If there is this strong, conclusive proof of God, then **WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE REJECT THE IDEA OF GOD?** I think the basic reason is that man doesn't want to believe in God today because if he admits there is a power greater than and outside himself then it only stands to reason that man is accountable to that power. If there is a God man is responsible to find what God would have of him and then obey it. Man doesn't want that, he wants to be his own god and not submit to Anyone. Thus it isn't lack of evidence that man rejects the idea of God, but purely because of self-centered presuppositions. In order to live life for himself and continue in his own prideful and selfish existence, man must deny the fact of a God. To admit to a God means man then must obey His will and direction or face the consequences. Modern man doesn't want to do either. He thinks by denying there is a God he exempts himself from accountability to that God. However just saying God doesn't exist doesn't make it so. Even convincing yourself completely He doesn't exist doe nothing to remove Him from existence. In doing so man is gambling with his eternal existence, putting it on the line for a few short years of self-centered indulgence.

How should we approach those who deny the existence of God? Don't bring up these rational, intellectual arguments unless they are open enough to consider them. Belief starts in the heart, not the head. Pray for them to be open to the truth. Share with them how Jesus meets your needs, gives you meaning and satisfaction, purpose and peace. They can't argue with this nor disprove it. God will use it in His time to convict them of their need. He will fan the flames you start. Keep off intellectual arguments, you'll never force anyone to believe something they don't want to believe. They are only good with those who are open to finding the truth. Then use them, for we must always be ready to give a person the reason of the hope that is in us!

If God exists, what is He like?

Do you have a big God or a little God? A little girl listened attentively as her father read the family devotions. She seemed awed by her parents' talk of God's limitless power and mercy. "Daddy," she asked, placing her little hands on his knees, "how big is God?" Her father thought for a moment and answered, "Honey, He is always just a little bigger than you need."

How would YOU answer the question about how big God is? Is He bigger than YOUR needs? Do you really believe that? Most people don't. How are we to show them that we have a God bigger than any of their problems?

GOD AS A PERSON When one accepts the reality that a God exists, the next step is for them to understand that God is a person. To many God is just a force, an energy source, a 'Mother Nature' which is an unfeeling power. Thus there is no possibility of a personal relationship or intimacy. How can we explain that not only is there a God, but that He is a person?

First of all, we must understand what personality is. Personality means there is a **mind** that can think and reason, a free **will** than can make moral choices, and **emotions** which can feel. If man has these, where did they come from?

As a Person, God has a **mind** which to think and reason. That is the creative source behind everything working so perfectly and fitting together so well in the universe, everything from the tiniest atom to a complex human being to the largest galaxy. Such a perfect, intricate system has 'design' and 'intelligence' written all over it.

As a Person, God has a free **will** to make choices. Before the creation of the world He chose to make man with a free will, too, despite knowing man would sin and be separated from God eternally. God then chose to come to earth, Himself, in the form of a man, to pay man's eternal penalty for sin by suffering what we would suffer for all eternity on the cross.

As a Person, God has **emotions**. God has this built into nature. Music is more than just notes and sounds. They were created to touch a deep spot in man. The beauty of a sunset, the majesty of a waterfall, the awesomeness of the ocean -- all these were created by an emotional Being to evoke emotion in man. Did love and hate just evolve? If so, why so completely in man, but not in animals or trees? Only man can plan ahead in a rational way (not just be natural instinct for survival). Only man knows inside that there must be justice some where, some time. Only man can feel guilt. Only man has sought to find and contact God. All peoples everywhere have had a natural, built-in desire to find and know God. If God is not personal, where does this across-the-board desire for personal contact with Him come from?

THE NON-MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD These are the attributes of God which do not involve moral qualities. They are:

Omnipresence God is all ("omni") present ("presence"). He is everywhere (Psalm 138:7-12). There is no place He is not. He is in (but not limited to) nature, space, everywhere. There is no place anywhere in the universe, however large or small, where He is not.

Omniscience God has all knowledge. He knows everything (Proverbs 15:3; Jeremiah 23:23-25). There is nothing He doesn't know. We don't have to inform or remind Him of anything. He knows the future as thoroughly as the past, our every fleeting thought.

Omnipotence God has all power. He is able to do whatever He wants (Job 42:2). There is nothing He cannot do. He is able to do anything. He is always able to do whatever we need, but He isn't always willing. Sometimes He knows it would be better for us in the long run as well as for His own glory to not do a thing. He is always able to do anything and everything.

Sovereignty God is the supreme ruler of all (Ephesians 1). He is in sovereign control of that which He created. Since He formed and made everything, both by right and supremacy He can do anything He wants with His creation. He has no limits. He has no one He needs to get permission from before He can act. He is sovereign.

Immutability God is unchangeable (James 1:17). This is a real anchor because it means that God's love and mercy that is available for us today will always be available. The rules will never change because God Himself will never change. Sometimes His plan changes, but He Himself will never change for He cannot change. Perfection can't be improved on.

Eternal There is no beginning or end to God (Genesis 21:23). He is free from all succession of time. He created time to serve Him in one small part of His plan, but He is far above time and unaffected by it. To try and squeeze Him into time and look for a beginning or end to Him is ridiculous. Time will be gone, so there can be no end to anything!

THE MORAL ATTRIBUTES OF GOD These do involve moral qualities.

Holiness God is separate from moral evil and sin (Leviticus 11:44-45). He is sinless and unable to sin (in thought or deed). He is absolute perfection.

Righteousness & justice This is how God treats His creation (II Chron. 2:6). God imposes just laws and sanctions. His rewards and punishments are fair and right. We can never cause Him of being unfair or unjust. We may not understand everything from our perspective, but we know that all God does is right.

Truth God's knowledge, declarations and representations conform to reality (John 17:3). God Himself and all He does is truth, without any error or mistake. He is never wrong.

Goodness God is good. The non-moral attributes can seem hard and cold, but when guided by God's goodness we know that the very best is being done for us! These include:

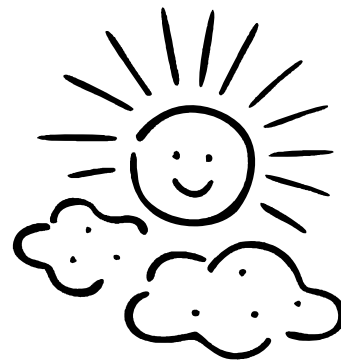
Love The part of God's nature that motivates Him to communicate Himself to man, to get involved with man, to pay for sin for man so man can be pardoned. This is a rational and voluntary affection, not a mere emotional impulse (I John 4:8). It is the motive for all God does for and with His people.

Benevolence This is the affection which He feels and shows to His creatures. It is manifested to us in His care for our welfare (Psalm 154:9). God cannot hate what He made, only what was later added to that creation, which is sin (John 14:5).

Grace God's Riches At Christ's Expense. Grace is goodness manifested to the ill-deserving (which is everyone). Grace is an essential quality of God, but His use of it is optional (Eph. 2:4; James 5:11). All we have is because of His grace (Eph. 2:8-9). God shows grace to everyone in withholding judgment on sin (Ex 34:6) and provision of salvation (I John 2:). For His people His grace is seen in their election and foreordination (Acts 18:27), redemption (Eph. 1:7-8), salvation (Acts 18:27), sanctification (Rom 5:21; Titus 2:11-12), preservation (II Cor 12:9), service (Heb 12:28) and final presentation (I Pt 1:13).

Mercy This is goodness manifested to those who are in misery or distress (also called compassion, pity, loving-kindness). Grace is getting what we don't deserve from God (goodness), mercy is not getting what we do deserve from God (justice, punishment).

Thus God is a personal God with all the traits we would naturally expect of God: power, control and goodness. With such a God in control there is no reason for fear or worry!



2. FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH 2: THE BIBLE IS TRUE

How do we know the Bible is inspired?

Has anyone ever challenged you about how you know the Bible is true? What do you say when they state that anyone could write a book and in it claim inspiration? No one doubts that the Bible claims to be inspired by God, but so do other 'holy' books. How do we know the Bible is the one true book from God to man? This is the way I explain it:

Starting with the acceptance that there is a God (article 1 in this series), then it is reasonable that God would reveal Himself to man. If he didn't man could never know anything about Him. God has revealed some things about Himself in creation, but that is just a rough sketch. For man to really know God **it is necessary for God to reveal Himself to man**, for man could never find God without God making the first move. If God has truth to reveal, if man is accountable, and if God wants a relationship with man that must start from God's side. Not only is this necessary, **it is also possible for God to reveal Himself to man**. Were He really God it would be totally within His possibility to communicate truth to us and keep it accurate down to our day. That would not be too hard for Him at all. Thus we accept that a revelation from God to man is both possible and necessary. But is the Bible that revelation? I say it is.



18 REASONS FROM OUTSIDE THE BIBLE PROVING IT IS GOD'S WORD

1. The Bible is **theocentric** (God-centered), not anthropocentric (man-centered). If man wrote the Bible, he would be the leading character. In the Bible God is sovereign and absolute authority (I Chronicles 29:11; Isaiah 43:7). Man's highest good is submission to His will. The purpose of all we do is for His glory (Revelation 4:11). All other 'holy' books focus on man and build up man, not God.

2. The Bible is **monotheistic** (one God), not polytheistic (more than one god). 'Scholars' say that man started with many gods and eventually evolved to having just one. The Bible, at the beginning of man, says there was just one. If man were writing the Bible he would have one God evolve out of many. Even the fact that the Jews were worshipping the golden calf and other gods at the

time the first commandment was written (saying God was the only god, Exodus 20:1-6) show that even they believed there was more than one God.

3. The fact of the **Trinity** helps prove man didn't write the Bible. Would natural man write about something that he could not understand, something with no parallel or analogy in nature? No finite mind has ever comprehended how 3 separate persons could form one essence/substance. If man wrote the Bible he would NOT write about a Triune God.

4. If man wrote the Bible, would he say that the world was **created** from nothing (Hebrews 11:3)? Nothing is a state man has never known. He would come up with some rational explanation, as evolution tries to do today.



5. If man wrote the Bible would he say his basic nature is evil and **sinful** (Romans 3:23)? Would man say there was nothing he could do but accept God's cure for sin (Ephesians 2:8-9). Every religion man has developed or 'holy' book man has written has something man must do to earn/deserve removal of sin, but not the Bible.

6. The **extent of revelation** in the Bible shows it is beyond what man could or would write. How could man write of things beyond his own senses and experiences? Yet the Bible speaks authoritatively about heaven, hell and eternity without hesitation (I Corinthians 2:9-12; II Corinthians 5:8; Luke 16:19; Revelation 19:20-21).

7. If man wrote the Bible, its **ethics** would be based on individual, relative decisions (Judges 17:6) rather than absolutes. Because man is a child of wrath (Ephesians 2:3) by nature his ethics would be corrupt (as they are today apart from the Bible) and would end in chaos. One example: the Bible tells us to use things (I Corinthians 7:31) and love people (Romans 12:10). Man's ethics are the opposite.

8. It is humanly impossible for 44 authors over a period of 1500 years unknown to each other and from vastly different backgrounds and cultures to arrive at 66 books so internally systematic and consistent as the Bible. It would be like 44 men each tossing a stone on a pile over 1500 years and the finished product being a modern hospital. There must have been one Author behind it all.

9. The fantastic number of **fulfilled prophecies** in the Bible show that it is no book authored by mere man. Experts in probability mathematics have come up with these statistics concerning the following prophecies:

7 prophecies against Tyre in Ezekiel 26:3-4,7-8,12,14,21 coming true: 1 in 7.5×10^7

5 prophecies against Samaria in Hosea 13:16 & Micah 1:6 come true: 1 in 4×10^4

5 prophecies against Gaza & Ashkelon in Amos 1:8, Jer 47:5, Zeph 2:4-7: 1 in 1.2×10^4
 3 prophecies against Moab & Ammon in Ezek 25:3-4, Jer 48:47; 49:6: 1 in 10^3
 9 prophecies against Edom in Isa 34:6-15, Jer 49:17-18; Ezk 25:13-14; 35:5-7: 1 in 10^4
 8 prophecies against Babylon in Isa 13:19-22; 14:23; Jer 51:26,43: 1 in 5×10^9
 9 prophecies about Jerusalem in Jeremiah 31:38-40: 1 in 8×10^{10}
 7 prophecies about Palestine in Lev 26:31-33; Ezek 36:33-35: 1 in 2×10^5
 9 prophecies about Petra & Edom in Isa 34:6-18; Ezek 25:13-14; 35:5-7:1 in 2×10^5
 4 prophecies about Thebes & Memphis in Ezek 30:13-15: 1 in 10^3
 4 prophecies about Nineveh in Nahum 1:8,10; 2:6; 3:10,13,19: 1 in 10^2

The probability of these 11 prophecies coming true is 1 in 5.76×10^{59} ! This is almost impossible to visualize. Suppose this number were silver dollars. There would be enough to fill 10^{28} suns! Or think of it like this. In the universe there are about 2 trillion galaxies, each containing about 100 million stars. From our 5×10^{59} we could make all of the stars in all of the galaxies 2×10^5 times! Only one silver dollar in all of these stands for the chance a writer could have guessed all these prophecies correctly! Even more astounding is the fact that these are only 11 prophecies. There are literally hundreds and hundreds of others which have already come true. (For more information about this see "Evidence That Demands A Verdict" by Josh McDowell).

10. The exceptional **literary value** of the Bible cannot be attributed to the natural ability of human writers. How could such unlearned men write such a surpassing piece of literary genius beyond their own ability? The Bible far exceeds the intellectual and moral qualifications of other books being written in its time such as the Talmud (Jewish), Apocrypha (Christian) and Koran (Islamic). The living quality of the words, reaching to all ages and social positions of people for century after century show its uniqueness. The Bible is deep enough for the most gifted scholar to spend a lifetime in one small part of it and never get out all there is, but also simple enough for a young child to read and understand. One of the greatest truths expressed is just 7 monosyllables, each 3 letters or less: "You in me and I in you" (John 14:20). The Bible stories are never hurried or cramped, neither are they drawn out and boring. The Bible does not gloss over the sins of its heroes, neither does it overemphasize them. The values and opinions of the individual writers are not the focus, just the story they are telling.

11. Another proof for the Bible not being written by man is its **enduring freshness**. Voltaire said 150 years ago: "Within 100 years the Bible will be obsolete." It has not happened, in fact his home now houses a Bible society! The Bible never grows old. No other book in the world not only invites but sustains a ceaseless re-reading. Other books come and go, but the Bible has remained for thousands of years. It remains a fresh, up-to-date book, not an old book.

12. If man wrote the Bible would he say to further spiritual ends by love & reliance on divine **power** or by political force? The Inquisition and Crusades in Christianity as well as the history of Islam, Shintoism, Nazism, etc., all show man used political force to spread their beliefs. The Bible commands to do it in a way that is not natural for man, the opposite way.



13. No human **scientist** has been able to avoid being obsolete in a later time. Science is always changing but the Bible is scientifically infallible in all ages. The Bible spoke accurately of scientific truth thousands of years before man 'discovered' them, while the very writers often believed the opposite of what they were writing. For example, the Bible says the life of the flesh is in the blood (Leviticus 17:11) yet until recent times doctors bled people to cure them. The Bible says the physical world is basically non-physical in its ultimate essence (Hebrews 11:3; Colossians 1:16-17), something no human writer could or would have guessed at. The Bible has always said the earth was round (Isaiah 40:22), rotates (Job 38:12,14), has gravity (Job 26:7), and the whole solar system orbits in the universe (Psalm 19:16). Man believed the moon was greater than the earth for many centuries but the Bible says opposite (Genesis 1:16). Even atomic energy and its results is found in II Peter 3:10-12 (the Greek word means to "loose" or "set free" as what happens when atoms are released). The laws of thermodynamics are there, too: #1 (Genesis 2:1-2; Hebrews 4:3,10) and # 2 (Psalm 102:25-27; Hebrews 1:10-12; Romans 8:20-22). There are hundreds of other examples, too.

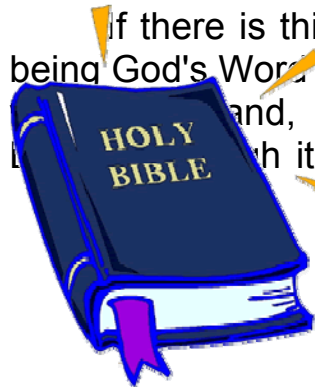
14. The number and accuracy of the **ancient manuscripts** of the Bible that have come down to us today show God's work in giving and keeping the Bible for us. Of Caesar's "Gallic Wars" we have only 9 manuscripts, the oldest 900 years after the original. Of the "History of Thucydides" and "History of Herodotus" we have only 8 manuscripts each, from 1300 years after they happened. Yet of the Old Testament we have 1,700 manuscripts, the oldest 100 years after the original. The variation percentage between them is one minor difference every 2,000 words! Evidence for the New Testament is even greater: 13,000 manuscripts with the oldest portion 10 years after the original and the variation percentage being only one minor difference every 200,000 words! Manuscripts have come down in many different languages and large portions come to us quoted in the works of hundreds of authors. The recent discover of the Dead Sea Scrolls pushed back the date of the earliest Old Testament manuscripts 1,000 years, yet there was no difference between them and what we had before they were discovered!

15. The study of **archaeology** continues to prove there are no historical inaccuracies in the Bible. William F. Albright, one of the greatest archaeologists ever, said, "The Bible's incredible historical memory has been many times validated by the process of discovery. No archaeological discovery has contradicted a Biblical reference." For many years scholars thought the Bible in error about the Hittites for no trace of that vast and great civilization had ever been found. In recent years, though, much has been found about them, again validating the truth of the Bible.

16. The preservation and regathering of the **nation Israel** after 2,000 years is proof of the greatness of the Bible. It has never happened, nor was it ever thought possible to happen, for a group of people to survive 2,000 without a homeland yet stay a separate cultural unity. That has happened with the Jews. Where are the Ammonites? Philistines? Hittites? Not only that, but the Jews are now back in their homeland, truly a sociological miracle!

17. The **inner testimony of the Holy Spirit** inside His people gives us assurance that the Bible is true. He gives us peace and assurance within that the Bible indeed is God's book.

18. The **life and resurrection of Jesus** also give validity to the Bible. If everything about Him, His deity and His resurrection is true, then the Bible is true. If it is not true the Bible cannot be from God. This will be considered in the next article about the deity of Jesus.



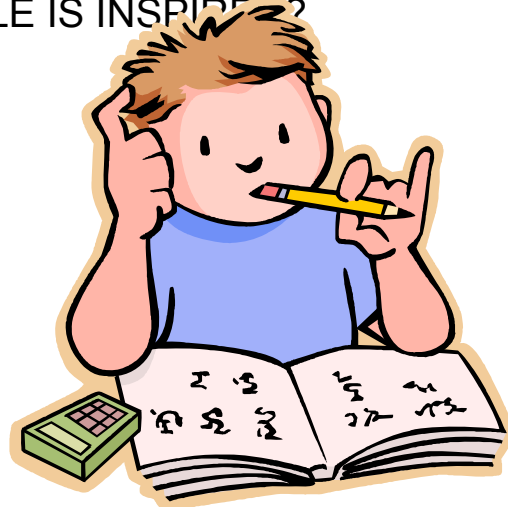
If there is this great body of evidence, why do so many deny the Bible as being God's Word? Let me answer that with a story. Many years ago, while on a vacation, a wealthy man was fascinated by a powerful microscope. With its lens to study crystals and the petals of flowers, he was amazed at their beauty and detail. He bought one and took it home. He thoroughly enjoyed using it until one day he examined some food he was planning to eat for dinner. He discovered tiny living creatures were crawling in it. He was especially fond of this food and didn't know what to do. Finally he concluded there was only one way out of this dilemma: he smashed the microscope to pieces. That is what man tries to do to the Bible when it shows up his sin. Like bugs under a rock run from the light when the rock is turned over, so man in sin runs from the light of God's truth about him.

ASSIGNMENT

After reading the first two chapters, answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. HOW DO YOU KNOW THERE IS A GOD?

2. HOW DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED?



3. FOUNDATIONAL TRUTH 3:

JESUS IS GOD

How do we know Jesus is God?

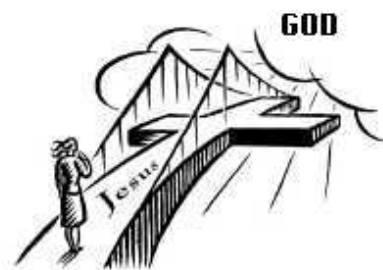


Did a man named Jesus really live in Palestine 2,000 years ago? Certainly, there is no doubt or question about that. No secular historian disbelieves that, for it is a proven fact of history. Many historians of Jesus' day wrote about Him. What is of much debate, however, is if He was God or not. Was He just a man like everyone else, or was He really and truly God? Did He just say He was? Or did His followers later write in such a way to make Him seem to be God when He had no such claims? The implications of these answers are great. How can we as

Christians be sure? Lets look at some proofs of His deity from within and without the Bible.

LORD, LUNATIC or LIAR

First, there is no doubt that **Jesus claimed to** life points to that. He verbally claimed to be God (ma 17:5; etc.). He accepted worship as if He were God (sin (Mark 2:5). Now, what are we to make of some possibilities about such a person. He is crazy, a **lunatic**, for he truly thinks he is God but is wrong. He knows he isn't God but tries to convince everyone he is anyway, thus he is a **liar**. Or he really is God and **Lord** of all! Lord, lunatic or liar are our options. Just a good man, a fine teacher, a moral example -- these are not options for one who claims to be God! If He is a lunatic or liar He doesn't qualify as a good, fine person. If He is Lord He is overqualified and far more than just a good, fine person. Thus He is either God to be worshipped and obeyed or an impostor to be forgotten and ignored.

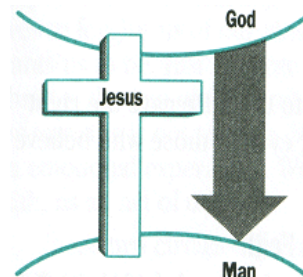


FULFILLED PROPHECIES

To prove He is Lord we turn to the Bible, not to passages about miracles and claims that could possibly have been made up by writers after His death, but to Old Testament Prophecies whose fulfillment could not have been faked. Listed below are

61 Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah with their fulfillment in the New Testament also recorded:

1. Born of the seed of woman: Gen 3:15; Gal 4:4, Matt. 1:20
2. Born of a virgin: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18,24,25; Lk 1:26-35
3. Son of God: Ps 2:7 (I Chron 17:11-14; II Sam 7:12-16), Mt 3:17; 16:16 (Mk 9:7; Lk 9:35)
4. Seed of Abraham Genesis 22:18 (12:2-3); Matthew 1:1; Gal 3:16
5. Son of Isaac: Genesis 21:12; Lk 3:23,34 (Mt 1:2)
6. Son of Jacob: (Num. 24:17 (Gen 35:10-12); Lk 3:23,34 (Mt 1:2; Lk 1:33)
7. Tribe of Judah: Genesis 49:10; Lk 3:23,33 (Mt 1:2; Heb 7:14)
8. Family line of Jesse: Isaiah 11:1, 10; Luke 3:23,32 (Mt 1:6)
9. House of David: Jeremiah 23:5 (II Sam 7:12-16; Ps 132:11); Lk 3:23,31 (Mt 1:1; 9:27)
10. Born at Bethlehem: Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1 (Jn 7:42, Mt 2:4-8; Lk 2:4-7)
11. Presented with gifts: Psalm 72:10 (Isaiah 60:6); Matthew 2:1,11
12. Herod kills children: Jeremiah 31:15; Matthew 2:16
13. His pre-existence: Micah 5:2 (Isa 9:6-7; Ps 102:25); Col 1:17 (Jn 1:1-2; 8:58; Rev 1:17)
14. He shall be called Lord: Psalm 110:1 (Jere 23:6); Luke 2:11; 20:41-44
15. Shall be Immanuel (God With Us): Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 7:16
16. Shall be a prophet: Deut 18:18; Matthew 21:11 (Luke 7:16; Jn 4:19; 6:14; 7:40)
17. He shall be a priest: Psalm 110:4; Hebrews 3:1; 5:5-6
18. He shall be a judge: Isaiah 33:22; John 5:30; II Timothy 4:1
19. He shall be a king: Psalm 2:6 (Zech. 9:9; Jer 23:5); Matthew 27:37; 21:5 (John 18:33-38)
20. Special anointing of the Holy Spirit: Isaiah 11:2; Matthew 3:16-17; 12:17-21 (Mk 1:10-11)
21. His zeal for God: Psalm 69:9; John 2:15-17
22. Preceded by messenger: Isaiah 40:3; Matthew 3:1-2; 3:3; 11:10
23. Ministry to begin in Galilee: Isaiah 9:1; Matthew 4:12,13,17
24. Ministry of miracles: Isaiah 35:5, 6a; 32:3,4; Matthew 9:32,33,35; 11:4-6 (John 5:5-9)
25. Teacher of parables: Psalm 78:2; Matthew 13:34
26. He was to enter the temple: Malachi 3:1; Matthew 21:12
27. He was to enter Jerusalem on a donkey: Zechariah 9:9; Luke 19:35,36,37a (Mt 21:6-11)
28. "Stone of Stumbling" to the Jews: Psa 118:22 (Isa 8:14; 28:16); I Peter 2:7 (Rom 9:32-33)
29. "Light" to Gentiles: Isaiah 60:3; 49:6; Acts 13:47,48a; 26:23; 28:28
30. Betrayed by a friend: Psalm 41:9; 55:12-14; Matthew 10:4; 26:49-50; Jn 13:21
31. Sold for 30 pieces of silver: Zechariah 11:12; Matthew 26:15; 27:3
32. Money to be thrown in God's house: Zechariah 11:13b; Matthew 27:5a
33. Price given for potter's field: Zechariah 11:13b; Matthew 27:7
34. Forsaken by His disciples: Zechariah 13:7; Mark 14:50 (Mt 26:31; Mk 14:27)
35. Accused by false witnesses: Psalm 35:11; Matthew 26:59-61
36. Dumb before accusers: Isaiah 53:7; Matthew 27:12-19
37. Wounded and bruised: Isaiah 53:5 (Zech 13:6); Matthew 27:26
38. Smitten and spit upon: Isaiah 50:6 (Micah 5:1); Matthew 26:67 (Luke 22:63)
39. Mocked: Psalm 22: 7,8; Matthew 27:31
40. Fell under the cross: Psalm 109:24-25; John 19:17; Luke 23:26; Mt 27:31-32
41. Hands and feet pierced: Psalm 22:16 (Zech 12:10); Luke 23:33 (John 20:25)
42. Crucified with thieves: Isaiah 53:12; Matthew 27:38 (Mk 15:27,28)
43. Made intercession for His persecutors: Isaiah 53:12; Luke 23:34
44. Rejected by His own people: Isaiah 53:3 (Ps 69:8; 118:22); John 7:5,48; 1:11 (Mt 21:42,43)
45. Hated without a cause: Psalm 69:4 (Isa 49:7); John 15:25



46. Friends stood afar off: Psalm 38:11; Luke 23:49 (Mk 15:40; Mt 27:55-56)
47. People shook their heads: Psalm 109:25; 22:7; Matthew 27:39
48. Stared upon: Psalm 22:17; Luke 23:35
49. Garments parted and lots cast: Psalm 22:18; John 19:23-24
50. To suffer thirst: Psalm 69:21; 22:15; John 19:28
51. Gall and vinegar offered Him: Psalm 69:21; Matthew 27:34
52. His forsaken cry: Psalm 22:1; Matthew 26:46
53. Committed Himself to God: Psalm 31:5; Luke 23:46
54. Bones not broken: Psalm 34:20; John 19:33
55. Heart broken: Psalm 22:14; John 19:34
56. His side pierced: Zech 12:10; John 19:34
57. Darkness over the land: Amos 8:9; Matthew 27:45
58. Buried in rich man's tomb: Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60
59. Resurrection: Psalm 16:10; 30:3; 41:10; 118:17 (Hosea 6:2); Acts 2:31(Lk 24:46; Mk 16:16)
60. Ascension: Psalm 68:18a; Acts 1:9
61. Seated at right hand of God: Psalm 110:1; Heb. 1:3 (Mk 16:19; Acts 2:34,35)

No one else in history ever came near to fulfilling these, and no one can since the birth records and tribal records of all Jews were destroyed in Jerusalem in 70 AD. The fulfillment of these prove the authenticity of the Bible as God's Word as the fact that Jesus is God.

The probability of just 1 through 8 coming true would be 1 in 10 with 16 0's. (If each chance is a silver dollar and they were laid down side-by-side on state of Texas they would cover whole state 2' deep! One is marked, all others not. Blindfold a man and let him walk anywhere, chances he'd pick right one same as first 8 prophecies just happening!



THE RESURRECTION

In actuality the proof of the deity of Jesus raises and falls on truth of His **resurrection**. He said He would come back to life, then claimed to have done so. His followers clearly claimed the same thing for them. Were they right? First, it stands to reason to assume that something like resurrection from dead to an eternal body isn't something a person would just make up! It would be too unbelievable, too unproveable, too far out for someone to have just made it up.

If Jesus didn't come back to life, what else could have happened to his body? Some say the disciples stole His body, but how would they gain courage to preach that they didn't have before? Why would they give up their lives for something they knew was a lie? So, others say, enemies stole the body. Then they would have said so and showed it to disprove the resurrection when that was first claimed. Neither theory explains the eye-witness accounts of over 500 people who saw Jesus alive after the crucifixion. More common is the swoon theory, that Jesus never really died but swooned then came 'to' later. But he was pronounced dead by experienced Roman executioners after having a spear run through His heart. He spent 3 days wrapped totally in cloth and covered with 100 pounds of spices, with no food or water. He would have had to come to, get out of the wrappings while leaving them there in the shape of

a cocoon as if He were still in them, with hands pierced by nails move the monstrous rock from inside with no handholds, overpower the Roman soldiers, walk many miles on feet pierced by nails, and then prove to those He met that He had a superior, eternal body! That takes more faith than believing in the resurrection!

There is **additional proof of the resurrection**. Jesus appeared 10 times to over 500 people. If there was no resurrection how do we explain the change in the disciples, the spread of the early church, the conversion of Paul, the start of the Lord's Supper and baptism, the switch of the day of worship from Saturday to Sunday and the impact His life has had even to today. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "The name of Jesus is not so much written as plowed into the history of the world." A liar or lunatic can't do that!



IF GOD BECAME MAN, THEN YOU WOULD EXPECT HIM TO:

One more line of reasoning is to ask yourself, "If God became man, what would we expect of Him?" Jesus fulfilled all we'd ask!

1. **Have an unusual entrance into life.** The virgin birth is the most unusual entrance ever. It, too, is not something someone would choose were they making the whole thing up. How would the idea of a virgin birth ever be considered if it weren't true?

2. **Be without sin.** Jesus claimed to be sinless (John 8:46) as do those who lived with Him 24 hours a day (Peter, John and Matthew). So do brothers who grew up in His family, seeing His whole life up close (James and Jude). Even enemies witnessed to His sinlessness (The thief on the cross, Pilate and the Centurion at the crucifixion).

3. **Manifest the supernatural in the form of miracles.** Jesus claimed to do miracles, and they were attested to by Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Peter, Jude and James.

4. **Have an acute sense of difference from others.** Jesus saw Himself as different, unique, and others saw Him that way, too. Even Jewish and Roman historians saw Him as not the same as other men, as does the Koran and many scholars today.

5. **Speak the greatest words ever spoken.** Jesus said His words would never pass away and they haven't! Others said that no one spoke as He did, and that is still true. Jesus is the person most quoted by religious and secular historians, teachers and philosophers.

6. **Have a lasting and universal influence.** Historians agree that Jesus is the most influential life ever lived on this planet.

7. **Satisfy the spiritual hunger in man.** Jesus met the inner needs in Matthew, Peter, Nicodemus, Zachaeus, the woman at the well, and countless others then and through the ages up to today. Truly Jesus satisfies!

8. **Exercise power over death.** Jesus claimed to have power over death and proved it by His own resurrection. He brought the dead back to life: widow of Nain's

son, Centurion's servant, Lazarus and Dorcas (through Peter). (For more information along these lines see "Evidence That Demands A Verdict," by Josh McDowell.)

Was Jesus God? You'll have to decide for yourself. However if He wasn't then no one will ever be. If Jesus were not God, then He deserved an Oscar!

CHRIST'S CLAIMS OF DEITY

Claimed Equality With God

Matt. 28:19; John 5:17-18; 12:45; 13:20; 14:1, 9

Claimed Oneness With God

Matt 4:7; Luke 4:12; 8:39; John 10:30, 36-38; 17:11, 21-22; 20:28

Claimed To Be Sent By God

John 4:34; 5:37; 7:16, 28-29; 8:16; 9:4; 11:42; 14:24; 16:28; 17:18, 23

Claimed To Be The Son of God

Matt 16:17; 22:42-45; Mark 12:35-37; 14:61-62; Luke 20:41; John 9:35-37; 22:69-70

Claimed To Be From Heaven

John 6:33, 35, 51

Claimed Attributes of God

John 8:42; 16:15

Omniscience Matt 11:21-22; Luke 10:13

Omnipresence Matt 18:20; 28:20

Omnipotence Mark 14:61-63; Luke 22:69-70; John 2:19, 10:18; 11:25-27

Forgive sin Mark 2:5,9,10; Luke 5:20-21; 7:48-49

Divine Authority Matt 7:21-23; 28:18

Honor John 5:22-23

Pre-Existence John 8:58; 17:5



ASSIGNMENT

After reading the first two chapters, answer the following questions to the best of your ability:

1. HOW DO YOU KNOW THERE IS A GOD?

2. HOW DO YOU KNOW THE BIBLE IS INSPIRED?

3. HOW DO YOU KNOW JESUS IS GOD?

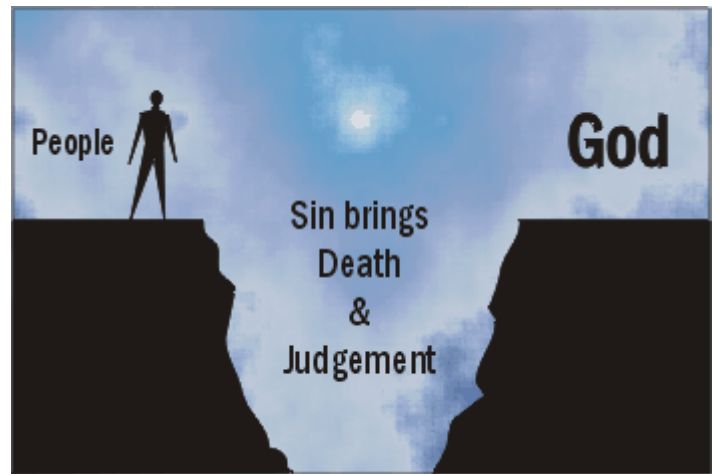


4. NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN

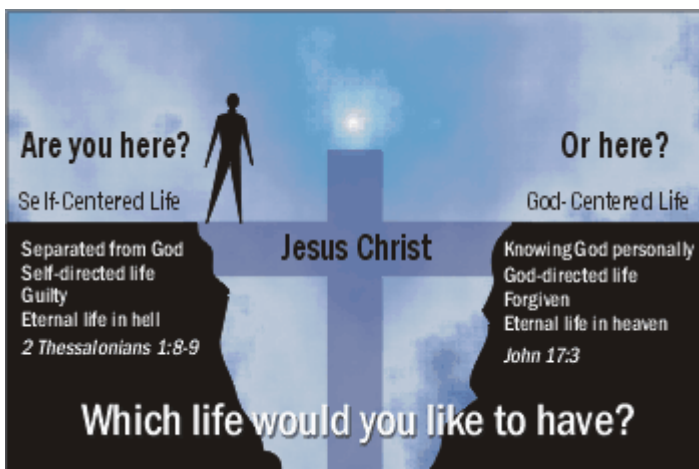
How do I become a Christian?

Physical life for us begins with a birth experience. Seed is planted and the result is new life. The same is true spiritually. Spiritual life also begins with a birth experience – a new birth. When a Jewish religious ruler asked Jesus what he needed to do to have a relationship with God in this life and live forever in the next life, Jesus told him that he needed to be ‘born again’ (John 3). Because he was thinking only in physical terms, Nicodemus missed the significance of what Jesus was saying.

The Bible tells us that we are all spiritually dead until our spirit is made alive by a new birth experience in Christ (Romans 3:23; 6:23). Salvation is all by God. We can’t do anything to earn or deserve it (Ephesians 2:8-9). We just receive it. It is a free gift – free to us. Jesus paid the price for it.



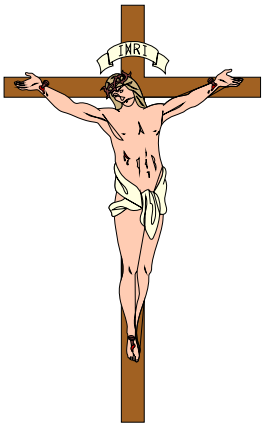
When Jesus went to the cross He became our representative, our substitute. He identified Himself with our sins and, since sin brings judgment, God poured out His judgment on Jesus. Jesus suffered for every sin we ever have committed or ever will commit. He suffered what we would have suffered in hell for all eternity. Because He was a man He could be our substitute. Because He was God He felt the sufferings all the more intently, thus being able to suffer all our sins during those hours on the cross. His suffering was much deeper and more intense than ours would have been.



By doing that for us, though, He provided free salvation for any who will receive it. He bridged the gap between God and man. He removed the enmity between God and us. Now we are God’s children, born into God’s family. God is our Heavenly Father and Jesus, God’s Son, is our Brother. He is also God as well. Welcome to the family!

SALVATION

Lost in the jungle, a man sought desperately to find his way to safety. His strength was ebbing fast as the insects and stifling heat did their deadly work. Suddenly he heard what he thought to be a bell tolling in the distance. Believing he was nearing civilization, he struggled bravely onward; but he never seemed to draw closer to the sound. Finally he fell to the ground exhausted, never to rise again. The mysterious bellbird had claimed another victim! This story is related in detail by G.B. Robeson. He says that many a traveler in the heart of the rain forest of Central and South America has been led to his death by the uncanny call of this seldom-seen bird. Its enticing, reverberating "toll" produces an almost overpowering temptation to seek its source. Similarly, Satan employs subtle devices to ensnare the human race. As lost souls seek to disengage themselves from the vines of sin, they are allured by the tempter's "bell" ringing in the distance. "At last," they think, "I've found a way of escape," and so, following the call of the evil one deeper and deeper into the jungle of despair, they are eventually lost for eternity.



Many are following the deceptive call of the devil's "bell-bird" because it "seems right" to them. O that they might realize the truth of these words before it is too late: "The end thereof are the ways of death." Christ, who declared that "no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6), is the only One who can lead poor wanderers to the promised land of salvation and safety!

THE NEED OF SALVATION For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ... (Romans 3:23). Because God is holy and perfect, He cannot allow sin in His presence. Still, He wants man to have fellowship with Him -- that's why He created man. So He planned to come to earth

Himself, and go to the cross as man's substitute. By taking the guilt for the sins of the world on Himself, He experienced what we would experience in all eternity in hell, condensed and poured out on Him. Because He was man He could be our replacement. Because He was sinless He didn't have sin of His own to pay for and could pay for ours. Because He was God He could experience hell for all of us at once, He had a greater capacity to suffer. There is nothing we can do to add to salvation, it is all by God.

THE PROVISION OF SALVATION God provided it all, all we do is freely accept His provision. Ephesians 2:8-9 says: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

John 19:30 says: *When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* The word *it is finished* in the Greek means: "paid in full." It was written on bills of receipt. Jesus wasn't killed for our sin, He suffered and paid for all of it, then, when it was finished and His life's work completed, He voluntarily died for there was no longer any reason to suffer. HE paid it all!

THE RECEPTION OF SALVATION Salvation is received by faith. Romans 3:28 says: *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.* John 3:16 also says: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* The artist who painted "Jesus at the Door" is said to have purposely left off the knob from the door, for the door represents the human heart, and on that door, the bolt is on the inside. Jesus stands and knocks. But he will not come in unless we open the door.

THE REJECTION OF SALVATION Jesus is the only way to God, there is NO other way of salvation (John 14:6). Rejection of His gift of salvation means eternal condemnation in hell. *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."* (John 3:36).

THE TENSES OF SALVATION At the moment of salvation all past sin and its penalty is removed (II Timothy 1:9; Acts 16:31). No matter what, it will never be held against us for its penalty has been paid (Romans 8:1). Sin committed after salvation has also been paid for on the cross, but must be confessed (admitted to - I John 1:9). Then it is removed. Unconfessed sin does not endanger our salvation, but hinders our closeness and fellowship with God. Sin between a husband and wife doesn't end the marriage but does keep the partners from being able to be close to and enjoy each other.



While salvation removes the penalty of all sin, it doesn't remove its power (Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 8:13). A Christian still has a sin nature and the capacity to sin just as much as an unbeliever. Lot is an good example of that (Genesis 13:12, 19:29-38; II Peter 2:7). While we CAN sin, we don't HAVE to sin! Sin's power is just as strong, but now instead of being powerless to resist, we have a greater Power, the Holy Spirit, and don't HAVE to sin any more. We are free from the power of sin, but not yet from the presence of sin.

In the future, when we are in heaven, we will be free from the very presence of sin and our sin nature will be gone (Romans 13:11; Titus 2:12-13). That is guaranteed to every one who accepts God's free gift of salvation.



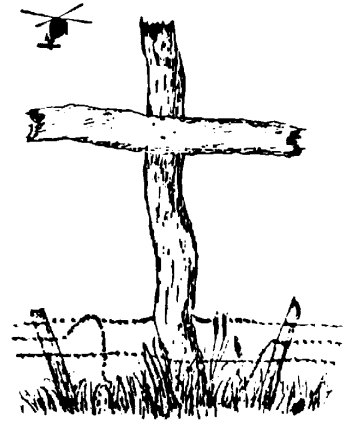
THE SECURITY OF SALVATION Salvation cannot be lost or returned. Once a person is born into God's family, he cannot be 'unborn' out of it. He is part of that family no matter what. Our keeping our salvation doesn't depend on our 'hanging on' but on God's faithfulness (II Timothy) and protection (Mt. 12:20; Ps 37:24), steadfastness (John 10:28-29; Romans 8:37-39) and forgiveness (Romans 4:6-8).

SALVATION

I. THE NEED OF SALVATION

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.



II. THE PROVISION OF SALVATION

ALL BY GOD Eph 2:8-9

Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.

Completely finished Heb 1:3 Jn 19:30

John 19:30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

Heb 1:3 The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

Received by faith Rom 3:28 Jn 3:16

Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

PROVIDED FOR BY JESUS

1Thes 5:9 For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Tim 2:10 Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.

2 Tim 3:15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

IF NO SALVATION under wrath of God Jn 3:36

John 3:36 Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."

THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

Have you heard of the four spiritual laws? Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern relationships with God.

* LAW 1: God loves you, and has a wonderful plan for your life.

* God's love: ***God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).***

* God's plan: [Christ speaking] ***I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly (John 10:10).***

* Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life? Because...

* LAW 2: Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

* Man is sinful: ***All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 2:23).*** Man was created to have fellowship with God, but because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of sin.

* Man is separated: ***The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).*** A great gulf separates the Holy God from sinful man. Man may try to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion - but he inevitably fails.

* LAW 3: Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.

* He died in our place: ***God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).***

* He rose from the dead: ***Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred... (1 Cor. 15:3-6).***

* He is the Only Way to God: Jesus said to him, ***I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6).*** God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to die in our place.

* LAW 4: We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

* We must receive Christ: ***As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).***

* We receive Christ through faith. ***By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).***

* When we receive Christ, we experience a new birth: Read John 3:1-8.

* We receive Christ through personal invitation: ***Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (Rev. 3:20).***

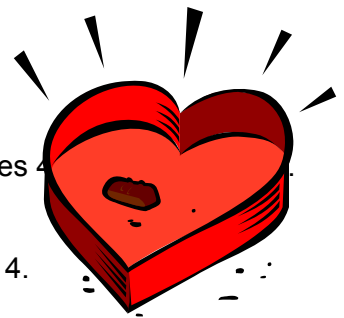
210 Things that are True of Me Now that I am Saved

When a child is born into a family he immediately is the recipient of many blessings and privileges that come from that family. He shares in all the family possessions and the family name opens doors and give special privileges. He gains a unique inheritance as well. The same is true of those born into God's family. Listed below are 210 things that happen at the moment of salvation. ***2 Cor 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!***

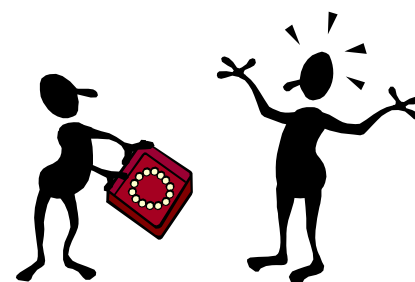
1. My salvation is fully accomplished - John 19:30.
2. I have eternal life as a present possession - John 5:24; 6:47; 1 John 5:11-13.
3. I have Jesus Christ as my present possession - 1 John 5:12.
4. I know the one, true God - John 17:3; 1 John 2:3; 5:20.
5. I have been saved by His grace - Eph. 2:1-10.
6. I have been justified by His grace - Titus 3:7.
7. I have passed from death unto life - John 5:24; 1 John 3:14.
8. I have been quickened by God - Eph. 2:1,5; Col. 2:13.
9. I have been made fit for heaven - Col. 1:12.
10. I have the forgiveness of sins - Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.
11. My sins have been taken away - John 1:29; Heb. 9:26; 1 John 3:5.
12. My sins have been completely purged - Heb. 1:3.
13. My sins will never be remembered by God - Heb. 8:12; 10:17.
14. My name is written in the Lamb's Book of Life - Phil. 4:3
15. My life is hid with in God - Col. 3:3
16. I have been forgiven all trespasses - Col. 2:13; 1 John 2:12.
17. I have been fully justified - Rom. 4:5; 8:30; 1 Cor. 6:11; Gal. 2:16; Tit. 3:7.
18. I am reconciled to God - 2 Cor. 5:18,19; Col. 1:20.
19. I am made nigh by the blood of Christ - Eph. 2:13.
20. I am redeemed through His blood - 1 Pet. 1:18,19; Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14.
21. I am redeemed from the curse of the law - Gal. 3:13.
22. I am redeemed from all iniquity - Titus 2:14.
23. I am bought with a price - 1 Cor. 6:20; 7:23.
24. I am delivered from so great a death - 2 Cor. 1:10.
25. I have been delivered from this present evil world - Gal. 1:4.
26. I have been delivered from the power of darkness - Col. 1:13.
27. I have been delivered from the wrath to come - 1 Thess. 1:10.
28. I will not come into condemnation or judgment - John 5:24; Rom. 8:1.
29. I am a child of God - John 1:12; Rom. 8:16; Gal. 3:26; 1 John 3:1,2.
30. I am a son of God - Gal. 4:5-7.
31. I belong to Jesus Christ - Gal. 3:29; 5:24.
32. I have been adopted - Gal. 4:5; Rom. 8:15,23.
33. I am an heir of God and joint-heir with Christ - Rom. 8:17; Tit. 3:7.
34. I am an heir of the grace of life - 1 Pet. 3:7.
35. All things are mine - 1 Cor. 3:21-23.
36. I possess all things - 2 Cor. 6:10.
37. I will inherit all things - Rev. 21:7.
38. I am enriched by Christ in everything - 1 Cor. 1:5; 2 Cor. 9:11.
39. I am a fellow-heir - Eph. 3:6.
40. I am rich because of Christ - 2 Cor. 8:9; Rev. 2:9.
41. I am blessed with every spiritual blessing - Eph. 1:3.
42. I have obtained an inheritance - Eph. 1:11,14; Heb. 1:14; 9:15; 1 Pet. 1:4.



43. I have been appointed to obtain salvation - 1 Thess. 5:9; Heb. 1:14.
44. I am His inheritance - Eph. 1:18.
45. I am a partaker of His promise in Christ by the gospel - Eph. 3:6.
46. I am a new creature in Christ - 2 Cor. 5:17; Eph. 2:10; 4:24; Col. 3:10.
47. I have been renewed by the Holy Spirit - Tit. 3:5.
48. I am accepted and highly favored in the Beloved - Eph. 1:6.
49. I am seated in heavenly places in Christ - Eph. 2:6.
50. I am to the praise of His glory - Eph. 1:6,12.
51. I am light in the Lord - Eph. 5:8.
52. I am a child of light - Eph. 5:8; 1 Thess. 5:5.
53. I am a "peculiar person": God's special, purchased possession - Tit. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9.
54. I am a priest who can offer spiritual sacrifices - Heb. 13:15,16; 1 Pet. 2:5,9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6.
55. I am a king who will reign - Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6.
56. I am privileged to have fellowship with the Father and with the Son- 1 John 1:3.
57. I dwell in Christ - John 6:56; 1 John 3:24; 4:13,15,16.
58. Christ dwells in me - John 6:56; Gal. 2:20; 1 John 3:24; 4:12-16.
59. I am in Christ - John 14:20; 2 Cor. 5:17.
60. Christ is in me - John 14:20; Col. 1:27; 1 John 4:4.
61. The Spirit of God dwells in me - Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 3:16; Eph. 2:21,22.
62. I am not in the flesh but in the Spirit - Rom. 8:9.
63. My "earthen vessel" houses a great Treasure - 2 Cor. 4:7.
64. My body is the temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Cor. 6:19.
65. I have gift & presence of Holy Spirit -2 Cor. 1:22; Gal 4:6; Eph 1:13,14; 1 Thes 4:8
66. I have an anointing (unction) from the Holy One - 1 John 2:20,27.
67. I have an anchor for my soul, both sure and steadfast - Heb. 6:19
68. I am one of the called of Jesus Christ - Rom. 1:6; 8:28-30; Jude 1; Rev. 17:14.
69. I have been called unto the fellowship of God's Son - 1 Cor. 1:9.
70. I have been called unto eternal glory - 1 Pet. 5:10.
71. I have been called with a holy calling - 2 Tim. 1:9.
72. I am a partaker of the high, heavenly calling - Phil. 3:14; Heb. 3:1.
73. I have been called out of darkness into His marvelous light - 1 Pet. 2:9.
74. God foreknew me - Rom. 8:29; 1 Pet. 1:2.
75. God predestined me to be conformed to Christ's image - Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:5,11.
76. I have already been glorified according to God's mind and purpose - Rom. 8:30.
77. I am eternally secure in God's love - Rom. 8:38,39.
78. I am chosen in Christ - Eph. 1:4; Col. 3:12; 1 Thess. 1:4; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 17:14.
79. I am complete in Christ - Col. 2:10.
80. I am beloved of God - Col. 3:12; 2 Thess. 2:13.
81. I am chastened and disciplined by my Heavenly Father - Heb. 12:6,7.
82. I am part of group Christ isn't ashamed to call His "brethren" & "friends" - Heb 2:11; Jn 15:14,15.
83. I am a child of Abraham - Gal. 3:7.
84. I am Abraham's seed - Gal. 3:29.
85. I enjoy the blessing of Abraham - Gal. 3:9.
86. I am a child of promise - Gal. 4:28,31.
87. I am faithful - Rev. 17:14.
88. I am a sheep in His flock - Luke 12:32; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 2:25.
89. I am a member in His body - 1 Cor. 10:17; Eph. 3:6; 4:25; 5:30.
90. I am a stone in His building - Eph. 2:20-22; Heb. 3:6; 1 Pet. 2:5.
91. I am a branch in His vine - John 15:1-7.
92. I am a child of His kingdom - Matt. 13:38; Mark 10:14,15; Luke 17:21.
93. I am born again into His family - John 1:12,13; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3,23; 2:2; 1 John 5:1.
94. I am one of God's people because He graciously claims me as His own - 1 Pet. 2:10; Rev. 21:7.
95. I am a fellow citizen with the saints - Eph. 2:19.
96. I was baptized into Jesus Christ - Rom. 6:3; 1 Cor. 12:12-13 Gal. 3:27.
97. I was identified with Christ in His death - Rom. 6:3-6,8-11; 2 Cor. 5:14; Col. 2:12,20; 3:3.



98. I was identified with Christ in His resurrection - Rom. 6:5,8,11; 2 Cor. 5:15; Gal. 2:20; Col. 2:12; 3:1.
99. I am dead to sin - Rom. 6:2.
100. My "old man" was crucified with Christ - Rom. 6:6; Gal. 2:20
101. I have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts - Gal. 5:24.
102. I am alive unto God - Rom. 6:11,13; Gal. 2:19,20.
103. Christ is my life - Phil. 1:21; Col. 3:4.
104. I can walk in newness of life - Rom. 6:4.
105. I can serve in newness of spirit - Rom. 7:6.
106. I can live unto righteousness - 1 Pet. 2:24.
107. I died to the law - Rom. 7:4; Gal. 2:19.
108. I am delivered from the law - Rom. 7:6.
109. I am not under the law but under grace - Rom. 6:14.
110. I have God's laws written in my heart - Heb. 10:16.
111. I am married to Jesus Christ - Rom. 7:4.
112. I am a partaker of Christ - Heb. 3:14.
113. I am identified with Christ in His suffering - 2 Tim. 2:12; Phil. 1:29; 1 Pet. 2:20; 4:12,13; 1 Thess. 3:3; Rom. 8:18; Col. 1:24.
114. The knowledge of God is made known by me - 2 Cor. 2:14.
115. The savor (aroma) of Christ is made known by me - 2 Cor. 2:15,16.
116. I am an epistle of Christ - 2 Cor. 3:3.
117. I am being changed into Christ's glorious image - 2 Cor. 3:18.
118. I am being perfected - Phil. 1:6.
119. My inward man is being renewed day by day - 2 Cor. 4:16.
120. I have put on Christ - Gal. 3:27.
121. I am not of the world - John 17:14,16.
122. The world is crucified unto me - Gal. 6:14.
123. I am crucified unto the world - Gal. 6:14.
124. I am separated unto the gospel of God - Rom. 1:1.
125. I am sanctified in Christ Jesus - 1 Cor. 1:2; 6:11; Heb. 10:10; Jude 1.
126. I am holy - Col. 3:12; Heb. 3:1; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 20:6.
127. I am clothed in His righteousness - Rev. 19:18.
128. I am a saint - 1 Cor. 1:2; Phil. 1:1; Col. 1:2; Rom. 1:7.
129. I am faultless in Christ - Eph. 5:27; Col. 1:22; Jude 24.
130. I am perfected forever - Heb. 10:14.
131. I am not my own - 1 Cor. 6:19.
132. I am called unto holiness - 1 Thess. 4:7.
133. I am a citizen of heaven - Phil. 3:20.
134. I am a stranger and pilgrim who is not at home in this world - Heb. 11:13; 1 Pet. 2:11.
135. I have been translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love - Col. 1:13.
136. I am circumcised in my heart - Col. 2:11; Phil 3:3 (cf. Dt. 10:16).
137. My faithful God will sanctify me wholly - 1 Thess. 5:23,24.
138. My faithful God will keep me from evil - 2 Thess. 3:3; 2 Tim. 4:18.
139. Christ has made me free, free indeed - John 8:32,36; Gal. 5:1; 1 Cor. 7:22.
140. Jesus Christ is my Deliverer - Rom. 7:24,25.
141. I am free from sin - Rom. 6:7,18,22.
142. The law of the Spirit of Life has made me free from the law of sin and death - Rom. 8:2.
143. I am God's servant /slave - Rom. 6:22.
144. I am Christ's servant/slave - 1 Cor. 7:22.
145. I am a servant/slave of righteousness - Rom. 6:18.
146. I have been called unto liberty - Gal. 5:13.
147. I have the mind of Christ - 1 Cor. 2:16.
148. I have a sound mind - 2 Tim. 1:7.
149. Christ has given me an understanding - 1 John 5:20.
150. I have the righteousness of Christ - 2 Cor. 5:21.
151. I have all sufficiency in all things - 2 Cor. 9:8.



152. I have all things that pertain to life and godliness - 2 Pet. 1:3.
153. I can ever be content for I have Christ - Heb. 13:5.
154. I have all the armor and weapons I need - 2 Cor. 10:4; Eph. 6:10-17.
155. I have God's all-sufficient grace - 2 Cor. 12:9.
156. I have grace to help in time of need - Heb. 4:16.
157. I have God's power - Eph. 1:19; 3:20.
158. I have access to the Father - Eph. 2:18; Heb. 4:16.
159. I have a great High Priest - Heb. 2:17,18; 3:1; 4:14-16; 8:1; 10:21.
160. I have an unfailing Intercessor - Heb. 7:25; 9:24; Rom. 8:34.
161. I have a righteous Advocate with the Father for times when I sin - 1 John 2:1.
162. I have peace with God - Rom. 5:1.
163. Christ is my peace - Eph. 2:14.
164. I have rest for my soul - Matt. 11:28,29; Heb. 4:9.
165. I am led by the Spirit of God - Rom. 8:14.
166. I am enabled during trials and temptations - 1 Cor. 10:13.
167. I am given assurance by the Spirit - Rom. 8:16; Heb. 6:18.
168. I am given comfort by God - 2 Cor. 1:3-7.
169. I am tranquilized by His peace - Phil. 4:7.
170. I am freely given truth and knowledge by the Spirit - 1 Cor. 2:12.
171. I am not distressed - 2 Cor. 4:8.
172. I am not in despair - 2 Cor. 4:8.
173. I am not forsaken - 2 Cor. 4:9.
174. I am not in darkness - 1 Thess. 5:4.
175. God is my Sufficiency - 2 Cor. 3:5.
176. God is my Strength - 2 Cor. 12:9,10; Phil. 4:13.
177. God is my Helper - Heb. 13:6.
178. I belong to a Sovereign God who works all things together for my good - Rom. 8:28.
179. All things are for my sake - 2 Cor. 4:15.
180. My God is for me - Rom. 8:31.
181. My every need is supplied - Phil. 4:19.
182. I am a laborer together with Christ - 1 Cor. 3:9; 2 Cor. 6:1.
183. I am His workmanship - Eph. 2:10.
184. God works in me - Phil. 2:13; Heb. 13:21.
185. God's Word works in me - 1 Thess. 2:13.
186. I am sealed by God - 2 Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13.
187. I am on the Rock, Christ Jesus - Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 3:11.
188. I am established securely in Christ - 2 Cor. 1:21; 2 Thess. 3:3.
189. I am kept by the power of God - 1 Pet. 1:5.
190. I am preserved in Jesus Christ - Jude 1.
191. I am kept from falling - Jude 24.
192. I have a building of God eternal in the heavens - 2 Cor. 5:1.
193. My name is forever written in heaven - Luke 10:20.
194. I am more than a conqueror: a super-conqueror - Rom. 8:37.
195. I have victory through Christ - 1 Cor. 15:57.
196. I have overcome the world - 1 John 5:4,5.
197. I always triumph in Christ - 2 Cor. 2:14.
198. I am indwelt by the victorious Christ who is greater than Satan - 1 John 4:4.
199. Satan cannot touch me - 1 John 5:18.
200. I have a living hope - 1 Pet. 1:3.
201. I have a glorious future - Rom. 8:18; 2 Thess. 2:14.
202. I have been given eternal encouragement and good hope through grace - 2 Thess. 2:16.
203. I will be given a new body just like Christ's glorified body - Phil. 3:20-21.
204. I will be preserved unto His heavenly kingdom - 2 Tim. 4:18.
205. I am receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved - Heb. 12:28.
206. I have a place reserved in heaven for me - John 14:2,3; 1 Pet. 1:4.

207. I will not be hurt of the second death - Rev. 2:11; 20:6.
 208. I will have a new name - Rev. 2:17; 3:12.
 209. I will sit with Christ in His throne - Rev. 3:21.
 210. I will be with my God forever - Rev. 21:3,4.

4. NEW LIFE HAS BEGUN

1. The great purpose of the Bible is to give a history of the world (John 20:31). TRUE FALSE
2. In John 8:12 Peter is called the light of the world. TRUE FALSE
3. All men are willing to come to the light of Jesus (John 3:19). TRUE FALSE
4. Those who do evil are afraid that their evil deeds will be reproved (John 3:20). TRUE FALSE
5. If a man sins he is a servant of sin (John 8:34). TRUE FALSE
6. Jesus said in John 16:9 that not believing on Him is a sin. TRUE FALSE
7. All men are sinners (Romans 3:23). TRUE FALSE
8. The result of sin is death (Ezek. 18:4; Romans 6:23). TRUE FALSE
9. The sinner is not under condemnation now but will be when he dies (John 3:18) TRUE FALSE
10. Christ came to condemn you (John 3:17). TRUE FALSE
11. Even though man is sinful God loves him (John 3:16). TRUE FALSE
12. Because Christ died for everyone, everyone will automatically go to heaven (John 8:24). TRUE FALSE
13. Jesus was proved guilty of several faults at His trial (John 19:4; Hebrews 4:15). TRUE FALSE
14. Romans 6:23 teaches that eternal life is _____.
15. You receive eternal life by doing more good things than bad things (Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:5). TRUE FALSE
16. What are your "righteousnesses" (good works) like in God's sight? (Isaiah 64:6)
 _____.
17. Is there any other way to God except through Jesus (Prov. 14:12; John 14:6; Acts 4:12)? TRUE FALSE
18. If you say, "I'll take my place as a sinner, for all have sinned (Romans 3:23); I turn to Christ, the One who died in my place (1 Peter 3:18); and receive Jesus as my personal Savior (John 1:12)," will He save you? _____
19. Have you received Him? _____ When? _____
20. To whom did Thomas speak just after he believed (John 20:28-29)?

21. Whom should you thank after you believe? _____ Have you thanked Him? _____

22. What did Jesus tell the man in Mark 5:19 to do? _____. Will you do the same? _____

5. SIGNS OF LIFE

How can I be sure I am a Christian?

When a baby is born everyone checks immediately to make sure it is alive and healthy. There are certain signs that show life: movement, crying, pulse, etc. The same is true spiritually. There are certain spiritual 'signs' that show us that we have been born into God's family. I John lists 5 of these:



1. BELIEF IN JESUS AS SAVIOR AND LORD

1 John 5:1 Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. A sign of spiritual life is a deep awareness that Jesus is God and Savior, that He is the One who provides salvation and it isn't anything we do or deserve.

2. STRONG DESIRE TO OVERCOME SIN IN LIFE

1 John 5:18 We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the one who was born of God keeps him safe, and the evil one cannot harm him. Along with new birth comes a different attitude to sin. We now know it is wrong and have a strong desire to stop. While we may struggle with certain sins, there should be a slow but steady progress in godliness. Gradually we become more and more like Jesus in what we think and do.

3. DOING WHAT GOD CONSIDERS RIGHT

1 John 2:29 If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. A baby doesn't know just how to live the moment it is born, and neither do we who are born spiritually. It is a learning process, it takes growth. Growth is a sign of life. God says that those who are alive spiritually will grow spiritually. "GROW in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ". II Peter 3:18 "Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly -- mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?" I Corinthians 3:1-3

4. LOVE FOR OTHER BELIEVERS

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. There will be a natural bond between those who are in God's family. We have the most important things in life in common. Usually there is instant rapport. We have a desire to spend time with and get to know other Christians. That is a joy and encouragement, for we are likeminded.

5. VICTORY OVER WORLDLY WAYS

1 John 5:4 for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. While victory over sin often comes slowly and gradually, as Christians we know that we have within us a Power greater than that which is in the world and we can experience God giving us victory over things that used to defeat us.

How can I be sure I still am a Christian?



When first born babies are very susceptible to disease and illness so they must be protected from these. They are very vulnerable. Until they grow and become stronger they are in danger of things that won't be nearly as hard to fight off later on. When someone is a new believer there is danger they will start to doubt their salvation or fear they have lost it. Thus it is important to make sure young Christians are protected from the diseases of doubt and fear. Satan can't take away our salvation so he tries to take away the joy of our salvation in these ways.

DISEASE OF DOUBT It's not unusual for Satan to put doubt into a person's mind right after they become a Christian. Did it 'work'? Did they 'do it' right? There is no requirement to meet so there is nothing that can be done wrong. Salvation is simply a heart attitude of believing that Jesus is God who paid for your sins on the cross. If you believe that you are saved.

Rom 3:28 For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

Eph 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.

If you aren't sure when you accepted Jesus as Savior and for that reason wonder if you really did, just take a moment right now to pray and ask Him to forgive your sins and live in you. You will know for sure that He has done that now if not before, so you never will have need to wonder or worry. Write down today's date so you can always go back to this time and remember that you really did put your faith in Him. _____

DISEASE OF FEAR If getting a person to doubt their salvation doesn't work Satan will try to have you believe that you have somehow lost your salvation. That will take away your peace and joy and replace it with fear. Believing you can lose your salvation will cause you to try to do all you can to not lose it. Thus instead of the Christian life being one of security and assurance in what Christ has done, the emphasis focuses to what you do or don't do. Fear of doing something that will cause you to lose your salvation becomes the primary motivating force in your Christian life. How could a family operate if everyone had to be nice to the others for fear they would be kicked out of the family?

God wants us to know for sure that there is nothing we can do to lose our salvation. He wants us to be assured of His love forever. He wants us to serve Him out of love for Him, not because we are afraid He will send us to hell!

WE ARE UNDER GRACE, NOT LAW, so there is nothing we can do to lose salvation. *Rom 6:14 For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.*

GOD IS FAITHFUL to His promise to save us if we believe. Even if we become unfaithful He still keeps His promise to us. *2 Timothy 2:11-13 Here is a trustworthy saying: If we died with him, we will also live with him; if we endure, we will also reign with him. If we disown him, he will also disown us; if we are faithless, he will remain faithful, for he cannot disown himself.*

GOD PROTECTS US when we are weak and faltering. When we sin and drift He does not cast us aside. *Matthew 12:20 A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. Psalms 37:24 though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.*

GOD WILL NEVER HOLD OUR SINS AGAINST US for they were all paid for on the cross. Thus there is no sin that will ever be charged to us. *Romans 4:6-8 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*

SALVATION CANNOT BE RETURNED, AND SATAN CANNOT TAKE US FROM GOD There is nothing that can come between us and God, not even we ourselves. *John 10:28-29 I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

So any time you feel one of these diseases trying to hit you and take your joy and strength, remember you have no reason to doubt your salvation and you have no reason to fear losing your salvation.



SIGNS OF LIFE

1. When you receive Jesus as your Savior He gives you (John 14:6; Gal. 2:20; I John 5:11) new _____.
2. John 3:18 says that in the past you were _____.
3. John 10:28 says you now have _____.
4. "Eternal" means _____.
5. John 5:24 says the Christian may some day be condemned for his sins. TRUE FALSE
6. God wants you to know if you have eternal life (I John 5:13) TRUE FALSE
7. Jesus says in John 6:37 that those who are not too wicked can come to Him. TRUE FALSE
8. Jesus said His sheep would never perish (John 10:28). TRUE FALSE
9. No trouble, or care, or anything else can separate you from the love of Christ (Romans 8:35-39). TRUE FALSE

10. You can be plucked from Christ's hand (John 10:28). TRUE FALSE

11. God is willing to let some believers be lost (John 6:39). TRUE FALSE

12. Upon whose power does our salvation depend (I Peter 1:5)?

13. The Holy Spirit guides and keeps the Christian in this life. How long is He to be with the Christian (John 14:16-17)? _____

14. You can depend on God's promises because He seldom lies (Numbers 23:19). TRUE FALSE

15.If you do not believe what the Bible says, what do you make of God (I John 5:10)?

16. Jesus does not expect your life to be different now that you are a Christian (John 8:11; II Corinthians 5:17). TRUE FALSE

17.A real believer should have peace and joy (John 14:27; 15:11) TRUE FALSE

18. John 8:31 teaches that if you are Jesus' disciple you will continue obeying His
_____.

19. What means has God chosen to change your life (John 15:3)?
_____.

20. Where should you carry God's Word (Psalm 119:11)?
_____.

21. How can you show your love to Christ (John 14:21)
? _____.

22. Jesus said in John 13:34-35 that all men would be able to tell you are His disciples if you keep this new commandment to:

- a. tithe your money
- b. go to church on Sunday
- c. love one another

23. Romans 10:17 teaches that assurance of eternal life depends upon:

- | | |
|------------------------------|----------------------|
| a. your feelings | d. church membership |
| b. your promise to do better | e. The Word of God |
| c. your good works | |

24. Only preachers and Sunday School teachers are to spread the Gospel (John 20:21). TRUE FALSE

6. LEARNING TO EAT I

Where can I get spiritual nourishment?

When a baby is first born the first thing it demands, after air, is nourishment. Babies need to eat often in order to grow. They have a strong appetite. The same is true spiritually. Those born of God find they have an appetite to learn God's Word. A new appreciation for and love of the Bible appears. The desire to read the Bible isn't just to fill an intellectual curiosity but rather to feed one's soul and spirit. We sense from the very start that there is much-needed nourishment to be found there.



Paul talks about the similarity in his letter to the Corinthians. *Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly -- mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men? I Corinthians 3:1-3*

When a person loses their appetite for food it is a sign of illness and the person becomes weak. The same thing happens spiritually. A desire for the Word of God must be fed. *1 Peter 2:2-3 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.*

BIBLE OVERVIEW The Bible contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners and the happiness of believers. Its doctrines are holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable. Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy. It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you. It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword and the Christian's character. Here paradise is restored, heaven opened, and the gates of hell disclosed. Christ is its grand object, our good is its design, and the glory of God its end. It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet. Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully. It is given you in life and will be opened in the judgment and will be remembered forever. It involves the highest responsibility, will reward the greatest labour, and will condemn all who trifle with its sacred contents.

The Bible is a beautiful palace built of 66 blocks of solid marble – the 66 books. In the first chapter of **Genesis** we enter the vestibule, filled with the mighty acts of creation. The vestibule gives access to the law courts – the **five books of Moses** – passing through which we come to the picture gallery of the **historical** books. Here we find hung upon the walls scenes of battlefields, representations of heroic deeds, and portraits of eminent men belonging to the early days of the world's history.

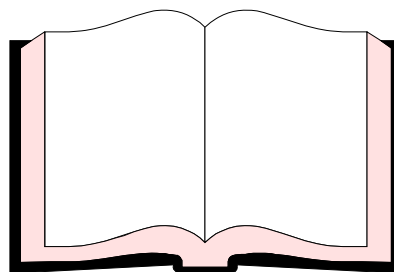
Beyond the picture gallery we find the philosopher's chamber – the book of **Job** – passing through which we enter the music room – the book of **Psalms** – where we listen to the grandest strains that ever fell on human ears.

Then we come to the business office – the book of **Proverbs** – where right in the center of the room, stands facing us the motto, “Righteousness exalteth a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people.” From the business office we pass into the chapel – **Ecclesiastes**, or the **Song of Solomon** with the rose of Sharon and the lily of the valley, and all manner of fine perfume and fruit and flowers and singing birds. Finally we reach the observatory – the **Prophets**, with their telescopes fixed on near and distant stars, and all directed toward “the Bright and Morning Star,” that was soon to arise. Crossing the court we come to the audience chamber of the King – the **Gospels** – where we find four vivid lifelike portraits of the King himself. Next we enter the workroom of the Holy Spirit – the **Acts of the Apostles** – and beyond that the correspondence room – the **Epistles** – where we see Paul and Peter and James and John and Jude busy at their desks. Before leaving we stand a moment in the outside gallery – the **Revelation** – where we look upon some striking pictures of the judgments to come, and the glories to be revealed, concluding with an awe-inspiring picture of the throne room of the King.

FACTS ABOUT THE BIBLE

A. The Old Testament

1. 39 books
2. 929 chapters
3. 23,214 verses
4. 593,493 words
5. Longest book – Psalms
6. Shortest book – Obadiah
7. 17 historical books (Genesis-Esther)
8. 5 poetical books (Job-Song of Solomon)
9. 17 prophetic books – major (Isaiah-Daniel) minor (Hosea-Malachi)



B. The New Testament

1. 27 books
2. 260 chapters
3. 7,959 verses
4. 181,253 words
5. Longest book – Acts
6. Shortest book – 3 John
7. 4 Gospels (Matthew-John)
8. 1 historical book (Acts)
9. 22 epistles (Romans-Revelations)

DISCRIPTIONS OF THE BIBLE

- I. It is called a **mirror** because it reflects the mind of God and the true condition of man.
- II. A **Seed** – “Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever” (1 Pet. 1:23). “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures” (1:18). “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). It is called a seed because, once properly planted, it brings forth life, growth, and fruit.

- III. **Water** – “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. 5:25-27). It is called water because of its cleansing, quenching, and refreshing qualities. (See Psa. 42:1; 119:9; Prov. 25:25; Isa. 55:10; Heb. 10:22; Rev. 22:17.)
- IV. **A Lamp** – “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psa. 119:105). “For the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light; and reproofs of instruction are the way of life” (Prov. 6:23). “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” (2 Pet. 1:19). It is called a lamp because it shows us where we are now, it guides us in the next step, and it keeps us from falling.
- V. **A Sword** – “For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged 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” (Heb. 4:12). “And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Eph. 6:17). It is called a sword because of its piercing ability, operating with equal effectiveness upon sinners, saints and Satan! Of the various armour pieces mentioned in Ephesians 6:11-17, all to be worn by the believer, the only offensive piece is the “sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.”
- VI. **Precious Metals**
- A. **Gold** (Psa. 19:10; 119:12) “Therefore I love thy commandments above gold; yea above fine gold” (Psa. 119:127).
- B. **Silver** (Psa. 12:6) – “The words of the Lord are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times” (Psa. 12:6). It is referred to as precious metals because of its desirability, its preciousness, its beauty, and its value.
- VII. **Nourishing Food**
- A. **Milk** – “As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Pet. 2:2).
- B. **Meat** – “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong
29 meat. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil” (Heb. 5:12-14).
- C. **Bread** – “I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world” (John 6:51).
- D. **Honey** – “More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb” (Psa. 19:10). It is referred to as nourishing food because of the strength it imparts. The Bible is the original “soul food.”

VIII. **A Hammer** – “Is not my word like as a fire? saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?” (Jer. 23:29). It is referred to as a hammer because of its ability to both tear down and to build up. (See Acts 9:4; Jude 20.)

IX. **A Fire** – “Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay” (Jer. 20:9). “And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?” (Luke 24:32). It is called a fire because of its judging, purifying, and consuming abilities.

THE BIBLE AND THE SAINTS OF GOD

A. *What the Bible does for the believer*

1. It upholds (Psa. 119:116).
2. It orders steps (Psa. 119:133).
3. It produces joy (Psa. 119:162).
4. It strengthens (Psa. 119:28; 1 John 2:14).
5. It gives hope (Psa. 119:74, 81).
6. It gives light (Psa. 119:105, 130).
7. It gives understanding (Psa. 119:169).
8. It shows God’s will (Isa. 55:11).
9. It builds up (Acts 20:32).
10. It produces fruit (John 15:7).
11. It convicts of sin (Heb. 4:12).
12. It converts the soul (James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:23).
13. It cleanses the conscience (John 15:3).
14. It consecrates life (John 17:17).
15. It corrects the wrong (2 Tim. 3:16).
16. It confirms the right (John 8:31).
17. It comforts the heart (Psa. 119:50, 54).



B. *What the Bible demands from the believer – Because of the above, the Christian is exhorted to:*

1. Read it (Col. 3:16; Deut. 31:11; Rev. 1:3; Isa. 34:16; Luke 4:16; Eph. 3:4; 1 Thess. 5:27; 2 Tim. 4:13; Col. 4:1).
2. Heed it (Psa. 119:9; 1 Tim. 4:16).
3. Seed it (Matt. 28:19-20).
4. Desire it (1 Pet. 2:2).
5. Preach it (2 Tim. 4:2).
6. Rightly divide it (2 Tim. 2:15).
7. Live by it (Matt. 4:4).
8. Use it (Eph. 6:17).
9. Suffer for it, and if need be, die for it (Rev. 1:9; 6:9; 20:4).

MEMORIZATION OF THE BIBLE

Here are some good verses to get you started in your memorization. When you come across a verse that speaks to you in a special way write it down and add it to the list of verses to memorize. Listed below are some good ones to get started with. Pick any you want to start with. Write it on a piece of paper and carry that with you throughout the day. Look at it in spare minutes, while waiting on the phone, etc. You'll be surprised how much you can learn!



Psalms 119:11 I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.

Philippians 4:6 Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.

2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

1 John 5:11-12 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.

John 16:24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

1 Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.

Proverbs 3:5-6 Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.

2 Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

Romans 12:1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God — this is your spiritual act of worship.

John 15:7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.

Ephesians 2:8-9 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

2 Timothy 3:15-17 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. 16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

LEARNING TO EAT

1. Job 23:12 teaches that God's Word is more important than food. TRUE FALSE
2. II Tim 3:16 teaches that all Scripture is inspired by God & is profitable for us. TRUE FALSE
3. Who helps you understand spiritual things (I Cor. 2:9-12)?

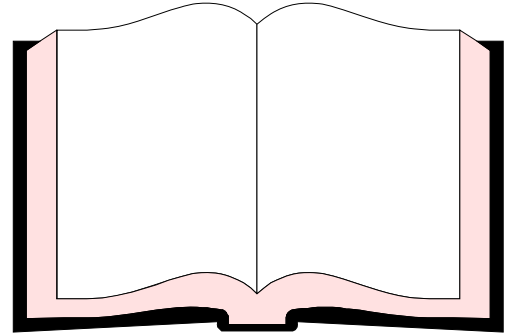
4. According to Psalm 119:18 you should begin to read the Bible by praying that God will
_____.
5. The Bible will some day pass away (Isaiah 40:8). TRUE FALSE
6. God still allows men to add to the Bible (Rev. 22:18). TRUE FALSE
7. Unsaved people can understand and appreciate spiritual things (ICor. 2:14). TRUE FALSE
8. The Word of God is able to: (match the correct reference with the answer)
____ Acts 20:32 a. help you to pray
____ John 15:7 b. guide you
____ Ps.119:105 c. "build you up & give you an inheritance"
9. II Timothy 2:15 commands you to pray. TRUE FALSE
10. Psalm 119:11 teaches that you should memorize Scripture so others will know you are a Christian. TRUE FALSE
11. Mark 7:21-23 teaches that the source of evil desires is the heart. TRUE FALSE
12. You should learn to study the Bible because Ephesians 4:14 teaches there are false teachers waiting to deceive you. TRUE FALSE
13. What are four ways we can feed on God's Word?
____ II Timothy 2:15 a. hearing
____ Rom. 10:17 b. reading
____ Psalm 119:11 c. studying
____ I Tim. 4:13 d. memorizing
14. When you learn God's Word you must apply it to your _____.
15. By yourself you can do nothing for God (John 15:5). TRUE FALSE
16. Through whose strength should you live your daily life (Phil. 4:13)? _____
17. Whom did Andrew find after he had found Jesus (John 1:41)? _____
18. Have you ever led anyone to Christ? _____
 Would you like to? _____
 Would Jesus like you to (John 15:16)? _____

7. LEARNING TO EAT - II

How can I learn to feed myself?

HOW TO STUDY THE BIBLE

Some time ago I read a story about a man who died in deep poverty. In fact, he died from lack of proper food and housing. Among his possessions was found a Bible and in the Bible thousands of dollars were stuffed. The Bible was left to him by his parents -- but he never opened it! How often we are like that man -- our soul is starving and we are living in spiritual poverty while the provision for our needs lies between the covers of our Bible. We must get it and use it.



Suppose you want to sit down and study your Bible. You open to a passage and read a few verses, wondering how to begin. "How does that man in the pulpit find the things he talks about? I never see those things when I read the Bible," you say. In frustration and guilt you read a few more verses, check the footnotes, then go answer the telephone. Thus ends your Bible study for the day. It's like a miner walking along looking for gold nuggets or diamonds lying on the ground. Usually he comes up empty! It doesn't have to be that way! There is no quick, easy, magical formula to get instant insight into a passage. Like anything else worthwhile, it takes work. However that work must be purposeful and worthwhile or nothing good will come of it. That is where this series comes in.

My purpose here is to provide some practical help for those who are motivated to improve their Bible study skills. This certainly isn't the only way, but it is one way of study. As I see it, Bible study is broken down into three main steps: Observation ("What do I see?"), Interpretation ("What does it mean?") and Application ("How should I respond?"). The Bible provides spiritual nourishment for our souls as food provides physical nourishment for our bodies (I Peter 2:2; Psalm 119:103; Hebrews 5:13-14). There is a close similarity between partaking of physical and spiritual food, also. First you thoroughly analyze your food (cut and chew), then break it down so it can be used (digestion) and finally apply it (used by bones and muscles). We will develop this in future articles. First observation.

Before you can swallow and use food that you are eating you must first chew it in bite-size sections. In fact, the better you chew your food the more you will benefit from it. Someone has said we suffer from "habit-focus," we see only what we have seen before. That is where the work part of Bible study comes in. You must train yourself to see what you haven't seen before! A doctor will closely examine you, gather facts, and ask questions before interpreting them and coming up with a plan of action. Likewise a detective needs to look for things that aren't at first obvious. The same is true of a scientist. For all of these, the final application is only as good as the early observation. The better the discovery period, the more accurate and helpful the conclusion. The same is true in Bible study. Too often we skip the observation period and right away try to find out what it means and how it applies. This always leads to shallow, surface results that leave us thinking we can't get anything out of the Bible. Dig!

So then, how are we to observe the Bible as we study it? Let me give you some steps:

I. OBSERVATION

1. LOOK AT THE WHOLE The first thing you do when food is placed before you is to look at the whole, get an overview of what is there. When you feed on God's Word do the same thing. Read the passage or book through in one sitting. Do this several times for a short passage. Don't do anything but read it over and over. Do this for several days. It's like looking at a favorite picture or listening to a favorite song, you seem to notice new things each time. You never get it all the first time!

2. WRITE DOWN QUESTIONS When you first see that table of food you ask yourself what you like, how was it made, is it good for me, etc. The same with Bible study. As you read keep a paper and pencil handy. After the first few times questions will start coming to mind, things you don't understand and would like answers for. Write them down! In fact, try to write down as many questions as you can. Don't worry about answering them now, most will answer themselves as you go along. However if you don't ask the question you will never notice the answer when it comes floating by and will miss it! You won't answer questions you haven't asked, so make sure you are thorough, creative, and patient in writing down questions. Ask yourself, "If Jesus were here, what would I ask Him about this word/verse?" I cannot overemphasize the importance of developing well the skill of asking the right questions! Don't let your questions get in a rut either.

3. DIVIDE IT INTO PARTS After you look at the whole and start asking questions (keep adding questions the whole time, you never stop writing questions down) then you divide it into parts. From the food on the table you divide it into portions and put some on your plate. You further divide that into portions to eat -- forkfuls. You can't shove it all into your mouth at once! With your Bible passage start breaking it into major sections. These can then be broken into subsections. Eventually you will come up with a rough outline. This you will be constantly changing and improving on, but now is the time to start. An outline gives you word labels to make large sections easier to grasp and manage. It forces you to think through the flow of the passage and discover the relationships of the various parts. It makes you read between the lines, thus improving your observation. Of course you keep adding to your list of questions.

4. LOOK CAREFULLY AT THE DETAILS Now that you have the food broken down on your plate and are starting to eat it, you must make sure you chew it thoroughly. Neither too little nor too much chewing gets the best results. Like with food, you will have to learn how much to chew each mouthful of Scripture you work with. Don't try to put too much in your mouth at once -- that is why it is good to outline and break it down into smaller segments. Thoroughly work each small segment -- looking closely at everything. Start by asking yourself how the original readers would have seen it. Suppose you were listening to a pastor read Paul's letter to you in Ephesus, or you are a Jew in Old Testament times hearing a prophet speak. What would you understand? How would you view it? Look at the Bible through the eyes of the original readers, for it is specifically and directly written to them. It applies to us today, but wasn't directed just to us. It comes to us through their historical context.



II. INTERPRETATION



in studying the Bible is OBSERVATION - learning to look carefully, seeing details before. This is like chewing food. The better your food is chewed the easier your body to digest it. Digestion is like the second step in Bible study - OBSERVATION gathers the details: facts, questions, insights. Interpretation is the organization to these observations and answers to your questions. You don't start by going through your list of questions one by one, but as you go through many of the answers are there. If you would have not asked the question you recognized the answer, it would have passed by unnoticed. With the question you will pick up the answer as it comes along in your interpreting. For a doctor this is the diagnosis stage when conclusions are drawn. The same is true of the detective and scientist who must make sense out of the information they have gleaned.

How do we do this in Bible study? The key to correct understanding of the Bible is to put yourself in the place of the writer and read his mind - what did he have in mind? Why did he write this? What would he say it means? The science that covers this is called "HERMENEUTICS." Whole libraries are filled with books on this subject. We will summarize some of the most important principles to use here.

History refers to those portions of the Bible which give information about people, places, events, groups or time periods. Genesis through Ruth and Matthew through Acts are mainly history. Today we have historical books and novels and biographies.

First of all, let's go back to our analogy of eating. After chewing, food is digested. The mouth and saliva start breaking down the food into small pieces, but the digestive system breaks it down into something useful for the rest of the body. Various foods are broken down by different enzymes. Some foods digest quickly (like carbohydrates) and others slowly (like fats). The process differs for different kinds of foods. So it is with Bible study. Interpreting history is different than doctrine, or poetry, or prophecy. It is a bit of a different process for each. We will look at these one at a time. We will first look at the easiest to digest - history.

INTERPRETING HISTORY

History can be thought of as being the food group called FATS. It is composed of dairy products like milk, ice cream, yogurt, butter and cooking oils. These take longest for the body to digest, and to really understand all about Bible history takes much time because of the different customs and historical events. Fats give our bodies reserves to fall back on when needed. Lessons from history give guidance, encouragement, precedents, examples and principles for us to fall back on and use when necessary. Facts are basic to health and are the first thing babies need and eat. Learning basic Bible stories is fundamental for new Christians. Fats cushion and insulate and allow general good health. Knowing the historical events and lives of people in the Bible does this in our Christian lives. Fats are often mixed in with other foods, and history is in other sections of literature, too - like teaching (protein) and poetry (carbohydrates).

Use the principles above to determine the meaning of works in historical sections. Bible dictionaries (such as Unger's Bible Dictionary) can offer excellent, easy-to-find helps. To help you in your own study, though, it is good to use the following questions to help you find answers yourself:

WHO is involved?

WHEN in history did it happen?

WHERE was it located?

WHAT happened?

WHAT was life like then?

HOW did it happen?

HOW did it affect them?

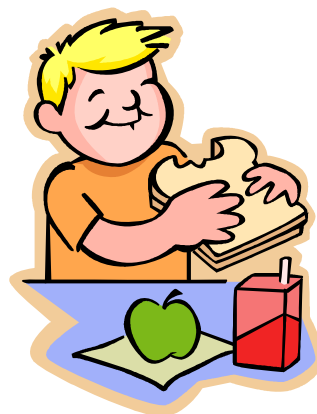
WHY did it happen?

WHY is it recorded for us?

INTERPRETING TEACHING

Teaching, or doctrine, refers to any communication of ideas from one person to another. That is why I prefer the word Teaching. This would include Jesus' teaching, Paul's epistles, the preaching of the Old Testament prophets, and many other portions of Scripture. Literature today of that type would include study books, sermons, how-to books, lectures, educational programs on TV, and non-fiction books of any kind. It is quite a large area, and one that is very important for Bible study. It is the most direct means of communicating truth from God to man through His Word.

To continue our food analogy, teaching can be thought of as the food group **PROTEIN**. It is composed of products like meat, fish, poultry, cheese, eggs and beans. Protein is necessary for growth of tissue. Learning the teaching of the Bible is essential for spiritual growth. Protein is also necessary for repair and maintenance of the body. We need to keep falling back on what we have learned from the bible's teaching to repair and maintain our own Christian life. Learning what the Bible teaches is very important to spiritual health. Protein is key to a strong structure of bones and muscles and that is the framework for our bodies and all they do. The teaching sections of the Bible also provide for our spiritual bones and muscles, the inner structure for our Christian life.



One of the most important steps in interpreting a teaching section is to discover the main idea of the section. In effect, this is what you are doing when you outline and then title a section. The title should summarize the main idea. That is very helpful and important for all kinds of Bible literature, but for teaching sections it is a real must. Think of a good sermon or Bible study you heard recently, or a book you enjoyed -- you should be able to summarize it in one or two sentences. Now think of one which never got hold of you and still remains fuzzy -- there was no one main idea. Remember this when you are teaching or communicating. Always write down and know your main idea, what you want to convey. Stick to what your main idea is and don't add too much extra information. This is what makes the difference between a good teacher and a not-so-good teacher. The Bible teaching is done by good teachers, and they always have a main idea. If you don't read the writer's mind and discover it, you won't be able to correctly interpret the rest of the passage correctly. Remember, you have direct access to the very mind of the One who wrote it all, so stay in constant contact during this process through prayer. Do not go further in your Bible study until you can write the main

idea of a passage in as few words as possible. You can and probably will adjust and fine tune this as you go, but you must work hard to make sure this is straight. It is the foundation for all you will build as you study the passage - make it true!

INTERPRETING POETRY

We hear a lot about carbohydrates today. Athletes load up on them before times of high output. We all need them. They supply energy for our bodies, and they are enjoyable and tasty eating. Grains, fruits and vegetables provide carbohydrates. Simple carbohydrates are among the quickest and easiest foods to digest and use. They are fast-working and productive.

God Word, our spiritual food, has something similar. There is a type of literature that is enjoyable and appealing to all. It is easy to digest and provides quick spiritual energy. Spiritual meals are made more exciting by it. It is **POETRY**. Poetry is one of the quickest and easiest forms of Bible literature to understand and apply. It is full of emotion and life and speaks to our hearts. It provides the quick boost of spiritual energy we sometimes need. Poetical portions of the Bible include Job, Psalms, Proverbs and Song of Solomon. There is hardly a book without at least some poetry in it. Much of what the Old Testament prophets had to say was in poetical form. Much of it gets lost when the Bible is translated into English. Still, there is a lot left for us to enjoy. You'll never run out of this food item!

One literary device of special value in understanding poetry is the use of **FIGURES OF SPEECH**. While these pop up in all forms of literature, they are especially common in poetry so we are considering them here. These include rhetorical questions, allegories, types, metaphors, similes and such.

Since Psalms are part of poetry, it is necessary to look at some specific forms of poetry involved in them. One is the way Jewish poetry rhymes. It does not rhyme words, like English poetry, or all would be lost in translation. God knew that, so His poetry rhymes thoughts/ideas. It is really neat when you get the idea of it. Basically it is the relationship of the 2nd line to the 1st that makes their poetry 'rhyme.' Look to see if the second line in a poetic section repeats, builds up, or says the opposite of the first line. That can go far in helping to understand Biblical poetry.



INTERPRETING PARABLES

PARABLES can be thought of as spices because both are used to bring out the main flavor of what they are served with. Parables bring out and illustrate a spiritual truth. Spices (salt, pepper, sage, ginger, oregano, cinnamon, etc.) do the same thing. Over use, or trying to get too much out of them, will do more harm than good. Neither are any good alone, and you couldn't live on a diet of just them, but when used correctly they are super! A parable is a short story used to illustrate a truth, like the story or illustrations your pastor uses in his sermons (I hope!). Aesop used them, so did Jesus. There are many in the Old Testament, too, although not as common as easy to pick out.



Many of the skill you have been developing in studying the Bible are used in interpreting parables. Your history **QUESTIONS** (Who, When, Where, What, How and Why) must be answered correctly. Also **CUSTOMS** and practices of how people lived in the time & place the parable is about is of the utmost importance!

INTERPRETING PROPHECY

PROPHECY can be thought of as being dessert! It is like pie, cake, cookies, etc.! These are really part of other food groups, just as is prophecy (it is part of teaching). However, desserts have a special role in how they are used. Dessert is served last, and prophecy is the study of last things. They both give you something to look forward to. Again, neither are good as a steady diet of only them. Overuse undermines health. They are meant to supplement other, more basic food items. Dessert, like prophecy, is served in a special time and way, and thus there are some special principles that apply to eating it, too.

Besides the portions of the Bible we consider prophecy (Revelation, Daniel, Ezekiel, Matthew 24-25) we must keep in mind that much of what the Old Testament prophets said was prophetic when it was said.

Here, too, there are **PROPHECY PRINCIPLES** to help you in your study. Interpret prophecy literally, taking the words in their usual/normal sense. The same rules of grammar and language apply here, use them! Don't make interpreting prophecy harder than it is! Interpret it in harmony with other prophecy. It must fit in with the rest of the Bible. You aren't going to discover something all scholars have missed, if you do check your work! Often one prophecy will refer to similar happenings (for example Old Testament prophets often talk about Jesus' first and second coming in the same prophecy). The purpose of prophecy is to focus on Christ and give Him the glory. As you work in the power of the Spirit, He will glorify Christ through it all.

SYMBOLS can be more difficult. Again, let the Bible interpret itself. Just use your common sense. When interpreting a symbol, look for the main characteristic the writer would have seen in it. Symbols are used the same way when used at different places in the Bible. If you aren't sure of a meaning, don't push. Just make sure your interpretation agrees with the rest of the Bible.

III. APPLICATION

APPLICATION is the final step in Bible study. After the living food of God's Word is chewed (observation) and digested (interpretation) it is then sent to various parts of the body that need it. Some vitamins, minerals, calories or whatever go to the muscles, others to the bones, still others to whatever organ is in need of it. So it is with God's Word. The purpose of studying and learning it is to apply it to areas of your life where needed.



The digestion and application of food, as well as Bible truth, is a gradual but continual process. How much you get out of it depends on how well you chewed and digested it. You can't swallow food whole and expect it to do your body much good. Unfortunately many people read a passage and then think about how it applies to them. They don't come up with much, for they have neglected the first two steps. Much of what happens after swallowing is out of your hands. Your body does it. Much of how the Bible is applied is out of your hands, too. Only God's Spirit can really make it work in your life. We must be willing to submit to what God teaches us.

Thus application is very, very important - in its proper order. It is the culmination of the first two steps. From it comes spiritual health and strength - the goal of all eating. Application asks and answers the questions: "How should I respond?", "What should I do with what I've learned?" During the observation and interpretation stages of Bible study you study the Word of God; in application, the Word of God studies you! In the application process you look for principles, suggestions, commands, etc., that can affect your behavior and make you more like Jesus.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS: carefully apply the passage, looking for any:

COMMAND to obey

EXAMPLE to follow

CHALLENGE to heed

SIN to avoid

TEACHING to learn

ACTION to take

Something to PRAY about

PROMISE to claim

DIFFICULTY to explore

PORTION to memorize



RECORDING YOUR APPLICATIONS

Write your applications down on your Bible study papers - either on a separate sheet or with the verses they come from. I save the color red for this, so it jumps right off the page and I don't miss it. Do it any way you like (highlight it, underline it, box it in, put a star by it, etc.) -- just do it!

As God works in your life, record what happens and when this can be a real encouragement for you and others, it will increase your faith in God, and it can be very helpful in praising God. A spiritual diary is something good to get your children started doing, too.

7. LEARNING TO EAT

PRACTICE # 1 (to do in class)

Acts 17:10-12 As soon as it was night, the brothers sent Paul and Silas away to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. 11 Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. 12 Many of the Jews believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.

PRACTICE #2 (to do at home)

James 5:13-18 Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. 14 Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. 15 And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. 16 Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.

17 Elijah was a man just like us. He prayed earnestly that it would not rain, and it did not rain on the land for three and a half years. 18 Again he prayed, and the heavens gave rain, and the earth produced its crops.

OBSERVATION

- Look at the whole
- Write down questions
- Divide into parts
- Look carefully at the details

INTERPRETATION

- WHO** is involved?
- WHEN** in history did it happen?
- WHERE** was it located?
- WHAT** happened?
- WHAT** was life like then?
- HOW** did it happen?
- HOW** did it affect them?
- WHY** did it happen?
- WHY** is it recorded for us?
- What is the MAIN IDEA of the passage?

APPLICATION

- COMMAND to obey
- EXAMPLE to follow
- CHALLENGE to heed
- SIN to avoid
- TEACHING to learn
- ACTION to take
- Something to PRAY about
- PROMISE to claim
- DIFFICULTY to explore
- PORTION to memorize

8. LEARNING TO TALK

How can I communicate with God?

HOW TO PRAY

Prayer is powerful (John 14:13-14; 15:7,16; Mark 11:24; 11:22-24; Luke 11:9-10; I John 5:14; Jeremiah 33:3). There should be six parts to your prayer life, all equally well developed.

1. CONFESSION (I John 1:9; Psalm 66:18; 51:1). To confess means to agree with God that the issue at hand is sin (not a mistake, someone else's fault, etc.) . Use the lists on page 15-17 to help in this. After you confess your sin make sure you accept God's forgiveness (Daniel 9:9,19; Psalm 130:4; 86:5; 78:30; 99:8; 103:3; Amos 7:2). Only God can forgive sin (Mark 2:7; 11:25; Luke 23:24; 5:24; Matthew 6:14; Colossians 3:13). God doesn't over look sin, he forgives because it was paid for with the blood of Jesus on the cross (Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 4:32; 1:7; I Peter 2:24; 3:18; Luke 24:46-47; Colossians 1:14; John 19:30). This forgiveness is available to all (Isaiah 53:6; Colossians 2:13; romans 8:1). When you confess/admit your sin God forgives it. This means He blots it out (Isaiah 43:25; 1:18; 44:22; Acts 3:19; Colossians 2:14; Psalm 32), casts it behind His back (a place He can't see it - Isaiah 38:17; Jeremiah 31:34), forgets it (Hebrews 8:12; 10:17; Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:34), makes it disappear where it will never be found (Jeremiah 50:20), has it vanish like the morning mist at noon (Isaiah 44:22; John 20:31; Matthew 27:51), and casts it into the deepest part of the sea (Micah 7:19) which will then be gone forever (Revelation 21:1).

2. PRAISE (Psalm 34:1-3; 48:1; Hebrews 13:15). Praise is glorifying God for Who and What He is. It is different than thanking Him for things He has done. We will be praising God for all eternity, so we should start now! God is pleased with our praise (Psalm 22:3; Hebrews 13:5). The Bible says there is power in praise (Psalm 22:3). Praise can be done by word or song. Make sure you develop a strong praise life (Philippians 4:4; Hebrews 13:15). Read the following passages and turn them into praise prayers: Exodus 15:1-2; Deuteronomy 10:21; 32:3-4,43; I Samuel 2:1-2; II Samuel 22:4, 50; I Chronicles 16:9,25,31; 29:10-12; II Chronicles 5:12-14; 20:21-22,27; Psalm 8:1-2; 9:1-3; 31:21; 44:8; 40:16; 47:1-3; 68:3-4; 72:18-19; 86:12-13; 104:33; 108:3; 117:1-2; 119:108,175; 138:1-4; 142:7; 149:1,3,6-9; 150:1-6; Isaiah 25:1,9; 38:18-19; 60:18; Daniel 2:20-23; Jeremiah 20:13; Habakkuk 3:17-19; Zechariah 9:9; Luke 1:46-47; Luke 10:21; John 4:23-24; Ephesians 1:3; Jude 25; Revelation 4:10-11; 5:5,12-13; 15:3-4.

3. THANKSGIVING (Psalm 116:12; Philippians 4:6; I Thessalonians 5:18). Thanksgiving is thanking God for what He has done, is doing and is going to do in your life (as well as the lives of others). We all appreciate being thanked for things we do, and so does God. Be specific in your thanksgiving. Remember, everything comes from Him and is for our good (Romans 8:28) so we should thank Him for everything!

4. INTERCESSION (Psalm 28:9; James 5:14-20; I Timothy 2:1-4; I Samuel 12:23). Intercession is prayer for others. Often it is good to keep a list of prayer requests so you remember to pray for them and so you can mark down the answer, too. Then thank God for the answer. Remember God answers EVERY prayer. The answer is either yes (now), wait (later) or no (never). Every prayer gets one of these answers. God is able to do anything, but He isn't always willing to do what it is we think He should do to bail us out (Daniel 3:17). Therefore when you pray for others first be sensitive to how God would have you pray. Don't

be so quick to come up with a solution and make that your prayer. God may have another solution (better than ours). Don't pray solutions to God, pray problems and let Him come up with His own solution. You'll find prayers answered more often when you let Him figure out how to take care of something. Often instead of removing something He gives us grace to endure it (II Corinthians 12:7-10). Include that option in your prayers for others.

5. PETITION (James 4:2; Hebrews 4:15-16; John 15:7). Petition means asking God for things for yourself. This is legitimate. We shouldn't always pray just for ourselves, nor should we feel unworthy to ever pray for ourselves. Much of what I said under "Intercession" above fits in here. There are some things the Bible says we should ask for: an understanding heart (I Kings 3:7,9), fellowship with other believers (Philemon 4-6), forgiveness (Psalm 25:11,18,20), guidance (Psalm 25:4-5; 27:11), holiness (I Thessalonians 5:23), love (Philippians 1:9-11), mercy (Psalm 6:1-6), power (Ephesians 3:16), spiritual growth (Ephesians 1:17-19) and to know and do God's will (Colossians 4:12). As you pray for yourself think of a Bible promise to claim for it. God promises He will not forget us (Isaiah 49:15), not fail us (Joshua 1:5), will show us what to do (I Samuel 16:3), will help us (Isaiah 41:10) and will strengthen us (Isaiah 41:10).

6. LISTEN (I Samuel 3:10; Hebrews 1:1-2; 3:15; Psalm 62:5; 46:10) Good communication is a two-way street. Pause a few minutes and listen to God talk to you. You should do that throughout your day. After all, which is more important: you passing on information to God or Him passing on information to you? Be still in your mind, let Him put in thoughts, feelings, ideas, etc., that you need. Be sensitive to His leading. As with any relationship, the better you know the person the better the communication. Good, deep communication is difficult with a stranger, but the more time you spend with a person the better you can 'hear' them, and that's true with God, too. This is an art that takes time to develop. It happens if you don't work on it!

THE FIVE FINGER PRAYER

1. Your **thumb** is nearest to you. So begin your prayers by praying for those closest to you. They are the easiest to remember. To pray for our loved ones is, as C.S. Lewis once said, a "sweet duty".

2. The **next finger** is the pointing finger. Pray for those who teach, instruct and heal. This includes teachers, doctors, and ministers. They need support and wisdom in pointing others in the right direction. Keep them in your prayers.

3. The **next finger** is the tallest finger. It reminds us of our leaders. Pray for the president, leaders in business and industry, and administrators. These people shape our nation and guide public opinion. They need God's guidance.

4. The **fourth finger** is our ring finger. Surprising to many is the fact that this is our weakest finger; as any piano teacher will testify. It should remind us to pray for those who are weak, in trouble or in pain. They need your prayers day & night. You can't do too much for them.

5. And lastly comes our **little finger**; the smallest finger of all. Which is where we should place ourselves in relation to God and others. As the Bible says, "the least shall be the greatest among you." Your pinky should remind you to pray for yourself. By the time you have prayed for the other four groups, your own needs will be put into proper perspective and you will be able to pray for yourself more effectively.



UNANSWERED PRAYER

1. LACK OF FAITH Mt 21:22; James 1:6-7
2. SELFISHNESS James 4:2-3
3. CARNALITY Psalm 66:18
4. LACK OF COMPASSION Prov 21:13
5. LACK OF COMPLIANCE WITH GOD'S WILL I John 5:14
6. LACK OF DOMESTIC TRANQUILITY I Peter 3:7
7. PRIDE Job 35:12-13
8. DISOBEDIENCE I John 3:22
9. NOT BEING FILLED WITH HOLY SPIRIT Ephesians 6:18
10. UNFORGIVING SPIRIT Mark 11:25



PRAYER PROMISES

PROMISES TO BELIEVE

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone that asks receives, and he that seeks shall find, and to him that knocks it shall be opened. ... If you, then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Matthew 7:7,11

And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it John 14:13-14

Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know. Jeremiah 33:3

You will call upon me and come and pray to me and I will hear you. Jeremiah 29:12

CONDITIONS TO MEET

If you believe, you will receive whatever you ask for in prayer. Mt. 21:22

Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. Mark 11:24

This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us - whatever we ask - we know that we have what we asked of him. John 5:14:15

You don't have because you don't ask. You ask, and don't receive because you ask for the wrong purpose, that you may consume it upon your selfish desires. James 4:2-3

And whatever we ask, we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in His sight. I John 3:22

This is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us; and if we know that He hears us, whatever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him. I John 5:14-15

"If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, you shall ask what you will and it shall be done for you." John 15:7

GET INTO THE HABIT OF PRAYER

* **Set aside time.** Take time when it can best be found, preferably early in the day. Prayers that are not said in the morning tend not be said at all.

* **Set a minimum time.** Begin modestly but gradually increase in length. Ten minutes is a realistic minimum and a half-hour is within most people's ability.

* **Be faithful.** Whatever length of time is decided, it should be firmly kept. Without some discipline, prayer tends to be pushed to the margin even by the most devout - there is always something else to do that appears more pressing or more attractive. There are days when prayer seems less easy and spontaneous and concentration is harder. On these days the offering of time is an act of obedience - which is itself an act of faith.

* **Have structure.** This can give shape on constancy without constricting your spontaneous approach to God. Begin with acknowledging the presence of God. Adoration follows: praise, awe, and love for who He is. Then follow where the personal situation leads. This might mean thanks for particular benefits or mercies to you and others, admission of sins, and requests for your desires or needs, intercession for the help of others. Don't worry if one area monopolizes your prayer time - consider this as a principal need of the day.

* **Ask.** Prayer is not a shopping list of things you'd like to have, yet it is right to bring your hopes before God, and in so doing to test their quality. But you are encouraged and even commanded to ask, so that your relationship with Him includes all aspects of your life. As you make intercession for others, ask that you be made available to be used in God's service if the opportunity is given.

* **Be ambitious but not impatient.** All Christians - including the saints - have known periods when there seemed to be no progress. These are times to hold fast to the discipline of prayer, waiting until you are ready to receive God's calling to new understanding and fresh devotion.

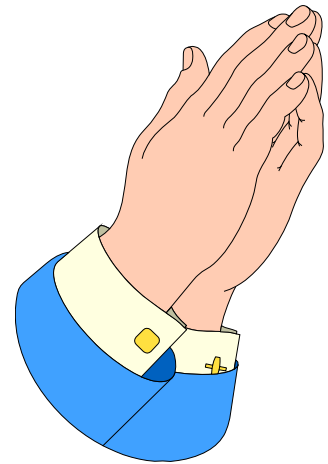


* **Use a prayer book.** There is strength in praying established prayers in addition to your own personal prayers. The insights and phrasing of these prayers can expand your understanding of God. Remember the Lord's Prayer which gives you a perfect pattern for prayer. Commit to praying it with renewed awareness of the words.

* **Prayer is relationship.** Essentially prayer brings you into contact with God. Your growth in prayer should be a deepening of that relationship with Him. Like a child who runs eagerly with requests to a loving parent, your sincerity and complete honesty are essential for prayer as you run to the Father.

GOOD PRAYER HABITS

Don't constantly repeat the Lord's name.
Don't repeat the same old phrases.
Don't pray AT others
Don't pray TO others
Don't pray showy prayers to impress others
Don't mumble or talk too softly in public prayer
Do talk naturally but respectfully
Do be definite, don't wander
Do set aside a certain time for daily private prayer



PRAY THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION

Petition answered, desire unanswered

Jews desire happiness so ask for meat to eat, but doesn't make them happy
Jews want a king so they can be 'successful' like other nations but doesn't happen
Demons ask to go into pigs so they can be safe but all the pigs drown

Petition unanswered, desire answered

Healed man asks to be with Jesus so he can serve Him, but sent home to serve
Abraham desires a son so asks if Ishmael can serve God, but gets Isaac instead
Abraham is concerned for Lot's safety so asks God to spare Sodom, Lot OK anyway

Petition and desire answered

Samson asks for strength back to avenge himself, gets both
Thief on cross asks Jesus to remember him in heaven so he'll be there, it happens
Jesus asks for Lazarus to come back to life so bystanders can believe

LEARNING TO TALK

1. One of our first prayers should be "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1) TRUE FALSE

2. Christians can now pray in the name of Jesus (John 16:24) TRUE FALSE

3. As you pray to God, your motive should be to bring glory to yourself (John 14:13) TRUE
FALSE

4. Ephesians 2:18 teaches that we pray to the Father through _____ by the
_____.

5. Some of the requirements for effective prayer are:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| ___ Matt. 21:22 | a. abide in Christ |
| ___ I John 5:14-15 | b. believe |
| ___ I John 3:22 | c. ask according to His will |
| ___ James 4:3 | d. His Word abide in us (live by the Bible) |
| ___ & ___ Jn. 15:7 | e. not ask selfishly |
| | f. live obediently |

6. What sometimes hinders our prayer (Isa. 59:1-2)? _____

7. If you sin, how do you get back on praying ground (Ps. 32:5)? _____

8. Some of the times you should pray are:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| ___ I Thess. 5:17 | a. when tempted |
| ___ Heb. 4:16 | b. when afflicted |
| ___ Matt. 26:41 | c. without ceasing |
| ___ James 5:13 | d. morning, noon, and evening |
| ___ Ps. 55:17 | e. in times of need |

9. Some of the people for whom you should pray are:

- | | |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| ___ Eph. 6:18 | a. your enemies |
| ___ Matt. 5:44 | b. all saints (Christians) |
| ___ James 5:14-16 | c. all men, kings, those in authority |
| ___ I Tim. 2:1-2 | d. those who are sick |
| ___ I Tim. 2:4 | e. the unsaved |

10. Some of the things you should pray for are:

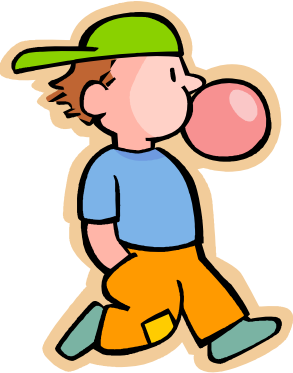
- | | |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| ___ James 1:5 | a. strength |
| ___ Acts 4:19 | b. that the Lord will teach you |
| ___ Ps. 19:12 | c. boldness to witness |
| ___ Ps. 105:4 | d. wisdom |
| ___ Ps. 119:33 | e. cleanse me from secret faults |
| ___ I Peter 5:7 | f. a knowledge of His will for you |
| ___ Col. 1:9 | g. all your cares |

11. Prayers were offered from the following physical positions:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| ___ Mark 11:25 | a. on His face |
| ___ I Kings 19:4 | b. sitting |
| ___ Luke 22:41 | c. standing |
| ___ Matt. 26:39 | d. kneeling |

9. LEARNING TO WALK

How do I live as a Christian?



How old does a baby need to be to start to walk? 12 months? 15 months? What if they are 5 years old and still crawling? Walking is natural, something healthy babies want to do. Learning to walk takes time and effort. It doesn't come quickly and easily but takes perseverance. Babies learn to walk one step at a time. Balance, timing and strength come slowly. They often fall down and have to get up and try again.

God says the same is true of a child of His learning to walk spiritually. He says we are to "walk by the Spirit" (Gal 5:16, 25). Step by step we must learn how to move through our life each day in a godly manner. We need to live our daily lives in a way that is honoring and pleasing to Him. We get our balance, our timing and our strength from the Holy Spirit, not from ourselves. If we could live the Christian life merely by doing our best there would have been no reason for God to send His Spirit. He knows we need His help and that the only way we can walk as He wants is by the power of the Holy Spirit.

THE TRINITY Augustine, the distinguished bishop of Hippo in North Africa, was strolling the beaches of the Mediterranean Sea one morning, engaged in deep thought. He was attempting to come to grips with the depths of the doctrine of the Trinity. He was interrupted in his thoughts when he stopped to watch a little fellow running toward the ocean with a bucket. He watched with amusement as the little guy filled his pail with water and hurried back up the beach to pour it into a little hole he had pawed into the sand. Within seconds the sea water soaked into sunbaked, thirsty sand. Then the bishop's eyes followed the little boy down to the ocean again, and then back up to the hole. Once again the little guy poured the water into the hole, and once again the sand swallowed it up greedily. "What are you trying to do?", asked Augustine with a smile. The little boy, a little annoyed at being interrupted in the middle of his busy task, replied, "I'm trying to put the ocean into this hole." Suddenly, it dawned on Augustine that he was behaving much like this little fellow. He was trying to cram the ocean of God's truth into his little box of brains and was having no more success than the little boy with his bucket.

If you are confused about the Trinity, you're on the right path! That three can be one and one three doesn't compute mathematically or in our minds, yet both truths are taught in the Bible. There is only one God, but in the unity of the godhead there are three eternal and coequal persons, the same in substance but distinct in subsistence.

GOD IS ONE Deuteronomy 6:4 says, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.*" This has become the motto of Judaism, which sees Christians as having three Gods.

GOD IS THREE While God is one, God is also three. This is called the Trinity. While the word 'Trinity' doesn't appear in the Bible, the truth it conveys does. The most common word for God is "Elohim" which is plural ("im" in Hebrew is like "s" in English). God said "Let US make man..." (Gen 1:26) and "Let US go down..." (Gen 11:7). In the Old Testament it is clear the Angel of the LORD is God, as well as God in heaven (Gen 16:7-13, etc.). Jesus lay aside the use of His divine attributes when He became man (Phil. 2:7) and did all He did as God by the power of the Holy Spirit (Mt 4:1; Lk 2:27; 4:1, 14; 10:21).



The Father is God (John 6:27), the Son is God (Heb. 1:8) and the Spirit is God (Acts 5:3-4). There are verses which mention all three persons of the Trinity as equally God: *Matt 28:19 Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and 2 Cor 13:14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.* At Jesus' baptism the Son was baptized, the Father spoke and the Spirit came down like a dove (Mt. 3; Mk 1; Lk 3; Jn 1).

THREE AND ONE? The only solution to this is to believe that God is both three and one. Both are 100% true. Our brains aren't equipped to understand how both can be true any more than we can understand eternity (time without end) or how God is 100% sovereign yet we are 100% responsible for our free will. There are many programs too complicated for my small home computer to run, there just isn't enough there to run it. The Trinity is a program too grand to be run by the human brain. Just because we can't understand it doesn't negate it. Who are we but tiny specks on a tiny speck (the earth) to think we can understand the Mind of the One who created and runs the whole universe?

THE HOLY SPIRIT It is said that a certain guide lived in the deserts of Arabia who never lost his way. He carried with him a homing pigeon with a very fine cord attached to one of its legs. When in doubt as to which path to take, he threw the bird into the air. The pigeon quickly strained at the cord to fly in the direction of home, and thus led the guide accurately to his goal. Because of this unique practice he was known as "the dove man." So, too, the Holy Spirit, the heavenly Dove, is willing and able to direct us in the narrow way that leads to the more abundant life if in humble self-denial we submit to His unerring supervision.

There is probably more serious disagreement among Christians today over the Holy Spirit than any other important theological doctrine. Denominations, churches, even families are split over this. Who and what is the Holy Spirit? What is His role today?

SPIRIT OR GHOST? The word used for the third Person of the Trinity is "pneuma" (Greek) which means breath. This pictures Him as an invisible power ("Spirit"), but certainly no "Ghost." The personal pronoun "He" is always used, never "it." All His works and attributes also show personality. He is called God (Acts 5:14) and has all the attributes which God has.

WORKS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT The Holy Spirit is the means and author of the Bible, revealing and inspiring the writers. In the Old Testament He came upon and filled believers at times of special need in their lives and ministry. It is in His power that Jesus ministered and did miracles, for Jesus voluntarily lay aside His divine attributes when He came to earth (Phil. 2:7).

Today He is the One Who restrains sin in general (II Thes. 2:7), convicts unbelievers of sin (John 16:8-9), and seals (guarantee of assurance) believers (II Cor. 1:22; Eph. 1:13; 4:30). He indwells every believer from the moment of salvation (Jn. 7:37-39; 14:16-17; I Cor. 6:19-20), produces the fruit (good works) in believers (Gal. 5:2-16) and baptizes (identifies) all Christians into the Body of Christ (I Cor. 12:13). He guides and directs believers as well as teaching and reminding them of God's Word (John 14:26). He gives spiritual gifts to each believer and through them ministers to the whole Body (1 Cor 12:4-13).

We are commanded to be filled (controlled) by the Spirit (Eph 5:18) by continually being in total submission to God (Gal 5:16,25) and not allowing any sin or disobedience in our lives (Eph 4:30; I Thes 5:19).

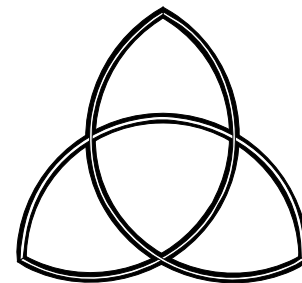
One day a Christian was looking at Niagara Falls with a friend. The friend observed that Niagara Falls was the most neglected power source in the world! "No," said the Christian, "the Holy Spirit is the most neglected power source in the world!" Are you trying to live the

Christian life without God's Spirit? It can't be done. Man comes "batteries not included." The Holy Spirit is our energy source. Without Him we can't function in the way we were created to function. What about you -- are you trying to run without batteries? The power is available, free, just use it!

HOW TO WALK BY THE SPIRIT

The Bible commands believers to be "filled" with the Holy Spirit. *"Do not get drunk with wine, for that is drunkenness, but be FILLED with the Holy Spirit." Eph 5:18*

Being 'filled' with the Holy Spirit is not a matter of trying to get more of the Holy Spirit in us. It's a matter of us give more of ourselves to God and His Spirit. When you accept Jesus as Savior the Holy Spirit indwells you and stays as long as you are on this earth. That is like putting your fist in a glove. The glove is indwelt with your hand, but it isn't filled with your hand. Each finger must totally fill each finger of the glove before the glove is 'filled' with the hand. That's the way it is with us and God's Spirit. For the glove to perform the functions needed it needs to be totally filled with the hand. In order for the child of God to live the way God wants us to live means we have to be totally filled by His Spirit.



Paul writes about the importance of walking by the Spirit. *Galatians 5:16 So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature. Galatians 5:25 Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*

He warns us to make sure we don't 'grieve' the Spirit. *Ephesians 4:30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.* This means we aren't to do anything that will make the Spirit sad. When that happens the Spirit doesn't leave us, but that sin does keep us from being totally filled by the Spirit. Thus we don't enjoy His presence, power and protection as we otherwise would.

The other danger we are warned to watch out for is 'quenching' the Spirit. *1 Thessalonians 5:19 Do not quench the Spirit ('put out the Spirit's fire').* The picture here is of taking a hose or straw and bending it so a kink prevents free flow of fluids through it. Sin or any kind of disobedience in our lives will prevent God's Spirit from totally filling and flowing through us as He desires and we need.

Jesus talks about this same principle in John 15:1-8. He tells His disciples that they must 'abide' in Him. That means they must stay connected to Him, depend on Him, remain close to Him. That is the only way fruit can be produced. A branch not connected to the vine, no matter how close otherwise, will not produce fruit.

Paul also uses the analogy of crucifixion to picture the same truth. *"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and delivered Himself up for me." Galatians 2:20*

A man who drank heavily was converted to Christ and lived victoriously for several weeks. One day as he passed the open door of a tavern, the pungent odor drifting out aroused his old appetite for liquor. Just then he saw this sign in the window of a nearby cafe:

"All the buttermilk you can drink -- 25 cents!" Dashing inside, he ordered one glass, then another, and still another. After finishing the third he walked past the saloon and was no longer tempted. He was so full of buttermilk that he had no room for that which would be injurious to him. The lesson is clear: to be victorious over our evil desires, we must leave no opportunity for them to repossess us.

Dwight L. Moody once demonstrated the principle like this: "Tell me," he said to his audience, "how can I get the air out of the tumbler I have in my hand?" One man said, "Suck it out with a pump." But the evangelist replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter it." Finally after many suggestions, moody picked up a pitcher and quietly filled the glass with water. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then explained that victory for the child of God does not come by working hard to eliminate sinful habits, but rather by allowing the Holy Spirit to take full possession.

To live the Spirit-filled life you must be absolutely and thoroughly convinced you can do nothing apart from the indwelling strength of the Holy Spirit. The Spirit-controlled life begins with an overwhelming realization that we are absolutely helpless and hopeless apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit.

Step I = SALVATION - A mental decision to accept God's free gift of salvation & stop refusing it.

Once made, you can never go back on this. You will never lost salvation.

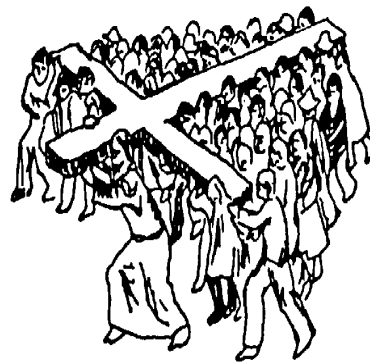
Step II = COMMITMENT -A mental decision to live as a disciple of Jesus and not for self, to put

Jesus first and obey Him in all things. This needs to be reaffirmed often.

Step III = CONTROL BY HOLY SPIRIT - A mental decision to depend on & be sensitive to His strength and leading and not your own. This needs to be reaffirmed constantly.

NATURAL, CARNAL AND SPIRITUAL MAN

1 Cor 3:1-3 1 Brothers, I could not address you as spiritual but as worldly — mere infants in Christ. 2 I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. 3 You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?



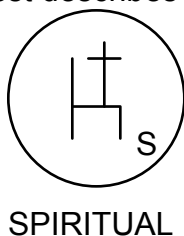
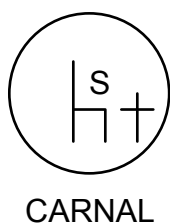
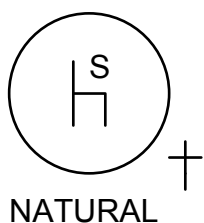
Notice the three circles below. The first, **NATURAL**, is the way we all naturally are. Self is on the throne and Christ (the cross) is not in their life. This is true of all unbelievers, and was true of us before we were born into God's family.

In the second circle we now see a person who is a Christian, who is born again, for Christ (the cross) is in his life, Unfortunately he still is in control of his own life, self in on the throne. Thus he is called **CARNAL**. Carnos is the Greek word for 'flesh' and this person still is living to please his flesh, not by the power of the Spirit.

The third circle, the **SPIRITUAL** man, is the way God wants us to be. Christ (the cross) is not only in his life but is on the throne. Self is off the throne. This person lives for God by the power of the Spirit.

Notice that the last 2 circles, Carnal and Spiritual, both are Christians and both will go to heaven when they die. However the middle circle, carnal, doesn't show that in his daily life. He lives and acts just like a natural man. Thus the first two circles look alike to those who know them. Only the spiritual person acts like a Christian.

Which one of these circles best describes where you are spiritually?



My Heart Christ's Home

Original text by - Robert Boyd Munger

"If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him." [John 14:23]

One evening I invited Jesus Christ into my heart. What an entrance He made! It was not a spectacular, emotional thing, but very real. Something happened at the very center of my life. He came into the darkness of my heart and turned on the light. He built a fire on the hearth and banished the chill. He started music where there had been stillness, and He filled the emptiness with His own loving, wonderful fellowship. I have never regretted opening the door to Christ and I never will. In the joy of this new relationship I said to Jesus Christ, "Lord, I want this heart of mine to be Yours. I want to have You settle down here and be perfectly at home. Everything I have belongs to You. Let me show You around."

The first room was **THE STUDY** - the library. In my home this room of the mind is a very small room with very thick walls. But it is a very important room. In a sense, it is the control room of the house. He entered with me and looked around at the books in the bookcase, the magazines upon the table, the pictures on the walls. As I followed His gaze I became uncomfortable.



Strangely, I had not felt self-conscious about this before, but now that He was there looking at these things I was embarrassed. Some books were there that His eyes were too pure to behold. On the table were a few magazines that a Christian had no business reading. As for the pictures on the walls - the imaginations and thoughts of the mind - some of these were shameful. Red-faced, I turned to Him and said, "Master, I know that this room needs to be cleaned up and made over. Will You help me make it what it ought to be?"

"Certainly!" He said. "I'm glad to help you. First of all, take all the things that you are reading and looking at which are not helpful, pure, good and true, and throw them out! Now put on the empty shelves the books of the Bible. Fill the library with Scripture and meditate on it day and night. As for the pictures on the walls, you will have difficulty controlling these images, but I have something that will help." He gave me a full-size portrait of Himself. "Hang this centrally," He said, "on the wall of the mind." I did, and I have discovered through the years that when my thoughts are centered upon Christ Himself, His purity and power cause impure thoughts to back away. So He has helped me to bring my thoughts under His control.



From the study we went into **THE DINING ROOM**, the room of appetites and desires. I spent a lot of time and hard work here trying to satisfy my wants. I said to Him, "This is a favorite room. I am quite sure You will be pleased with what we serve." He seated Himself at the table with me and asked, "What is on the menu for dinner?" "Well," I said, "my favorite dishes: mone, academic degrees and stocks, with newspaper articles of fame

and fortune as side dishes." These were the things I liked - secular fare.

When the food was placed before Him, He said nothing, but I observed that He did not eat it. I said to Him, "Master, don't You care for this food? What is the trouble?"

He answered, "I have food to eat that you do not know of. If you want food that really satisfies you, do the will of the Father. Stop seeking your own pleasures, desires, and satisfaction. Seek to please Him. That food will satisfy you." There at the table He gave me a taste of the joy of doing God's will. What flavor! There is no food like it in all the world. It alone satisfies.



From the dining room we walked into **THE LIVING ROOM**. This room was intimate and comfortable. I liked it. It had a fireplace, overstuffed chairs, a sofa, and a quiet atmosphere. He said, "This is indeed a delightful room. Let us come here often. It is secluded and quiet, and we can fellowship together." Well, as a young Christian I was thrilled. I couldn't think of anything I would rather do than have a few minutes with Christ in close companionship. He promised, "I will be here early every morning. Meet me here, and we will start the day together."

So morning after morning, I would come downstairs to the living room. He would take a book of the Bible from the case. We would open it and read together. He would unfold to me the wonder of God's saving truths. My heart sang as He shared the love and the grace He had toward me. These were wonderful times.

However, little by little, under the pressure of many responsibilities, this time began to be shortened. Why, I'm not sure. I thought I was too busy to spend regular time with Christ. This was not intentional, you understand. It just happened that way. Finally, not only was the time shortened, but I began to miss days now and then. Urgent matters would crowd out the quiet times of conversation with Jesus.

I remember one morning rushing downstairs, eager to be on my way. I passed the living room and noticed that the door was open. Looking in, I saw a fire in the fireplace and Jesus was sitting there. Suddenly in dismay I thought to myself, "He is my guest. I invited Him into my heart! He has come as my Savior and Friend, and yet I am neglecting Him."

I stopped, turned and hesitantly went in. With downcast glance, I said, "Master, forgive me. Have You been here all these mornings?" "Yes," He said, "I told you I would be here every morning to meet with you. Remember, I love you. I have redeemed you at great cost. I value your fellowship. Even if you cannot keep the quiet time for your own sake, do it for mine."

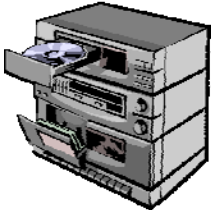
The truth that Christ desires my companionship, that He wants me to be with Him and waits for me, has done more to transform my quiet time with God than any other single fact. Don't let Christ wait alone in the living room of your heart, but every day find time when, with your Bible and in prayer, you may be together with Him.



Before long, He asked, "Do you have **A WORKROOM** in your home?" Out in the garage of the home of my heart I had a workbench and some equipment, but I was not doing much with it. Once in a while I would play around with a few little gadgets, but I wasn't producing anything substantial.

I led Him out there. He looked over the workbench and said, "Well, this is quite well furnished. What are you producing with your life for the Kingdom of God?" He looked at one or two little toys that I had thrown together on the bench and held one up to me. "Is this the sort of thing you are doing for others in your Christian life?"

"Well," I said, "Lord, I know it isn't much, and I really want to do more, but after all, I don't seem to have strength or skill to do more." "Would you like to do better?" He asked. "Certainly," I replied. "All right. Let me have your hands. Now relax in me and let my Spirit work through you. I know that you are unskilled, clumsy and awkward, but the Holy Spirit is the Master Workman, and if He controls your hands and your heart, He will work through you." Stepping around behind me and putting His great, strong hands under mine, He held the tools in His skilled fingers and began to work through me. The more I relaxed and trusted Him, the more He was able to do with my life.



He asked me if I had a **RECREATION ROOM** where I went for fun and fellowship. I was hoping He would not ask about that. There were certain associations and activities that I wanted to keep for myself. One evening when I was on my way out with some of my buddies, He stopped me with a glance and asked, "Are you going out?"

I replied, "Yes." "Good," He said, "I would like to go with you." "Oh," I answered rather awkwardly. "I don't think, Lord Jesus, that You would really enjoy where we are going.

Let's go out together tomorrow night. Tomorrow night we will go to a Bible class at church, but tonight I have another appointment." "I'm sorry," He said. "I thought that when I came into your home, we were going to do everything together, to be close companions. I just want you to know that I am willing to go with you." "Well," I mumbled, slipping out the door, "we will go someplace together tomorrow night."

That evening I spent some miserable hours. I felt rotten. What kind of friend was I to Jesus, deliberately leaving Him out of my life, doing things and going places that I knew very well He would not enjoy? When I returned that evening, there was a light in His room, and I went up to talk it over with Him. I said, "Lord, I have learned my lesson. I know now that I can't have a good time without You. From now on, we will do everything together." Then we went down into the rec room of the house. He transformed it. He brought new friends, new excitement, new joys. Laughter and music have been ringing through the house ever since.



One day I found Him waiting for me at the door. An arresting look was in His eye. As I entered, He said to me, "There is a peculiar odor in the house. Something must be dead around here. It's upstairs. I think it is in **THE HALL CLOSET.**"

As soon as He said this, I knew what He was talking about. There was a small closet up there on the hall landing, just a few feet square. In that closet, behind lock and key, I had one or two little personal things that I did not want anyone to know about. Certainly, I did not want Christ to see them. I knew they were dead and rotting things left over from the old life. I wanted them so for myself that I was afraid to admit they were there.

Reluctantly, I went up with Him, and as we mounted the stairs the odor became stronger and stronger. He pointed to the door. I was angry. That's the only way I can put it. I had given Him access to the library, the dining room, the living room, the workroom, the rec room, and now He was asking me about a little two-by-four closet. I said to myself, "This is too much. I am not going to give Him the key." "Well," He said, reading my thoughts, "if you think I'm going to stay up here on the second floor with this smell, you are mistaken. I will go out on the porch." Then I saw Him start down the stairs.

When one comes to know and love Christ, the worst thing that can happen is to sense Him withdrawing His fellowship. I had to give in. "I'll give You the key," I said sadly, "but You will have to open the closet and clean it out. I haven't the strength to do it." "Just give me the key," He said. "Authorize me to take care of that closet and I will." With trembling fingers I passed the key to Him. He took it, walked over to the door, opened it, entered, took out all the putrefying stuff that was rotting there, and threw it away.



Then He cleaned the closet and painted it. It was done in a moment's time. Oh, what victory and release to have that dead thing out of my life! A thought came to me. "Lord, is there any chance that You would take over the management of the whole house and operate it for me as You did that closet? Would You take the responsibility to keep my life what it ought to be?" His face lit up as He replied, "I'd love to! That is what I want to do. You cannot be a victorious Christian in your own strength. Let me do it through you and for you. That is the way. But," He added

slowly, "I am just a guest. I have no authority to proceed, since the property is not mine."

Dropping to my knees, I said, "Lord, You have been a guest and I have been the host. From now on I am going to be the servant. You are going to be the owner and Master." Running as fast as I could to the strongbox, I took out **THE TITLE DEED** to the house describing its assets and liabilities, location and situation. I eagerly signed the house over to Him alone for time and eternity. "Here," I said. "Here it is, all that I am and have, forever. Now You run the house. I'll just remain with You as a servant and friend."

Things are different since Jesus Christ has settled down and has made His home in my heart.

LEARNING TO WALK

1. John 16:13-14 says the Holy Spirit will not speak of Christ but will glorify Himself T F

2. The Holy Spirit is called:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> John 14:16 | a. Spirit of God & Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> John 14:17 | b. eternal Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heb. 10:29 | c. The Comforter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 1:4 | d. Spirit of Truth |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 8:2 | e. Spirit of Grace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eph. 1:17 | f. Spirit of Holiness |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Heb. 9:14 | g. Spirit of wisdom & revelation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Romans 8:9 | h. Spirit of Power & love |
| <input type="checkbox"/> II Tim. 1:7 | i. Spirit of life |

3. All Christians have been:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> John 3:5-6 | a. indwelt by Holy Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eph. 1:13 | b. baptized into Body of Christ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Cor. 12:13 | c. born of the Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Cor. 6:19 | d. sealed by the Spirit |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eph. 5:18 | e. commanded to be filled by HS |

4. There are 3 classes of men mentioned in I Co. 2:14 - 3:4

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> carnal man | a. the unyielded Christians living by own power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spiritual man | b. Christian living by power & guidance of Holy Spirit |

5. If you permit Him, the Holy Spirit will:

- | | |
|---|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 8:26 & 27 | a. strengthen you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 5:5 | b. lead you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Co. 2:12 | c. help you pray |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I Cor. 2:13 | d. teach you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 8:16 | e. shed the love of God in you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eph. 3:16 | f. show what God has given you |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Rom. 8:14 | g. assure you of salvation |

6. When the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit they became very timid (Acts 4:31) T F

7. To remain filled with the Holy Spirit you must not _____ or _____ Him
(Eph. 4:30 & I Thess. 5:19)

8. If you sin and fellowship with God is broken, how can you get back into fellowship (I John 1:9):

- ☐ do penance
☐ be rebaptized
☐ confess your sin to God

9. Romans 12:1 says you are to:

- ☐ do the best you can
☐ keep the 10 Commandments
☐ present yourself to God to be used by Him

10. WALKING WITHOUT STUMBLING

How can I walk without falling down?

When a young child starts learning to walk he must be very careful. He focuses on every step, goes slowly and is very careful, but still it is easy to lost balance and fall. As he grows older and stronger and gets more experienced he still is in danger of falling but not as much. There will always be the danger of tripping and falling, but time and alertness can help prevent many falls.



The same is true of new Christians. It's easy for a new believer to be tripped up and sin for everything is so new. It takes time to develop spiritual balance, rely on God's strength, and not have to focus on every movement. Still, there is always the danger of tripping and falling, no matter how long one has been a Christian. The key to walking in our Christian life without stumbling is to keep our eyes on Jesus.

Picture yourself walking down a street. Jesus is at the far end and that's where you are headed. Your goal is to be like Jesus. On either side of the street as you walk are store fronts, activities, distractions – anything to get our eyes off of Jesus and cause us to change our direction even so slightly. When we do we stumble and fall.

The things that distract us are attractions of the world. Satan puts temptations in our way as well. Then, too, our sin nature makes it natural for us to deviate from God's ways. Our normal tendency is to live for our self and wanting to meet our needs and desires right away. Much of our sin comes because we are trying to meet a legitimate need in an illegitimate way.

Satan uses lies to deceive us and we are all too quick to fall for them. Usually we don't realize they are lies until we find ourselves flat on our faces.

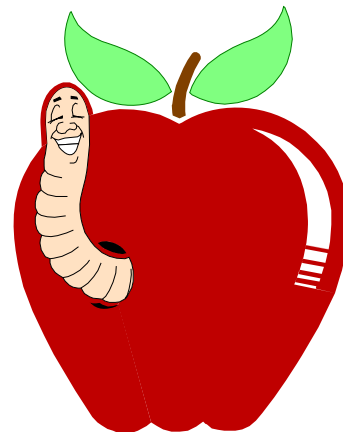
TEMPTATION

You must remember that being tempted to sin isn't the same as sinning (Matthew 5:27). Just because you are tempted doesn't mean you have sinned. You don't have to confess being tempted and ask God to forgive you.

Also we must remember that God never tempts us to sin. *James 1:13-15 When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; 14 but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.*

Temptation is like coming to a “Y” in a road. You have an option to go in either direction, right or left. There is no choice until there are 2 options, one right and one wrong. The wrong way is the way Satan tempts us. It is the way of sin. Instead of trusting God’s provision in His own way and time, we try to meet that need in our own way right now. The other path in the road is testing. God wants us to trust Him and live His way so we can see Him work in our lives.

One of Satan’s biggest lies to us is that the temptation is so strong we have to give in to it, we can’t help ourselves. We can’t resist. The Bible says this will never happen. *1 Cor 10:13 No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*



When we do give in to temptation and sin the solution is given in *1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.* If we confess our know sin, He forgives us for ALL our sins, even the ones we aren’t aware of. That is more than fair! Our part, however, is to ‘confess’ the sin. That means ‘agree with God,’ ‘say the same thing about the sin as God says.’ When you recognize your sin is your fault, not someone else’s fault, and when you take that blame yourself, then you are confessing your sin. You are seeing your sin as God sees it – so bad that Jesus had to die for it. If that would have been the only sin that anyone would have ever committed, Jesus would still have had to go to the cross. That’s how awful sin is. No wonder God hates it!

SUFFERING

Closely related to the area of temptation is the area of suffering, for that often causes us to stumble and fall quicker than anything else. Before salvation people feel that everything in life should go well and that if it doesn’t that is just bad luck. They see no God in control of everything and having a plan and purpose for everything that happens. They don’t appreciate the role of stretching and suffering in maturing them. It takes awhile after salvation for them to make these adjustments in perspective. It is important, though, to submit to whatever God has come our way in life. If we don’t, if we blame Him or others or if we take things into our own hands, then we have stumbled and fallen for we have stopped trusting in God and His sovereign love.

WHAT SHOULD BE OUR ATTITUDE TO SUFFERING?

a. UNBELIEVER

1. Consequences of sin in the universe

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you ...Genesis 3:17, 18

2. Consequences of own sin, folly

FREE WILL CHOICES in which we reap the consequences

Physical care of body, financial misuse of money, treat others wrong

COMPANY spends \$1 on computers, expert installs them, teaches how to use

They leaves, company throws instructional manuals away, does whatever

Things go wrong – blame manufacturer!

3. To Bring to salvation

b. BELIEVER

1. DESERVED SUFFERING

a. Consequences of sin in the universe, us all guilty with Adam

"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you ...Genesis 3:17, 18

b. Break rules of government, nature

Disobey laws of nature, gov.

FREE WILL CHOICES in which we reap the consequences

Physical care of body, financial misuse of money, treat others

wrong

c. God's discipline for sin

Disobey laws of God

and don't confess

To make us more like Jesus

2. UNDESERVED SUFFERING

compare/contrast

discipline & punishment

like parent to child



There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus. Romans 8:1

Judgment for sin: paid for on cross

He who has begun a good work in you will carry it out until the day of Christ Jesus.

Workman stranded on top of building, drops stones to get attention, bigger and bigger, until look up.

Shepherd in Palestine - break sheep's leg to cause him to trust God and depend on Him
 GOD; *As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten. Rev. 3:19*
The Lord disciplines those He loves, and corrects everyone he accepts as a son. Heb 12:6
Blessed is the man whom God corrects, so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty Job 5:17
DAVID: Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I have kept thy word.

a. CONFLICT BETWEEN SATAN & GOD Job 1-2

b. PRESENTS GOD'S MESSAGE Hosea

What we go through for God teaches others @ Him

c. TEACHES OBEDIENCE TO GOD Heb 5:8 Phil 2:8

Jesus learned obedience by the things he suffered. Heb 5:8

God made Jesus perfect (mature) through suffering. Hebrews 2:10

d. CAUSES US TO LEAN ON GOD'S GRACE

Paul's thorn in the flesh

"My grace is sufficient for you", for when I am weak then I am strong. Paul

e. BRINGS US CLOSER TO CHRIST I Peter 1:7-8 Isa 49:2

Makes us more like Jesus:

f. DEMONSTRATES GOD'S POWER John 13:16; 16:33; I Peter 1:13

As He works through us

g. MANIFESTS THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT II Cor 4:8-11 Eph 5

As we respond by HS within

h. HELPS OTHERS WHO SUFFER II Cor 1:3-4

HOW SHOULD WE RESPOND TO SUFFERING?

a. IF UNBELIEVER

Salvation

b. IF BELIEVER IN SIN

Confess sin

God turns suffering to good

All things work for the good of those who love God - Romans 8:28

c. IF BELIEVER AND NOT IN SIN

1. Make sure you are in God's will



Those who suffer according to God's will should commit themselves to their faithful Creator and continue to do good. I Peter 4:19

2. Realize God is doing it for our benefit

Every branch that bears fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. John 15:2

All things work together for Good for the benefit of those who love Him. Romans 8:28

3. Later we will know better why He allows it

Jesus said, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." John 13:7

4. Don't be ashamed of suffering, difficulties

If you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed but praise God that you bear that name. I Peter 4:16

5. Trust God and draw closer to Him

For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

BLESSING THROUGH TRIALS

Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. Ps. 126:5

As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem. Isa. 66:13

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. Romans 8:28

You know the testing of your faith develops perseverance. James 1:3

No temptation/testing has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted/tested beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted/tested, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it. 1 Cor. 10:13

He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield. Ps. 91:4

"Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him; I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name. He will call upon me and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble I will deliver him & honor him. With long life will I satisfy him & show him my salvation. Psalm 91:14-16

MANKIND

An American Indian tells about a brave who found an eagle's egg and put it into the nest of a prairie chicken. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them. All his life, the changeling eagle, thinking he was a prairie chicken, did what the prairie chickens did. He scratched in the dirt for seeds and insects to eat. He clucked and cackled. And he flew in a brief thrashing of wings and flurry of feathers no more than a few feet off the ground. After all, that's how prairie chickens were supposed to fly. Years passed. And the changeling eagle grew very old. One day, he saw a magnificent bird far above him in the cloudless sky. Hanging with graceful majesty on the powerful wind currents, it soared with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings. "What a beautiful bird!" said the changeling eagle to his neighbor. "What is it?" "That's an eagle--the chief of the birds," the neighbor clucked. "But don't give it a second thought. You could never be like him." So the changeling eagle never gave it another thought. And it died thinking it was a prairie chicken.



Many people are like that today. Despite all the New Age claims that we are 'gods,' all those without Christ are living an empty, earthbound existence, not realizing the tremendous blessing that is theirs by God's creation. Just who is this 'eagle' that so often chooses to live like a chicken?

MAN'S CREATION God created man in His own image (Gen 1:27). This means that man, like God (and the angels) has a mind (rational intelligence), a will (free to make his own choices) and emotions (can feel and experience). Man was created on the 6th day of God's creative activity (Gen 2:7-25), about six or seven thousand years ago.

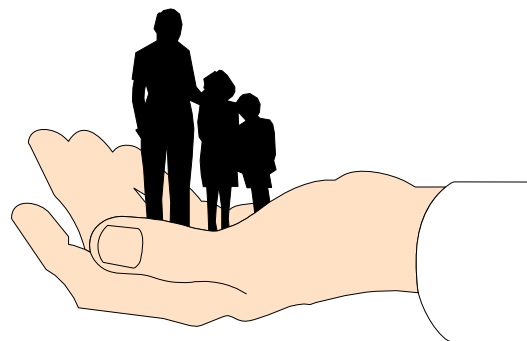
MAN'S NATURE Man is different from animals in many ways. Only man is made in God's image (Gen 1:27), only man had God breathe life into him, and only man has an immaterial part that will live forever. Man is physical (body) but also nonphysical (soul, spirit). Some see the soul and spirit as separate parts of man, the soul being the part that relates to man and the spirit that which relates to God and only comes alive at the new birth (I Thes 5:23). Others feel that the soul and spirit are used interchangeably (John 12:27; 13:21). Whatever the breakdown, there is definitely a part of man that will live forever, in heaven or hell.

Man is created not just a little higher than the animals, but a little lower than the angels. The Bible says: "You have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings" (Psalm 8:5; Heb 2:7,9). Modern man's "greatest dilemma" is an identity crisis brought on by the fact that man is no longer viewed as a little lower than the angels. We almost all think of ourselves as a little higher than the animals (or on an equal footing with them). The central teaching of the Scripture about the dignity of man is that we have been imputed or infused by God with a nature that is not only a little higher than the animals, but -- a little lower than the angels. In our new bodies, when we rule and reign with God for all eternity, we will be superior to the angels (I Cor 6:3). It's this

image of God spoken about in the Bible that makes the distinction between man and the animals.

MAN'S PURPOSE God planned man's creation even before He planned the creation of the world (Eph. 1:4), because we are more special to Him than even the world (Psalm 139). Man was created to have fellowship and communion with God, to walk and talk with God in Eden (Gen 2:15-17). That ended when sin entered, for sin separates man from God, but it was God's original intention (we could even say 'need') to have a close personal relationship with man. God Himself left heaven and came to earth to pay for man's sins on the cross so that close fellowship could be restored. By accepting Jesus as our Savior we can know that we will have that fellowship with God in heaven for all eternity (John 3:3, 7).

Satan caused this separation, this sin, by telling man he could be 'like god' (Gen 3:5) on his own, without God. That is still Satan's lie today, that all are 'gods' and don't need God. Yet without a real relationship with the living God, man continues to scratch around like chickens, only dreaming of soaring with eagles.



Yet despite this separation between God and man, Christians can still bring honor and glory to God (I Cor 10:31; Eph 1:12). This is our main purpose and goal in life, the reason we live. It is not to please ourselves nor to get God to serve us. It is for us to serve Him. We are to do His will and work.

Man was created to have dominion over the rest of creation (Gen 1:26,28). By sinning, Adam turned over rulership of this earth to Satan, who is now the prince of this world (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Eph 2:2). Jesus bought it back on the cross (Romans 5) and will one day come back and claim ownership of His creation by sending Satan and his forces to eternal torment in hell (Rev 20:1-3, 10).

When this happens born-again (John 3) people will be restored to his original state of innocence and fellowship with God (Rom 6:4; II Cor 5:20).

Man really only meets his potential when he humbles himself to serve and worship God. Of all creatures, only man has this privilege. Only in this way does he soar like the eagle he was created to be. What a shame that so many continue to walk around like a chicken, not realizing the tremendous blessings God built into them if they would just acknowledge Him as creator and Lord and accept His free gift of salvation!

One day God will give His children a new body, an eternal version updated and adapted to live forever (I Cor 15:42-44). Then this old chicken will really soar like an eagle!

WALKING WITHOUT STUMBLING

MEMORY VERSES:

James 1:14 Romans 13:14
I Co. 10:13 I Peter 4:12
James 1:12 Hebrews 2:18

1. There is no danger in getting involved in sinful things because once we have received Christ we will be free from temptation (Gal. 6:1) TRUE FALSE
2. A child of God can safely say he cannot sin. (I Jon 1:8, 10)
3. God sometimes tempts us to sin (James 1:13). TRUE FALSE
4. Who is your chief enemy (IPeter 5:8)? _____
5. Satan is also called:
 ____ Matthew 4:3 a. god of this world
 ____ John 8:44 b. tempter
 ____ II Corinthians 4:4 c. Satan
 ____ Romans 16:20 d. a liar
 ____ II Corinthians 11:14 e. appears as an angel of light
6. Satan has _____ (I Timothy 3:7) and _____ (II Corinthians 2:11) to get Christians to sin.
7. You should _____ to God and _____ Satan (James 4:7). At times it may be wise to _____ temptation (I Tim. 6:11).
8. Jesus met temptation by quoting Scripture (Mt. 4:6). TRUE FALSE
9. How can you follow Jesus' example in quoting Scripture? (Psalm 119:11)

10. According to Proverbs 4:14, Ephesians 4:27, and Romans 13:14, you should not go to places or be with people whom Satan causes to tempt you to sin. TRUE FALSE
11. Satan will tempt you to do things you do not like to do (James 1:14). TRUE FALSE
12. Sometimes a Christian is tempted by something greater than he is able to resist and he cannot help sinning (I Cor. 10:13). TRUE FALSE
13. Christ is able to help you when you are tempted because He also was tempted (Heb. 4:15). TRUE FALSE
14. Who will give you victory over temptation (II Peter 1:9; I Cor. 15:57) ?

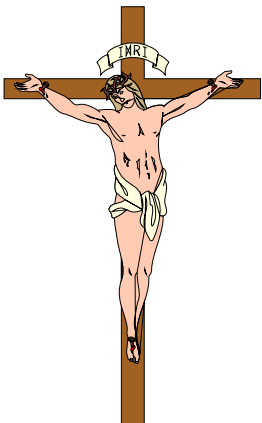
15. Will God reward those who are victorious in times of testing and temptation (James 1:12)

11. WASHING & SPANKING

What happens when I sin?

SALVATION – TOTAL CLEANSING

Lost in the jungle, a man sought desperately to find his way to safety. His strength was ebbing fast as the insects and stifling heat did their deadly work. Suddenly he heard what he thought to be a bell tolling in the distance. Believing he was nearing civilization, he struggled bravely onward; but he never seemed to draw closer to the sound. Finally he fell to the ground exhausted, never to rise again. The mysterious bellbird had claimed another victim! This story is related in detail by G.B. Robeson. He says that many a traveler in the heart of the rain forest of Central and South America has been led to his death by the uncanny call of this seldom-seen bird. Its enticing, reverberating "toll" produces an almost overpowering temptation to seek its source. Similarly, Satan employs subtle devices to ensnare the human race. As lost souls seek to disengage themselves from the vines of sin, they are allured by the tempter's "bell" ringing in the distance. "At last," they think, "I've found a way of escape," and so, following the call of the evil one deeper and deeper into the jungle of despair, they are eventually lost for eternity.



Many are following the deceptive call of the devil's "bell-bird" because it "seems right" to them. O that they might realize the truth of these words before it is too late: "The end thereof are the ways of death." Christ, who declared that "no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14:6), is the only One who can lead poor wanderers to the promised land of salvation and safety!

THE NEED OF SALVATION For ALL have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ... (Romans 3:23). Because God is holy and perfect, He cannot allow sin in His presence. Still, He wants man to have fellowship with Him -- that's why He created man. So He planned to come to earth Himself, and go to the cross as man's substitute. By taking the guilt for

the sins of the world on Himself, He experienced what we would experience in all eternity in hell, condensed and poured out on Him. Because He was man He could be our replacement. Because He was sinless He didn't have sin of His own to pay for and could pay for ours. Because He was God He could experience hell for all of us at once, He had a greater capacity to suffer. There is nothing we can do to add to salvation, it is all by God.

THE PROVISION OF SALVATION God provided it all, all we do is freely accept His provision. Ephesians 2:8-9 says: *For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-- not by works, so that no one can boast.*

John 19:30 says: *When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.* The word *it is finished* in the

Greek means: "paid in full." It was written on bills of receipt. Jesus wasn't killed for our sin, He suffered and paid for all of it, then, when it was finished and His life's work completed, He voluntarily died for there was no longer any reason to suffer. HE paid it all!

THE RECEPTION OF SALVATION Salvation is received by faith. Romans 3:28 says: *For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.* John 3:16 also says: *"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.* The artist who painted "Jesus at the Door" is said to have purposely left off the knob from the door, for the door represents the human heart, and on that door, the bolt is on the inside. Jesus stands and knocks. But he will not come in unless we open the door.

THE REJECTION OF SALVATION Jesus is the only way to God, there is NO other way of salvation (John 14:6). Rejection of His gift of salvation means eternal condemnation in hell. *"Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life, for God's wrath remains on him."* (John 3:36).

THE TENSES OF SALVATION At the moment of salvation all past sin and its penalty is removed (II Timothy 1:9; Acts 16:31). No matter what, it will never be held against us for its penalty has been paid (Romans 8:1). Sin committed after salvation has also been paid for on the cross, but must be confessed (admitted to - I John 1:9). Then it is removed. Unconfessed sin does not endanger our salvation, but hinders our closeness and fellowship with God. Sin between a husband and wife doesn't end the marriage but does keep the partners from being able to be close to and enjoy each other.



While salvation removes the penalty of all sin, it doesn't remove its power (Philippians 2:12-13; Romans 8:13). A Christian still has a sin nature and the capacity to sin just as much as an unbeliever. Lot is an good example of that (Genesis 13:12, 19:29-38; II Peter 2:7). While we CAN sin, we don't HAVE to sin! Sin's power is just as strong, but now instead of being powerless to resist, we have a greater Power, the Holy Spirit, and don't HAVE to sin any more. We are free from the power of sin, but not yet from the presence of sin.

In the future, when we are in heaven, we will be free from the very presence of sin and our sin nature will be gone (Romans 13:11; Titus 2:12-13). That is guaranteed to every one who accepts God's free gift of salvation.



THE SECURITY OF SALVATION Salvation cannot be lost or returned. Once a person is born into God's family, he cannot be 'unborn' out of it. He is part of that family no matter what. Our keeping our salvation doesn't depend on our 'hanging on' but on God's faithfulness (II Timothy) and protection (Mt. 12:20; Ps 37:24), steadfastness (John 10:28-29; Romans 8:37-39) and forgiveness (romans 4:6-8).

SIN AFTER SALVATION – GETTING DIRTY AGAIN



In the Australian bush country grows a little plant called the "sundew." It has a slender stem and tiny round leaves fringed with hairs that glisten with bright drops of liquid as delicate as fine dew. Woe to the insect, however, that dares to dance around it in the sunny air. For while its attractive clusters of red, white, and pink blossoms are harmless, the leaves are deadly. The shiny moisture on each leaf is sticky, and will hold any bug prisoner that touches it. The struggle to get free is often futile, for the movement of the insect causes the leaves to close even more tightly. This innocent-looking

plant actually feeds upon its victims if they do not quickly wriggle out of the entanglement. This is a picture of what sin does. Yet, like the flower, many today deny the danger and reality of sin. Just what is sin? Is it still real today or have we 'outgrown' the whole idea of sin?

SIN IS REAL From the beginning man has tried to deny sin. Adam and Eve, Cain, and everyone since looks for a way out from sin's consequences. Today is no different. Instead of acknowledging sin and changing, man would rather stay in his sin but deny his guilt by convincing himself there is no sin. To do this man must get rid of the idea of God, for any higher authority would have absolutes which, when man breaks, would be sin. Thus men run to philosophies like evolution which seem to allow them to deny any higher accountability, and thus the existence of sin. If there is no God, man is the ultimate authority, there is no absolute right or wrong, and anything goes. But that's not what the Bible says (Rom. 3:23; 6:23). Also, that doesn't seem to work in practicality. Guilt, drugs to mask the symptoms of guilt and stress, suicide, counseling, crime -- all are increasing at an alarming rate. Those who say that 'wrong' is just a learned response or a forced reaction to an imperfect culture, are wrong. We live in a more progressive society than anyone has, yet these things not only remain but increase. Sin is not just learned, it comes from within. Children are born selfish and self-centered, they don't need to learn that from anyone. They need to learn how to NOT be that way, but there seems to overcome that on one's own. What's the solution? First, correctly understand the problem.

SIN DEFINED Sin is anything that is contrary to the character of God. While a sin differs from a slip or mistake as to motive, dismissing all sin as mistakes is refusing to admit the true sinfulness of the act. That is like mislabeling dangerous poison as a mildly unpleasant substance. Sin can't be seen except in comparison of our selves with Jesus. His perfect standard is our goal. Anything that is not what He would think, say, do, or not do is sin.

THE ORIGIN OF SIN Sin started with Satan's prideful rebellion against God (Ezekiel 28:15). God is in no way responsible for sin. He gave Satan a free will, but had nothing to do with the sin. If I give my son the keys to the car to go someplace and he drives off the road, is that my fault for letting him drive? No, he is 100% responsible.

Satan, not God, is responsible for sin. He brought it to earth in Eden, when Adam and Eve sinned.

GUILT OF SIN The Bible tells us we are guilty of sin in three areas:

Imputed sin means we are guilty with Adam for his sin (Rom 5:12). As representative of the human race, we all share his guilt. We would have done the same thing were it us.

Inherited sin describes the sin nature that is passed from parent to child (Psalm 51:5). This natural tendency to sin is something we are all born with. Each baby is naturally selfish, and self-centered. Because of this we are 'totally depraved.' This doesn't mean we always sin just as badly as we could in every area. Humanly speaking, man can and does do nice things and often chooses the right over wrong. What it does mean is that there is nothing we can do to please God (Isa 64:6) or to impress Him. If our righteous acts are filthy in His sight, what must our sins be like? Inherited sin means we have a natural tendency to sin. It comes automatically. It means our every act and thought is polluted and unacceptable to God. Running clean water through contaminated pipes doesn't clean the pipes but taints the water. Thus all we do is tainted by selfishness and sinfulness because of our inherited sin nature.

A scorpion, being a very poor swimmer, asked a turtle to carry him on its back across the river. "Are you mad?" exclaimed the turtle. "You'll sting me while I'm swimming and I'll drown." "My dear turtle," laughed the scorpion, "If I were to sting you, you would drown and I'd go down with you. Now where is the logic in that?" "You're right," cried the turtle. "Hop on." The scorpion climbed aboard and halfway across the river gave the turtle a mighty sting. As they both sank to the bottom, the turtle, resigned, said, "Do you mind if I ask you something? You said there is no logic in your stinging me. Why did you do it?" "It has nothing to do with logic," the drowning scorpion replied. "It's just my nature." Sinning is just in our nature, too.

Individual sin refers to the acts of sin we daily commit: wrong thoughts, actions or motives. It also refers to the good things we should do but don't do. Our sinful actions are just the tip of the iceberg of our sinfulness, but the most visible proportion.

Thus we are triply guilty -- three strikes and you are out! Any one of these, actually any one individual act of sin (deed, thought, motive, good undone) would be enough to doom us forever. A holy God cannot allow any sin in His presence. So what is the solution to sin?

REMOVING SIN AFTER SALVATION - WASHING

SOLUTION TO SIN FOR THE BELIEVER Once God's free gift of salvation is accepted, we can never lose salvation. Sin must be confessed (recognize and admit the sin - I John 1:9). Then it is forgiven. Keeping from all sin is impossible in this life, but it is still our goal and what we must strive toward. It is only as we stay close to God that we can overcome sin.

A pilot was flying his small plane one day, when he heard a noise which he recognized as the gnawing of a rat. Wondering what its sharp teeth were cutting through, he suddenly realized with horror that it might be an electric wire. Then he



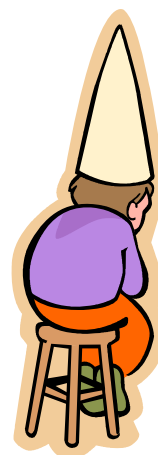
remembered that rodents can't survive at high altitudes. Immediately he began climbing until finally he had to put on his oxygen mask. Soon the gnawing sound ceased, and when he landed he found the rat -- dead. Staying close to God is the only way to grow in victory over sin in our lives. Know your enemy (sin) but know even more how to have victory (Jesus).

SOLUTION TO SIN FOR THE UNBELIEVER The only solution is salvation, freely accepting Jesus' work on the cross (John 3:16), for He paid the penalty for all our sin. He suffered on the cross what we would have suffered for sin during all eternity in hell. Because He was perfect He was without guilt for His own sin, because He was human He could take our place, and because He was God He could suffer for all people at once (greater capacity to suffer).

ALTERNATIVE TO WASHING - DISCIPLINE

Hebrews 12:3-11 Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. 4 In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. 5 And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." 7 Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? 8 If you are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. 9 Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! 10 Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. 11 No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.

There is no judgment for the believer (Romans 8:1) but God does discipline us (Heb 12:3-11). Judgment is to punish us, make us suffer for sins we have committed. Discipline is for a positive purpose, to make us mature so we don't make the same mistake again. Judgment looks to the past sin, discipline to future improvement. Our prison system is a picture of judgment. A shepherd who breaks a sheep's leg so the sheep won't keep running away but will learn to trust the shepherd as he carries him around is a picture of discipline.



WASHING AND SPANKING

1. Match the following words and their meanings:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| _____ Fellowship | a. discipling or training |
| _____ Confession | b. communion or joint participation |
| _____ Chastening | c. saying the same thing, agreeing |

2. Becoming a Christian means that you will not sin any more (I John 1:8, 10) TRUE FALSE

3. If you say you don't sin, what do you make God (I John 1:10)? _____

4. Galatians 3:13 teaches your sins can be forgiven:

- | |
|--|
| _____ if you promise to keep the law |
| _____ if you join the church, are baptized, and start to tithe |
| _____ because Christ redeemed you from the curse of sin |

5. If a Christian confesses his sin, he is cleansed from the defilement of that sin and restored into fellowship with God (I John 1:9) TRUE FALSE

6. After you have confessed your sin, you should not let Satan make you feel guilty by bringing it to your remembrance (Isa 43:25) TRUE FALSE

7. How many sins does God list in Proverbs 6:16-19 that He especially hates? _____

8. You can sin by not doing some good thing which you know you should do (James 4:17). TRUE FALSE

9. Sin separates a Christian from God (Isaiah 59:2). TRUE FALSE

10. What might keep you from confessing your sin and asking for forgiveness (Psalm 10:4)?

11. Psalm 139:23-24 teaches you should try to hide your sins from God so He will not be offended. TRUE FALSE

12. If you do not judge your sins, God will chasten you (I Corinthians 11:31-32) TRUE FALSE

13. You cannot prosper if you hide your sins (Prov 28:13). TRUE FALSE

14. If you are chastened by God you should:

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| _____ Revelation 3:19 | a. Know God loves you |
| _____ Revelation 12:11 | b. Not despise it or get discouraged and quit |
| _____ Revelation 12:5 | c. Bring good fruit, stop the sin, live for God |

12. PROTECTION FROM INJURY

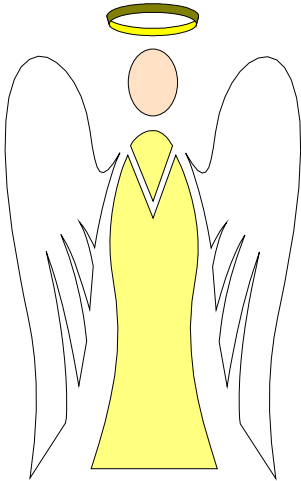
How can I keep safe from Satan's attacks?

ANGELS

Since the mid-1990's there has been a resurgence of popular interest in angels. This interest has manifested itself in such diverse phenomena as the proliferation of celestial iconography on greeting cards and household objects, a number of television specials, movies and weekly series devoted to encounters with angels, cover articles in Time, Newsweek, USA Today and other magazines, comics (Rose is Rose, etc.) based on angel contacts, books about angel manifestations and experiences people have had with angels, the great success of Tony Kushner's Pulitzer Prize-winning play "Angels in America," and even the appearance of "angelology" among the course offerings in some colleges.

The positive side is that it's nicer to see a focus on angels than on Satan and demons. The negative side is that Jesus is entirely left out as is any mention of salvation only by the blood of Jesus. Seldom is 'God' included, and then usually just in a weak background role. Angels are to bring honor and glory to God, not to themselves. Plus, in the Bible they never appear to help unbelievers (those who haven't been saved by faith in God as provided by Jesus on the cross). They do announce judgment to unbelievers, but that is the only minimal contact they have with them.

How does today's emphasis on angels compare with what the Bible says? Lets look at the truth about angels and see.



CREATION OF ANGELS God created the angels before the world was created (Job 38:6-7), the same time He planned to create each one of us (and already knew us in His mind). He created an "innumerable" number of angels (Heb. 12:22; Rev 5:11). No angels have been created or destroyed since then. The number is exactly the same. People who die do NOT become angels, in eternity we have a

position greater than the angels will have (I Cor 6:3).

PERSONALITY OF ANGELS God created angels and humans in His image in that we all have a mind to rationally think and reason (I Peter 1:12), emotions to feel and experience (Luke 2:13), and a free will to choose our destiny (Jude 6). Soon after creation, the top angel (Lucifer, now called Satan Ezekiel 28:12-15) used his free will to rebel against God (II Thes 2:4) and as a result was kicked out of heaven (Isa 14:12-15, Ezek 28:15-17; Luke 10:18). The angels then had a one-time choice to follow Satan or God. About one third (Rev. 12:4) followed Satan in his rebellion and also lost their first position, now being called demons. This was the only time angels ever had an opportunity to exercise their free will. They are now 'locked in' and cannot change their state (angels cannot feel to becoming demons, demons cannot move up to being angels). Angels do not know what it is to experience God's grace in their lives. That is

why they are so interested in watching us as we talk and live (I Pet 1:12) for our lives show God's grace and love in operation in a way they don't personally experience. They are impressed with God and His mercy on us undeserving people.

NATURE Angels are spirit beings. They are not like God in that they do not know everything. They are limited to being at one place at a time. They are not all powerful or all knowing (Ps 103:20; II Thes 1:7). They have no physical body, but sometimes do appear in the form of a person (Heb 13:1). This is to help God's people in need. Some have wings to show power and glory, but not all have wings. While possessing all the traits we would call 'masculine' and 'feminine,' angels are always referred to as masculine. Male pronouns are always used. Angels are different, just like people are different: different abilities and functions in God's service, different traits and skills. Angels can't and don't reproduce (Mt 22:30; Mk 12:25), although it does seem that demons somehow impregnated women before the flood in Noah's day (Genesis 6:1-4). Angels never die (Luke 20:36).

ORGANIZATION Angels (and also demons) are organized in a military-like fashion with generals, colonels, lieutenants, sergeants, privates, etc. They are called archangels, princes, rulers, seraphim, etc. (Rom 8:38; Eph 3:10; 6:12; Col 1:16; 2:5). Some have leadership over geographical areas, others over groups of people (as Michael seems to be the archangel caring for Israel).

DUTIES The Greek word for 'angel' ('angelos') means "messenger." Actually the word is just transliterated in our Bibles (English letters replace Greek letters but the word is the same). Were it translated into English we would have the word "messenger" every time 'angel' appears. That is basically their function -- messengers (servants) of God. They are God's servants who help God's people (Heb 1:14). Individual angels seem assigned to children and believers (Acts 12:12) to help them in special ways. God could use His sovereign power to do things such as prevent an automobile accident, have a child fall safely and not be hurt, discover a set of lost keys, or similar actions, but usually He has His angels do that work. They protect God's people (Psalm 34:7; 91:12; Matthew 18:10). They bring answers to prayers (Acts 12:7), although sometimes demons oppose them and the answers are delayed (Dan. 10:10-21). Angels watch and learn from believers (I Cor 4:9; I Tim 5:2). They encourage us in danger (Acts 27:23-24). They even help in evangelism (Lk 15:10; Acts 8:26). They care for God's people when they die (Lk 16:22; Jude 9). They fight against demons (Revelation 12).



OUR RESPONSE TO ANGELS We are not to try and contact angels, they will minister to us as God directs. I'm sure we all have been recipients of angelic ministrations numerous times without knowing it. Angels are always present around us, especially when we gather with other believers in Jesus' name. However we never can see them unless God opens our eyes in a special way (II Kings 6:17). It's quite likely you have seen angels, but in appearance as people (Heb 13:2) and therefore not recognized as an angel. That stranger who just happens to show up at the right time to provide help or assistance, whom we called an 'angel,' might well have been one!

We are not to focus on angels or worship them (Rev 19:10). They are created to bring honor and glory to God, they are His servants. The same is true of us, too. When you hear of or think of angels, think of the great God who created them to help us and serve Him. Give Him the praise and honor and glory and attention, not angels. He alone is worthy of all praise (Rev 4:11; 5:9,11). "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being." (Rev 4:11).

DEMONS

On the banks of the Amazon River live a species of large, colorful spiders. When they spread themselves out they look exactly like the blossoms of a brilliant flower. When bees and insects land on one to find pollen they find instead a spider that poisons and kills them. Satan does the same thing with the occult today.



Unfortunately we live in a time when more people believe in the Loch Ness Monster than in Satan! Some people who do believe in him tend to make him smaller than he really is.

Your devil is too small if you see Satan as merely a personification of evil. The picture of a devil in a red suit with a tail and trident comes from ancient times when red stood for death, horns for power, and tails and cloven hoofs for bestiality. Satan is a real, live personality, not a symbol of evil.

Your devil is also too small if you consign him to long-ago times or far away places. He is too small if you assume he leaves Christians alone (that's one of his biggest lies, which he uses it to cover his tracks). He is too small if you don't think he is capable of performing miracles and other feats of power, or if you think you can recognize and defeat him on your own. He is powerful, even using forces of nature such as lightning (Job 1:16) and strong wind (Job 1:19) to do his will.

On the other hand some see Satan as more powerful than he is. Your devil is too big if you see him as an evil god. He is not equal to God, he is limited to one place at a time and does not have all knowledge. You also see him as too big if you live in fear of him and avoid learning how to fight him.

NAMES The names of Satan reveal a lot about him and his character. He is called Satan ("adversary" of God and God's people), Devil ("accuser" of Christians), the Wicked or Evil One (showing his essential nature), Enemy (to God's people), Murderer, Deceiver, Beelzebub ("Prince of Demons"), Ruler of This World, Serpent, Dragon and Angel of Light (counterfeit light to deceive). Surely these names clearly summarize what he is and does.

ORIGIN Satan is God's highest created being (Ezek 28:11-15, Isa 14), the highest of all the angels. He is not like God, not omnipresent, etc. He was created to worship and bring glory to God, but because of pride wanted to be worshipped himself, so was cast out of heaven (Rev 12:3-4; Isa 14; Ezek 28). About one third of the angels decided

to agree with him and were also kicked out of heaven (Rev 12:4). They are now called demons.

WORK TODAY After enticing Adam and Eve to sin and getting authority over the world from them, Satan and his forces have continued trying to keep worship from God and getting it for themselves. They blind the minds of unbelievers (II Cor 4:4) and snatch the Word from their hearts (Lk 8:12). They do all they can to oppose God's work (Rev 2:13). Since they can't attack God, they take their anger out on those who are God's -- His people (Jews and Christians today). Satan and his forces tempt Christians to lie (Acts 5:3), accuse and slander them before God (Rev 12:10), hinder our work (I Thes 2:18), do anything possible to defeat us (Eph 6:11-12), tempt to immorality (I Cor 7:5) and incite persecution against us (Rev 2:10).

DEFEAT Satan and his forces are defeated foes, having given their all to destroy Jesus on the cross, but being beaten by Him instead (Heb 2:14-15; I Pt 3:18-22). When Jesus returns Satan and his demons will be cast into the lake of fire forever (Matthew 25:41; Rev 20:1-15).

DEMONS "Demon" means "destroyer." They are also called evil or unclean spirits, referring to the fact they don't have a physical body. They spread their sin and uncleanness any way they can. They are spiritual terrorists, trying to destroy the work of God's kingdom. As with human terrorists, no one is safe from them, they are deadly serious and have no softness or mercy. They serve Satan, who is their commander, and carry out his orders. They receive the worship given to idols or anything other than God (I Corinthians 10:20).

ORGANIZATION Satan organizes his demons in the same manner God has angels organized - in a military-like structure. These are similar to generals, colonels, majors, lieutenants, sergeants, corporals, privates, etc. (Ephesians 6:12). Usually a "strong man" (or ruler) is assigned to a task, and he has lesser demons under his command to help in the work (Matthew 12:25-29; Daniel 10:2-6, 12-14). The names of these demons usually refer to their work ("Fear," "Anger," "Lust," "Pride," "Deception," etc.).

DEATH, DARKNESS & SPIRITUAL BLINDNESS In actuality all Satan's forces operate in the realm of darkness (fear, deception, blindness, confusion, hopelessness, depression, self-pity, anger, revenge, suicide, death, etc.) He blinds men to spiritual things (II Corinthians 4:4; I John 2:11). He hardens minds and hearts to spiritual things (II Corinthians 3:14; Ephesians 4:18; Romans 1:21). He does this to individuals as well as nations (i.e.: Israel Romans 11:7-10). His purpose is to keep men from God's light and salvation (II Corinthians 4:4). God's light is greater than Satan's darkness (Genesis 1:14-19; John 1:5-9; 3:19-20; 8:12; 9:5; Matthew 17:2; Ephesians 5:8; I John 1:5-7; Revelation 21:11,23-24; 22:5; Isaiah 60:1). Believers are in the light, not darkness (Acts 26:18; I Thessalonians 5:4-5; Colossians 1:12-13; John 8:12).

The epitome of darkness is death. Satan's plan for man is death, just as God's plan for man is life. Satan is a murderer from the beginning (John 8:44). His name, Abaddon or Apollyon means "Destroyer." He tries to destroy physical (John 8:44; Mark 9:20-22; I John 3:12) or spiritual (II Corinthians 4:4) life. Satan has power to bring death (Job 1:19; Luke 11:21-22; Hebrews 2:14; Revelation 9:14-16), but because the power of death was destroyed at the cross (Hebrews 2:14-15) he cannot use that

power without God's permission (Job 2:6; Revelation 9:4). Satan cannot separate us from God, even by death (Romans 8:38).

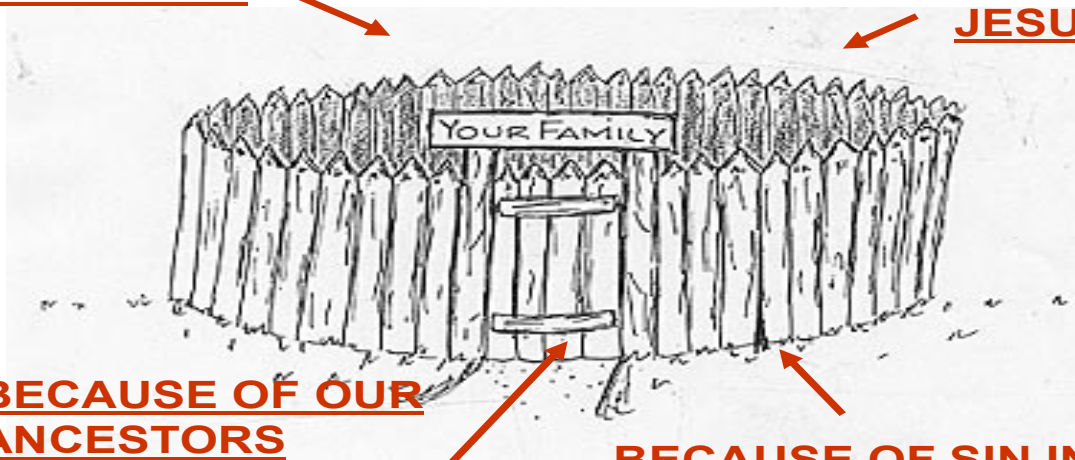
OVERCOMING SATAN & HIS FORCES God is greater than Satan and his forces (I John 4:4), so we need not fear them (Luke 10:17-19). We must humbly depend on God's strength, not our own (James 4:6-7; 5:16). Admit sin and open spots that Satan uses in your life (Psalm 32:5; 139:23-24), and confess any sin (I John 1:9). Accept God's forgiveness and, with His help, turn from the sin (Amos 3:3; Ezekiel 20:43). In prayer claim back any openings Satan is using in your life (Acts 19:18-19; Matt 3:7-8). Cover yourself with the armor of God each day (Eph 6:10-18). Stay in the Scriptures (Psalm 1:1-3). The Word is a mirror (James 1:22-25) a lamp (Psalm 119:105) a cleanser (Ephesians 5:25-26) a sword (Hebrews 4:12) and food (I Peter 2:2; Matthew 4:4). Use it for all these. Develop a life of continuous praise & prayer (I Thessalonians 5:17). Stay in close fellowship with other believers (Hebrews 13:5). Commit yourself to totally follow God (Ephesians 6:16).

**BECAUSE OF OUR
PROPERTY**

**BECAUSE OF OUR
RELATIONSHIP WITH
JESUS**

**BECAUSE OF OUR
ANCESTORS**

**BECAUSE OF SIN IN
OUR LIFE**



CHECK YOURSELF....

Below is a list of evidences of demonic activity. Check which ones apply to you more than you think should (more than is 'normal' or than most other people experience).

I. COMPULSIVE THOUGHTS

- ☐ Extremely low self image (feel unworthy, unclean, no good, etc) Lk. 8:2
- ☐ Constant confusion in thinking (especially about spiritual things)
- ☐ Inability to believe spiritual truths which you hear or read
- ☐ Mocking and blasphemous thoughts (esp. when hearing spiritual truths)
- ☐ Perceptual distortions (thinking others are angry at you when they are not)
- ☐ Repetitious dreams or nightmares (sexual, horror-filled, fearful, etc)
- ☐ Continuous violent thoughts (of suicide, rape, murder, self-abuse, etc.)

II. COMPULSIVE FEELINGS

- _____ Hatred and bitterness toward others for no justifiable reason
- _____ Tremendous hostility, fear, restlessness when challenged about demonizing
- _____ Deep depression and despondence (frequent and long)
- _____ Irrational fears, panic, and phobias (Rom. 8:15 Lk. 9:39)
- _____ Irrational anger or rage (Mt. 8:28)
- _____ Irrational guilt and extreme self-condemnation, unforgiveness of self

III. COMPULSIVE BEHAVIOR

- _____ Desire to do right but inability to carry it out
- _____ Sudden personality & attitude changes (like, then hate someone)
- _____ Strong aversion to Scripture reading & prayer
- _____ Dark countenance (steely or hollow look in the eyes, dilation or contraction of pupil, facial features may contort or change, can't look a person directly in the eyes, etc.)
- _____ Lying compulsively, then often wondering why (Acts 5:3)
- _____ Stealing compulsively, if you need the thing or not
- _____ Drinking compulsively, if really desire to or not
- _____ Using drugs (prescription or non-prescription) compulsively
- _____ Eating compulsively (or reverse, bulimia or anorexia nervosa)
- _____ Sexual sins that are compulsive (especially perversions) Mt. 15:5 Lk. 8:27
- _____ Irrational, inappropriate laughter
- _____ Irrational violence (compulsion to hurt self or someone else) Mt. 17:15; Mk. 5:5; Lk. 9:39
- _____ Sudden speaking of a language not previously known
- _____ Reactions to the name and blood of Jesus (uncomfortable, move away, say or do something to show you are uncomfortable about it) Acts 13:10)
- _____ Extreme restlessness
- _____ Uncontrollable cutting and mocking tongue and language
- _____ Vulgar language and actions (Lk. 4:33-34)
- _____ Uncontrollable greed, which drives you on (Acts 5:3)

IV. CONSCIOUSNESS PROBLEMS

- _____ Loss of time (little or a lot, not knowing how you got someplace or remembering something you did)
- _____ Extreme sleepiness around spiritual things (Bible study, prayer, etc.)
- _____ Demonstration of extraordinary abilities (ESP, telekinesis, etc. Mk. 5:7)
- _____ Voices heard in the mind (mock, intimidate, accuse, threaten, bargain Mt. 28:29,
- _____ A voice speaking from you refers to you in the third person ("he" "she")
- _____ Supernatural experiences (haunting, movement or disappearance of objects, other strange manifestations)

V. ABNORMAL MEDICAL PROBLEMS

- _____ Seizures (Mk. 1:26 Mk. 7:24-30 Mk. 17:15) It can't be said for sure they are all demonic, but they should be checked out to make sure.)
- _____ Pain without justifiable explanation, especially in the head or stomach (ANY medical problems which doctors can't understand or cure, Lk. 9:39)
- _____ Blackouts (Mt. 17:15, Mk. 1:26; 7:24-30, Lk. 4:35)
- _____ Physical ailments alleviated by a spiritual command immediately (epileptic seizure, asthma attack, headache, nausea, etc., which stops in Jesus' name)
- _____ Sudden interference with bodily functions (buzzing in ears, irritability to speak or hear, increased hypersensitivity in hearing or touch, sudden chills or overheating of body, dryness in mouth, numbness in arms or legs, sleepiness, coma, etc.)

ARMOR OF GOD

Satan does not trouble those who aren't committed believers. They are his subjects (Col. 1:13) and serve him (Eph. 2:2). Only when one wants to turn from that path, having accepted Jesus as his Savior and wanting to make Him Lord of his life, does Satan oppose the person. Satan will not give up one of his subjects easily and will do all he can to gain that person back. He can't take his salvation, but can have him live the same kind of life as before (one of service to Satan and sin). God does not want that for His children, however. He has defeated Satan and has made provision for us to share in that victory. As a good commander He provides the equipment we need to defeat Satan and to protect ourselves (Eph. 6:10-17, II Cor. 10:35, Mt. 12:29). The following is based on Ephesians 6:10-17. Open your Bible as you read the following.

I. ARMOR PROVIDED Ephesians 6:10-12

"FINALLY" (10): Paul builds to this throughout the whole Epistle.

"BE STRONG" (10): "Be continually strengthened" This is a command, not an option. It is passive, something we receive from outside ourselves. A soldier receives (passive) equipment from his commander, the commander is responsible to provide it, he must use it. The battle is between God & Satan, we are just privates and only get attacked because of joining God's army, it's not our personal battle but our commander who will make sure we can win it.

What makes a soldier strong so he can use his equipment? (1. Proper nourishment (food & drink) - for us the Word of God. (2. Regular exercise to stay fit - not spiritually fat or lazy. (3. Proper rest, meditation, relaxation, worship & praise times.

"IN THE LORD" (10): not "FROM" the Lord for He doesn't just give us a portion of His strength (as great as that would be) to fight in our own strength and to add to our strength. We are actually "IN Christ" (a phrase used over 40 times just in Ephesians). This refers to total dependence, like a baby IN a womb. We are one, we share His foe and His victory. We must stay as close to Christ as possible or we will never have victory.

"HIS mighty power" (10): Never look at Satan's power, or your own, just and only at Christ's!

"MIGHTY" (10): The word means a special endowment of power and strength. It is inherent strength, ability, and authority that comes from being "in Christ."

"POWER" (10): This word refers to manifested power, HIS power shown through us. The previous word would be used of the muscular ability a person naturally has, this word of that power shown in use. This power, by the way, comes through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8). God is the sovereign general, we are "in Christ," and the Holy Spirit is the power source given to us. What an unbeatable combination!

"PUT ON" (11): This verse tells HOW to be strong in Jesus. This, too, is a command - it is not an option., In the original language this speaks of a once-for-all action. The commander provides the armor, but the soldier must put it on-and then he must NEVER take it off for the warfare is continual. Each morning check out your armor to make sure it is well maintained, never take it off.

"FULL ARMOR" (11): If missing even just one piece Satan will attack there.

"TAKE YOUR STAND" (11): This same word is translated "resist" in James 4:7 and I Peter 5:8-9. We are NOT to run, fall back in fear or panic, surrender, sit, or fall asleep. We are to stand alert BEFORE attacked so we are ready to defend ourselves and beat it off.

"DEVIL" (11) "Devil" means "Slanderer," and that is what he does. He slanders God to man (as to Eve in Eden) and man to God (as with Job).

"SCHEMES" (11): The picture behind this word is of a cunning, deceitful animal full of tricks and deceit. Paul commands us to not be ignorant of these tricks and traps (II Corinthians 2:11).

"STRUGGLE" (12): This word-picture of wrestlers shows the life-and-death struggle we are in with Satan. Wrestlers back then tried to pin each other's neck to the ground. This is no innocent misunderstanding or friendly competition!

"NOT AGAINST FLESH & BLOOD" (12): Our main enemy is not other people, or even our own sin nature. We know how those operate from firsthand knowledge. Satan is in another realm that we are often unaware of, and have no idea how to fight.

"RULERS" (12): These are the demons on top of Satan's organizational systems, the generals under him as the commanding officer. They have vast oversight responsibilities, some over geographical areas, others over philosophies or works, etc.

"AUTHORITIES" (12): These very powerful demons are like colonels. They are given authority (thus the name) over certain countries, areas, churches, groups of persons, etc. They don't do the work but, like the Rulers, oversee and coordinate the activity of demons under them. They give power & authority to these lesser demons.

"POWERS OF THIS DARK WORLD" (12): These numerous, workhorse demons function on the command level, like lieutenants and sergeants. They oversee and work with small forces of demons assigned by 'Authorities' to a certain person, church, cult, location, idea, philosophy, etc. They receive their orders and power through the chain of command above them.

"SPIRITUAL FORCES OF EVIL IN THE HEAVENLY REALMS" (12): These very numerous demons are the daily working demons that carry out the work assigned to them by the above chain of command. These are the privates of Satan's army, the ones we do battle with each day. They are not as smart or clever as the ones higher in the command, they simply carry out orders given them. They have a great variety in their intelligence level, abilities, etc. They each function in one main area of expertise, and are named accordingly (Greed, Listlessness, Self-Destruction, Fear, etc.)

"HEAVENLY REALMS" (12): In the atmosphere is where Satan sets up his kingdom, between this earth and the third heaven where God is. That is why Michael needed to help the other angels get past the Prince of Persia in Daniel. Satan is the "ruler of the kingdom of the air."

II ARMOR DESCRIBED Eph. 6:13-18

A. BELT OF TRUTH 14a

"BELT": The belt was the KEY piece of equipment for a soldier because it held his other clothing and equipment in place. Clothing was tucked back out of the way to allow freedom of movement to fight, and it was the belt that gave them freedom. The belt held their valuables and personal possessions, too. It also held the sword, thus the close connection between the truth and God's Word (sword).



"TRUTH" : As the belt allowed the soldier's hands freedom, so the truth makes us free. Jesus is the "way, TRUTH and life" (Jn. 14:6) and only in Him ("IN CHRIST") is truth found. He said "I am the truth" (Jn. 14:6; 1:14). When we put on Christ and are strong in Him we take the truth that comes from Him as revealed in His Word, the Bible (II Tim. 2:15, James 1:18, Ps. 119:41-43). It is through the Holy Spirit that this truth is applied to our hearts and lives, for He is called the "Spirit of Truth" (I Cor. 1:6-15).

By contrast Satan is a liar (Jn. 8:44). He works in deceit and counterfeits to get us to fear and be defeated. He tries to get us to be untruthful (Acts 5:3) and uses any untruth in us to gain access to us. Therefore we are to "stand firm" against anything not 100% honest and truthful in us or others.

B. BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS 14b

"BREASTPLATE" : This vital piece of equipment covered the vulnerable organs of the upper body. Enemy soldiers would grasp each other's left forearms and with the right start stabbing each other in the breastplate. The first one to find or make an opening won!

Satan, too, first attacks our vulnerable areas. He knows where our weak and open spots are. That is why we are defeated over and over by the same besetting sin. Just as a soldier would make sure his breastplate was sound and perfect before the battle began, so we must make sure there are no areas in our life, thoughts, priorities or motives where Satan can defeat us. It doesn't matter how small, he will use it. All openings must be closed and covered with the blood of Jesus.

"RIGHTEOUSNESS": In contrast to our righteousness, which is like "filthy rags", God is pure righteousness (Ps. 48:10; 119:137; 145:17). One of His names is YHWH-TSIDEK ("The LORD Our Righteousness" Jer. 23:6). At the moment of salvation our sins are transferred to Jesus and His perfect righteousness is transferred to us. We must put faith in HIS provision, not our own good works/righteousness. We need to allow His righteousness to shine through us, and to accept His holiness (another word for righteousness) as ours "In Christ". It is in this area we can't have sin or Satan will use that to defeat us.

Note that our back isn't covered, just our front. A soldier of Christ cannot retreat or run but must move ahead in victory!

C. SANDALS OF PEACE

"FEET": On their feet soldiers wore sandals which were VERY important. They had to be sturdy, dependable and tough. The soldier went everywhere on his feet, and was usually attacked on rough, rocky ground where getting a good footing would be very hard. Failure of his sandals to protect his feet or give him good stability would result in his defeat. Our standing, too, must be sure and ready.

"READINESS": This word has the idea of establishment, a firm foundation.

"PEACE": "Christ is our peace" (Eph. 2:13-14), and we only have peace "in Christ." He provides peace with God (Rom. 5:1) and peace of God (Phil 4:6-9; Rom. 16:20; Prov. 16:7). Jesus is peace (Jn. 14:27) and we are to live in peace with God, self and others. This is our support, our foundation.

Satan tries to produce turmoil, chaos, and lack of peace in our lives. Then he comes along and offers false peace through drugs, alcohol, sex, compromise, etc.

D. SHIELD OF FAITH 16

"IN ADDITION": Literally "above all," meaning this is of the greatest importance. Faith, the helmet of salvation, and prayer, the next three, are even more important than the ones already described. The first 3 pieces of equipment are worn as part of the body, affixed to it. They are always to be there. These next ones are to be "taken up" to use when battle was near. The first we receive (passive), these we take up ourselves (active). These are our outer wall of defense.

"SHIELD": The shield was 2 foot by 4 foot. Soldiers would gather behind a wall of shields side-by-side and use it for an outer wall of protection.. They would NOT go into battle without a shield!

"FAITH": This is the substance of our shield. We, together with others of like faith, are to throw up a wall against Satan. We can still hear his roaring attacks, but faith keeps us from being defeated by them. It is not just 'faith' that protects, for faith must be in the right object - God.

"FLAMING ARROWS": Burning pitch and arrows tipped with burning pitch would be hurled against soldiers, and only a shield could protect them from it. Satan shoots arrows of pride, temptation, fear, worry, guilt, suffering, etc, at us and only faith in God will get us through those times.

"YOU CAN EXTINGUISH ALL": Some arrows get very close to us (like with Job), but God determines just how close they will fall (also like with Job.) Sometimes it seems like some of them even pierce our shield of faith. However when that happens they are no longer Satan's flaming arrows but God's refining and purifying messengers of love, as Paul's thorn in the flesh (see also I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 8:28 etc.) If we keep our shield up the fire refines us. It is only when our faith is down the fire harms us.

E. HELMET OF SALVATION 17a

"HELMET": The helmet protected soldier's heads from the broad sword their enemies carried. This sword was 3 to 4 feet long. The enemy held it with two hands and brought it straight down with all his might right on the soldier's head. Thus the helmet was very important.

"SALVATION" : Our mind is very important, and Satan attacks that in a deadly and vigorous way. Therefore it is very important to protect our mind: its thoughts, ideas, goals, motives, priorities, values, decisions, etc. (Rom. 12:1-2; James 1:8; II Tim. 2:25-26). This is where Satan attacked Eve (Gen. 3:1-7, II Cor. 11:3) and he attacks us there through our pride, selfishness & self-centeredness, as well as through the influence of the world. It is only through salvation that we can have the "mind of Christ" and thus do His will. Being Christ-like starts in our mind, so it must be protected and filled with God's word (studied and memorized).

F. SWORD OF THE WORD 17b

"SWORD": The only offensive weapon (prayer, next verse, is the other weapon we have but that isn't listed as a weapon the way the sword is in this soldier analogy). All the other pieces of equipment are defensive and for protection. It is only through the offensive weapons, Bible study and prayer, that we can forge ahead and defeat Satan. These weapons don't work until the previous ones are taken care of, though, because if we have a way to be defeated Satan will seize the initiative and we will be driven back instead of driving him back.

"OF THE SPIRIT": ANY weapon used in the flesh will not prosper. Peter used the sword of his flesh and cut Malchus' ear, but on Pentecost he used the sword of the Spirit and thousands of ears were won and opened for Christ. The best defense is a good offense.

"WORD OF GOD": Jesus, the living Word (John 1:1-14), is behind the Bible, the written Word. You need to know God's Word in detail, with much of it memorized, so you can really use this weapon. Jesus won His battles when Satan tempted Him by quoting Scriptures. That is how we are to win, too.

G. PRAYER 18

"AND PRAY": This is our other offensive weapon, equal in importance to knowing God's Word. God doesn't fully pour His Spirit into us in power until we fully pour our spirit out to him in prayer. In our military analogy, communication with the commander is key to receiving orders, help, strength, additional resources, support, etc.

"IN THE SPIRIT": Our prayer must be directed by the Holy Spirit just as our Bible study is ("sword OF THE SPIRIT"). The Holy Spirit directs our praying when we let Him (Rom. 8:26). Prayer in our own strength and wisdom brings no answer (James 4:3).

"ON ALL OCCASIONS": "Without ceasing." (Prov. 3:5-6). If you feel like it or not, are busy or not, know what to say or not - still pray. Prayer must be consistent and persistent (II Cor. 10:3-5).

USE THE WORD OF GOD



Knowing and using God's Word, the sword of the Spirit, is key for victory (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 77:12; I Chronicles 28:9; Matthew 22:37-38; I Corinthians 2:16; Philippians 4:8). That's how Jesus defeated Satan (Matthew 4:1-11). Satan tries to plant doubts about God's word in man's mind. This is how he got to Eve. She misquoted God's Word to Satan and when he added to God's Word (making God seem like He was keeping something good from her) she didn't pick it up. Satan was undermining God's Word, and he won! We must be skillful in the use of our sword to win.

Our Adversaries Will Be Defeated: Deuteronomy 32:43; Philippians 1:28; Deuteronomy 33:27

Victory is Promised: I Corinthians 15:57; I Chronicles 29:11; Proverbs 21:31; I John 5:4, 18; Rev. 12:11; 15:2; Romans 8:37; II Corinthians 2:14; John 16:33

God Promises To Fight For Us: I Samuel 14:47; Jeremiah 1:8
 No Weapon Formed Against The Believer Can Prosper: Isaiah 54:17
 Jesus Is Constantly Praying & Interceding On Our Behalf: I John 2:1; Hebrews 7:25
 God Is Always With Us: Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:5; Matthew 18:20; John 14:16, 21; Revelations 3:20
 Confession Means Cleansing & Forgiveness: I John 1:8-9; Thessalonians 5:23-24; I Timothy 4:5; Luke 11:13; II Timothy 2:21; Jude 1; Romans 8:33-39; Titus 3:4-5
 God Hears & Answers Prayer: Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9; Jeremiah 33:3
 We will never Be Separated From God: Romans 8:35-39; John 10:27-29; 3:36; 5:24
 God Will Meet All Your Needs: Philippians 4:19; Psalm 84:11; Romans 8:32; I Samuel 12:24
 There Is No Need To Worry: Matthew 6:25,34; I Peter 5:7; Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 5:38-39; Psalm 37:1-9; Jude 24
 God Promises His Care & Protection: Deuteronomy 33:27; Genesis 17:1; Jeremiah 23:24; 32:7
 Everything Will Work Out Right In the End: Romans 8:28
 You Won't Ever Face Anything You Can't Handle With God's Help: I Corinthians 10:13
 Peace Is Available No Matter What: John 14:27; Romans 5:1; Colossians 1:20; Isaiah 26:3; Philippians 4:6-7; Matthew 11:28-30; II Timothy 1:7
 Trials Are Allowed To Bring Spiritual Growth: Psalm 119:67,71,75; 94:12; Isa. 48:10; Rom. 5:3
 The Believer Has Nothing To Fear: Proverbs 3:25; Isaiah 14:3; Psalm 34:4; Joshua 1:9; 10:8; 23:9-11; Leviticus 26:8; Exodus 14:13; I Samuel 17:45-47; II Samuel 22:33-35,40-41
 We Are Assured Of Eventual Triumph Over Our Adversaries: Acts 2:39
 Victory Is Guaranteed Us: I Corinthians 15:57; Romans 8:37; I Chronicles 29:11; I John 5:4, 18; II Chronicles 32:8; Revelation 3:5; 21:7
 God Will Help Us Carry Our Burdens: Nehemiah 4:10; Matthew 11:30; Psalm 55:22
 God Promises Comfort: Psalm 23:4; Lamentations 3:22-23; Matthew 5:4; 11:28-30; John 14:16, 18; John 14:16, 18; Romans 15:4; II Corinthians 1:3-4; II Thessalonians 2:16-17
 God Will Give Us Courage: Proverbs 38:1; I Corinthians 16:13; II Timothy 1:7
 Guidance Is Promised: Psalm 32:8; Isaiah 30:21; 58:11; Luke 1:79; John 15:13
 God Will Help In Your Sorrow: Proverbs 10:22; Isaiah 53:4; John 16:22; II Corinthians 6:10; I Thessalonians 4:13; Revelation 21:4
 Wisdom Is Promised Those Who Ask: James 1:5; 3:15-17; Luke 16:8; 21:15; I Cor. 2:5; 3:19
 Rejecting Wrong Thoughts: II Corinthians 10:5; Psalm 139:23-24; 141:3-4; Isaiah 26:3-4; Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:22-24; Philippians 3:18-21
 Power of the Word of God: Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12; Isaiah 55:11; 59:21; Psalm 119:81, 105, 111-112; Proverbs 30:5; Lamentations 2:17; 3:37; Matthew 24:35; John 5:24; 8:51; 15:7; Rom. 10:17
 God's Promise of Angelic Intervention: II Kings 6:17; Psalm 34:6-7; Psalm 91:11; Daniel 6:22; 10:5-14; Acts 12:15

BIBLE MEMORY VERSES

GOD'S LOVE & ACCEPTANCE The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. Psalm 103:8

THE BIBLE, GOD'S WORD The Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Hebrews 4:12

GOD'S TRUTH FREES "If you hold to my teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32

LIVE IN HOLINESS Therefore, I urge you, brothers in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God -- this is your spiritual act of worship. Rom. 12:1

SUBMIT TO GOD, RESIST SATAN God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and He will come near to you. James 4:6-8

GOD IS GREATER THAN SATAN The One who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world. I John 4:4

GOD WILL MEET ALL OUR NEEDS My God will meet all your needs according to His glorious riches in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:19

RENEW YOUR MIND WITH CHRIST Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is -- His good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:2

PRAYER The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. James 5:16

AUTHORITY OVER DEMONS Jesus replied: "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you." Luke 10:18-19

RESISTING SATAN Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." Matthew 16:23

SIN AS OPENINGS TO DEMONIZING Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me and lead me in the way everlasting. Psalm 139:23-24

CURSES Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." Galatians 3:13

ANCESTRAL & CHILDHOOD OPENINGS Therefore if anyone is in Christ, He is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! II Corinthians 5:17

OCCULT OPENINGS Do not turn to mediums or seek out spiritists, for you will be defiled by them. I am the LORD your God. Leviticus 19:31

NEW AGE OPENINGS Such men (who preach a Jesus other than the Jesus I preached) are false prophets, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. II Corinthians 11:13-15

DELIVERANCE FROM DEMONIZING Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God ... This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. I John 4:1-2

DELAYED DELIVERANCE The Lord said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." ... For when I am weak, then I am strong. II Corinthians 12:9-10

CONTINUING VICTORY Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith. I Peter 5:8-9

PRAYER OF THE ARMOR OF GOD

Heavenly Father, I desire to be obedient by being strong in the Lord and the power of Your might. I see that this is Your will and purpose for me. I recognize that it is essential to put on the armor that You have provided, and I do so now with gratitude and praise that You have provided all I need to stand in victory against Satan and his kingdom. Grant me wisdom to discern the tactics and sneakiness of Satan's strategy against me. I delight to take the armor You have provided and by faith to put it on as effective spiritual protection against the spiritual forces of darkness present in the world today.

I confidently take the belt of truth that You offer me. I take Him who is the truth as my strength and protection. I reject Satan's lies and deceiving ways to gain advantage against me. Grant me discernment and wisdom to recognize the subtle and sneaky ways in which Satan seeks to cause me to accept his lies as truth. I desire to believe only the truth, to live the truth, to speak the truth, and to know the truth. I worship and praise You that You lead me only in the ways of truth. Thank You that Satan cannot stand against the truth.

Thank You for the breastplate of righteousness which you offer me. I eagerly accept it and put it on as my protection. Thank you for reminding me again that all of my righteousness comes from You. I embrace that righteousness which is mine by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is His righteousness that is mine through justification. I reject and repudiate all trust in my own righteousness which is as filthy rags. I ask You to cleanse me of all the times I have counted my own goodness as being acceptable before You. I bring the righteousness of my Lord directly against all of Satan's workings against me. I express my desire to walk in righteousness before God today. By faith I appropriate the righteousness of Christ and invite Him to walk in His holiness in my life today that I might experience His righteousness in total context of ordinary living. I count upon the righteousness of my Lord to be my protection. I know that Satan must retreat from before God's righteousness.

Thank You, Lord, for the sandals of peace You have provided. I desire that my feet should stand on the solid rock of the peace that You have provided. I claim the peace with God which is mine through justification. I desire the peace of God which touches my emotions and feelings through prayer and sanctification (Philippians 4:6). Thank You that as I walk in obedience to You the God of peace promises to walk with me (Philippians 4:9), I thank you that as the God of peace You are putting Satan under my feet (Romans 16:20). I will share this good news of peace with all others today that Your Spirit will bring into my life today. Thank you that You have not given me a spirit of fear but of love and power and a sound mind (II Timothy 1:7). Thank you that Satan cannot stand against Your peace.

Eagerly, Lord, I lift up the shield of faith against all the blazing darts that Satan and his hosts fire at me. I recognize that You are my shield and that in Your incarnation and crucifixion You took the arrows of Satan which I deserved. By faith I count upon You to shield me from above and beneath; on my right and my left; in front of me and behind me, that I might be protected, walled in, and encapsulated by You that Satan may gain no way to hurt me or keep me from fulfilling Your will today.

I am willing that any fiery darts of Satan You wish to touch me should do so, but I shall look upon them as refining fires permitted in Your providence and by Your love for my refining and Your glory. Thank You, Lord, that You are a complete and perfect shield and that Satan cannot touch me apart from Your sovereign purpose.

I recognize that my mind is a particular target of Satan's deceiving ways. I take from You the helmet of salvation. I cover my mind and my thoughts with Your salvation. I recognize that the Lord Jesus Christ is my salvation. I fill my head with Him. I invite His mind to be in me. Let me think His thoughts, feel His love and compassion, and discern His will and leading in all things. Let my mind be occupied with the continuing, daily, saving work of my Lord in and through my life. May of my Lord meet and defeat all Satanic thoughts in my mind.

With joy I take hold upon the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. I affirm that Your Word is the trustworthy, infallible Word of God. I choose to believe it and to live in its truth and power. Grant me the love for Your Word which comes from the Holy Spirit. Forgive and cleanse me from the sin of neglecting Your Word. Enable me to memorize it and to meditate upon its truth. Grant me proficient recall and skill in using Your Word against all of Satan's subtle attacks against me, even as my Lord Jesus Christ used the Word against Satan. Enable me to use Your Word not only to defend me from Satan, but also to claim its promises and to wield the sword strong against Satan to defeat him, to push him back, to take away from him ground he claims, and to win great victories God through Your Word. Thank You that Satan must retreat from Your Word applied against him.

Thank You, dear Lord, for prayer. Help me to keep this armor well oiled with prayer. I desire to pray at all times with depth and intensity as the Holy Spirit leads me. I trust the Holy Spirit to enable me and to intercede for me and through me. Grant me great supplication and burden for others in God's family of blood-washed saints. Enable me to see their needs and to assist them through prayer as the enemy attacks them. All of these petitions, intercessions, and words of praise I offer up before the true and living God in the name and worthy merit of my Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

PROTECTION FROM INJURY

1. Part of your prayer time should be secret prayer between you and God (Mt. 6:6). TRUE
FALSE
2. How many periods of time did Daniel set aside to commune with God each day (Dan. 6:10)
? _____
3. In Isaiah 40:29-31 God promises those who wait upon Him that He will renew their
_____.
4. God promised Joshua that his way would be prosperous and he would have good success if he would meditate upon and keep His Word (Joshua 1:8). TRUE FALSE
5. You can fool men by your outward appearances, but the Holy Spirit can use the Word of God to show the real _____ and _____ of our hearts (Heb. 4:12)
6. How should you regard the thoughts and truths the Holy Spirit reveals to you (Psalm 139:17)? _____
7. The Bible says:
____ Eph. 6:18 a. commit thy way unto the Lord
____ Prov. 15:8,29 b. true prayer should be guided by the Holy Spirit
____ Jer. 29:13 c. sin hinders prayer
____ Isa. 59:1-2 d. the prayers of the upright are a delight to the Lord
____ Psalm 37:4,5 e. should seek the Lord with your whole heart
8. I Timothy 4:15 teaches that meditation is a waste of time. TRUE FALSE
9. In Acts 13:1-4 the Holy Spirit impressed His message on a praying church and
_____ and Saul were sent on their first missionary journey.
10. What place is mentioned in Matthew 26:36 where Jesus went to pray?

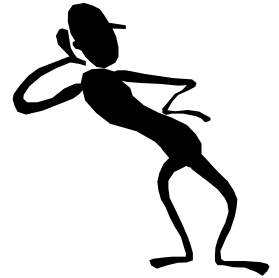
11. John 4:23 teaches that God seeks those who go through the outward motions of worshipping. TRUE FALSE
12. In John 14:21 Jesus promises to manifest (reveal) Himself to the obedient Christian. In verse 22 a disciple asks how He will do this. In verse 26 and in John 16:13-14 He says it will be done by _____, who will teach you and glorify Christ.
13. Do you have devotions each day: a time when you read your Bible and pray? _____

13. LEARNING TO LISTEN

How can I know what God wants me to do?

I. DOES GOD REALLY SPEAK TO ME TODAY?

I'm convinced He wants to speak to us. He does speak to us often. He wants us to listen to Him. Psalms 81:13 "If my people would but listen to me..." Jeremiah 33:3 'Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.' Ps 50:3 Our God comes and will not be silent; 1 Samuel 3:1-10 God spoke to Samuel as a boy (told he will replace Eli).



God wants to fellowship with us, to communicate with us. He created us to have a personal relationship with Him.

Not only does God desire to communicate with man, but man desires to communicate with God. Ps 83:1 O God, do not keep silent; be not quiet, O God, be not still.

We know communication from God is possible for He is God. If He can hear us speak to Him, He can certainly speak to us as well. Not only is it possible, it is probable for He made us to relate to Him. Even more, it is necessary for it is the only way man can know God.

So man desires to speak to God just as God desires to speak to man. The Bible is full of examples of this in the past. When we see how common it was in Bible times we'll realize it can be just as common today.

II. THROUGH WHAT MEANS DOES GOD SPEAK TO ME TODAY?

When we communicate with each other we use verbal words, body language, or written words. God uses various means to communicate with us, too.

How does God speak to us today? God uses nature to reveal Himself to those who have never heard of Him. He shows His greatness to all of us through nature.

God speaks through other people, especially mature believers who know us, to give good guidance and advice. He puts the wisdom in their minds and the compulsion to pass it on to us. We must recognize this as one of the ways God speaks His will to us today.

Then there are circumstances and experiences which God uses to reveal His plan and will to us. Often we aren't sensitive enough to hear God as He speaks in these ways.

I love the story a friend shared with me several years ago about this. A man was caught in a flood and ended up floating on the roof of his destroyed home. He prayed desperately for God's help. In time a rescue team came by in a boat. "We've come to help you," they shouted. "Get in our boat and you'll be safe." "No," the man shouted back. "God's going to save me." It grew dark and scary and the man prayed harder. The beat of a helicopter's blades could be heard coming from the distance growing louder and louder, until they were thumping overhead. A bright light framed the house wreckage and the man. The loudspeaker boomed, "Take the rope, you'll be safe." "No, thanks," the man shouted as he waved the helicopter away, "God's going to save me." Shortly thereafter, the roof disintegrated and the man drowned. He was grateful to arrive in heaven, but irritated that God hadn't answered his prayers.

When he stood before Jesus, he complained. “Why didn’t you save me as you promised that you would?” “Whatever do you mean?” the Lord said, “I sent a boat and a helicopter!”

Many times God is shouting to us through our circumstances, but we are so intent on just one option that we fail to hear Him. We can be so fixed in our point of view that we cannot see what He is doing or saying.

Paul’s thorn in his flesh is an example of that. David Jackson tells about how God used a tree falling on his house to help him straighten out some priorities in his life. We came to this church because God spoke through another person, a pastor, to lead us here. God used a series of circumstances to show us this was where He wanted us.

Another time God used circumstances to speak to me was when we were on vacation at the Gospel concert we go to the end of August. It was several years ago and I had planned to stay there for the whole 10 days. Before I had been coming home during the week with Nancy. They announced that the man who had been doing the morning Bible study during the week would not be able to do it and if anyone would be willing to let them know. Otherwise they would have to cancel it. While it would really stretch me to do it, God put a strong desire in my heart to volunteer. I told them I’d do it if they didn’t have anyone else and so they asked me to do it. It was a very rewarding experience and I’ve been asked back each year to do it. I look forward to it and really enjoy the experience. The people seem to appreciate it, and I get a donation that covers our expenses for our 10 days there! That’s an example of God using circumstances to ‘open doors’ to minister.

When has God used circumstances to speak to you in the past? How might He be using current circumstances to speak to you today?



So God spoke in the past and still speaks today through nature, other people and experiences we face. He also speaks to us through prayer.

Prayer, as we all know, includes listening as well as talking. Communication implies listening as well as talking – giving out information and taking in information.

When you pray, first pray to listen, pray you will be open to and able to listen. Then listen to pray. Ask God how you should pray about certain things and listen for His guidance. It’s while we are listening that we suddenly become aware of a flash of revelation, an insight in the form of a picture, an inner inaudible prompting, a thought that comes to mind, a word or phrase of Scripture that is continuously repeated, a growing conviction or awareness of what needs to be done, or an increasing consciousness of what God desires that just does not go away.

Jesus is a prime example of this. Since He set aside those attributes that would have made His earthly life easier, such as His omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence, He needed wisdom and revelation, guidance and direction from God through the Holy Spirit, the same as we receive it. He prayed for long periods of time because that was when He connected with God. He didn’t spend all that time talking but also must have been listening. A good example of this is when He chose the twelve to follow Him. He spent the previous night in prayer, obviously asking for and receiving guidance about whom to choose.

How much of your prayer time is spent talking? How much is spent listening? Try spending more time listening as you pray. We’ll talk about this more in future messages.

So God speaks through nature, other people, circumstances and prayer. We can add to that list the written Word.

God's will, His purposes and plans, His very nature, all are clearly revealed to us through the pages of the Holy Scripture. *2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*

Hebrews 4:12 for the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

God uses His Word to speak to us when a familiar scripture just jumps off the page, when a promise that speaks to a situation we are in comes to mind and sticks, when a certain passage, story or verse pop into mind, when something comes alive in a new way or when something we hear goes deep into our soul and ministers to a need.

Do you pray before reading the Bible, asking God to speak to you through it? Do you read it carefully, slow enough to listen, so you can notice when He points something out to your spirit?

OK. Let's review. God speaks to us through nature, others, circumstances, prayer and the written Word. Often the way He speaks through them is by the Holy Spirit within communicating what He wants to say. Therefore we must make sure we add the Holy Spirit to our list of how God communicates to us today.

Since personal, face-to-face communication with God won't happen until heaven, God now reveals His guidance and direction to us through His Holy Spirit within us. It is His Spirit that speaks His message to our hearts.

John 16:6-11, 13 But I tell you the truth: It is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.

8 When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; 10 in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. ... 13 but when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. Just as Jesus spoke God's message to the disciples when He was with them, so the Spirit will speak to them when Jesus is gone. The Spirit is Jesus' replacement, so we need to listen to Him as we would were Jesus Himself sitting here talking to us!

When we listen to Him, the Holy Spirit shows us how to pray. *Romans 8:26-27 in the same way, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. We do not know what we ought to pray for, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groans that words cannot express.*



27 And he who searches our hearts knows the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints in accordance with God's will.

It is the Holy Spirit who delivers our message, our thoughts and feelings, to God the Father. It is also He who delivers God's message to us. When we say that we 'hear' God's voice, it is really the Spirit within Who is speaking to us.

Do you recognize God's voice when He speaks to you through the Holy Spirit? We'll talk more about that in weeks to come, but start now trying to listen more carefully for His voice.

The final way God still speaks is through our conscience. Paul states: *"I speak the truth in Christ – I am not lying, my conscience confirms it in the Holy Spirit."* Our conscience is not a perfect instrument, for it is programmed much like a computer, but as you grow as a Christian God sensitizes your conscience so it lines up with the Bible.

When I am given too much change by a clerk, when I try to avoid an opportunity to speak out for Jesus, when I am tempted to do something I know I shouldn't – then God's Spirit warns me by pricking my conscience.

So God continues to speak to us today through nature, others, circumstances, prayer, the written Word, the Holy Spirit and our conscience. In future weeks we'll focus specifically on God speaking to us by His Holy Spirit as we listen in prayer. That's where we are weakest and that's the key to hearing from Him.

"What Does God's Voice Sound Like?"

In the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral there is what is known as the "Whispering Gallery." Through the peculiar construction of the dome a whisper by a person at one side travels round and can be distinctly heard by another person standing at the other.

An even more remarkable whispering gallery is that known as the "Ear of Dionysius" at Syracuse in Sicily. This is a vast cave, which externally bears a resemblance to a human ear. Entering by a low doorway, the visitor finds himself in a huge cavern. High up, concealed in the roof, is a chamber, which can only be entered by a concealed path at the top. The faintest whisper uttered below is distinctly heard by those concealed above. In this chamber the tyrant Dionysius used to sit listening to his slaves working or to his captives imprisoned below. All their plots against him were thus, to them, mysteriously discovered and circumvented. From this historical fact the cave has received the name of the "Ear of Dionysius."



We, too, can learn to hear everything God says – if we know how to listen.

We saw last week that God really does speak to us today. He desires communication with us and we desire communication with Him. We saw that hearing from God is probable, possible and even very necessary.

Then we saw examples of those whom God spoke to in the Old Testament. These include Moses, Samuel, David and the prophets. In the New Testament we see Him speaking to Jesus quite often, to Paul on the road to Damascus and to many others.

We also looked at some of the ways God speaks to man. Some of the means God used to communicate to men in the past but which He no longer uses include audible voice (although there may be some times He still speaks audibly to people today), angels, dreams, visions, casting lots and the Urim and Thummim. We observed more closely some of the ways God spoke in the past and still speaks today. He speaks through nature, other people, circumstances and experiences, prayer, the written Word, the Holy Spirit and our conscience.

Thus we have established that God wants to speak to us and in deed does. Now we want to look at how He speaks and what He says.

I hope you've been learning to listen to Him this past week. Have you taken time to let Him speak and to sit and listen? Have you become more aware of when and how He speaks to you? I hope so. The whole purpose of these messages is for you to take this information and apply it to your own lives during the coming week.

I. WHAT DOES GOD'S VOICE SOUND LIKE?

Out of the several ways God uses to communicate His messages to us today, we will be focusing on His speaking to us by the Holy Spirit. He speaks to us today and we can hear His voice. It's not a sound, it's a voice. It's not something you hear with your ears but in your mind. Once you learn to recognize and respond to this voice you'll recognize it often.

There is an old story about two men walking down a busy, loud New York City street. Horns honked, engines roared, PA systems blasted advertisements. All of a sudden one of the men, who had been an outdoorsman all his life, stopped and said, "What's that?" The other man couldn't imagine what he was talking about with all the noise and confusion all around. The first man went over to the side of a building and picked up a cricket he had heard. The friend was amazed that the outdoorsman had even heard it, but his ears were attuned to that sound and could pick it out of the din around them. That's how our spiritual hearing needs to be. We need to be able to pick God's voice out of all the other voices clamoring for our attention. Hopefully this message will help you to be able to do that.

First we'll look at what God's voice sounds like, and then we'll talk about some of the things He says. The first clue we have to what God's voice sounds like is in I Kings 19 where we see it is a still, small voice – a gentle whisper.

Kings 19:11-13 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by." Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave. Then a voice said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

In the still, small voice of God we are given a message that bears the stamp of His personality quite clearly and in a way we will learn to recognize.

There is a speaker system at the Ontario Motor Speedway in California that has an output of 30,800 watts connected to 355 speakers and able to communicate to 230,000 people above the noise of the car races. God could outdo that, but instead chooses to speak quietly. Therefore if we want to hear Him we can't wait for Him to shout over the noise in our life but we need to learn to be quiet and listen for His still, quiet voice.

I remember several years ago I was marrying a couple that I had known for a long time and had been coming to church and Bible studies for quite some time. They had some major 'issues' it seemed that had worked through, but the day before the wedding the groom did something that was part of his old pattern. I clearly heard God's voice in my spirit telling me



not to marry them, so I didn't. The bride and both families really put a lot of pressure on me to go ahead with the wedding but I knew that God had spoken.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones writes: "God sometimes answers directly in our spirit. The prophet said, 'I will watch and see what He will say in me.' God speaks to me by speaking in me. He can so lie something upon the mind that we are certain of the answer. He can impress something upon our spirits in an unmistakable manner. We find ourselves unable to get away from an impression that is on our mind or heart; we try to rid ourselves of it, but back it comes."

Remember, this is not verbal voice, a sensation or an emotional experience. In fact, it can be very easy to overlook His voice or just think it's a thought of our own.

Try an experiment: Be as still and silent as you possibly can for the next 30 seconds or so. Listen as intently as you can, noticing the sounds you hear. How many sounds? What are they?--Close your eyes and begin to listen. Pause: Did you hear 1 sound-- 2? 3? 4? 5? Did you hear the ticking of the clock? Heater noise? Birds? Traffic? Voices? Your own breath? Your heartbeat? Ringing in your ears?

We are seldom still enough to hear the subtle sounds. Most of us suffer from a steady dose of noise pollution: TV, radio, conversation. Constant sound bombards us until the naturalness of silence sounds foreign, unnatural, threatening, and we'll do just about anything to cover it up. In a significant way, we are in fact addicted to noise. The constant blaring of the TV is for many an electronic companion whose presence we take for granted; Muzak fills the elevator; we jump in the car and switch on the radio to fill the uncomfortable void; even a lapse in social conversation is viewed with alarm, and someone has to rescue the moment by talking. Even in church, if a few moments of silence are called for in worship, most church members have this internal response: "When will this be over?"

We need to learn to hear God's still voice as He speaks to us. I can think back on times He told me to talk to someone about Him and I didn't. Those still haunt me. Better memories are the times when God put it on my heart to speak to someone and I obeyed.

Writer Charles Swindoll once found himself with too many commitments in too few days. He got nervous and tense about it. "I was snapping at my wife and our children, choking down my food at mealtimes, and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day," he recalled in his book *Stress Fractures*. "Before long, things around our home started reflecting the patter of my hurry-up style. It was become unbearable.

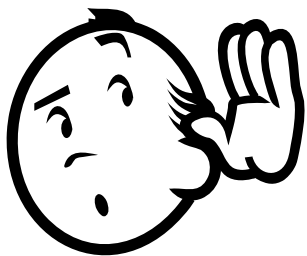
"I distinctly remember after supper one evening, the words of our younger daughter, Colleen. She wanted to tell me something important that had happened to her at school that day. She began hurriedly, 'Daddy, I wanna tell you somethin' and I'll tell you really fast.' Suddenly realizing her frustration, I answered, 'Honey, you can tell me -- and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.' I'll never forget her answer: 'Then listen slowly.'"

That's good advice for all of us. Listen slowly; listen intently, for His voice is often a gentle whisper, a still, small voice. When we learn to listen for it we recognize that He speaks rich and enlightened thoughts to our spirits.

God can put a new idea directly and immediately into our mind. He can give us a new perspective in which to view something. He can put new desires into our hearts. He can stimulate certain memories stored within our mind just when they are most needed.

Martin Luther wrote: "If the Holy Spirit should come when these thoughts are in your mind and begin to preach to your heart, giving you rich and enlightened thoughts, then give Him the honor, let your





preconceived ideas go, be quiet and listen to Him Who can talk better than you; and note what He proclaims and write it down.”

James Dobson has given some of the best practical advice I have ever heard on how someone who really wants the will of God and who has a basically correct understanding of it should proceed. Describing how he does it himself, he says, “I get down on my knees and say, ‘Lord, I need to know what you want me to do, and I am listening. Please speak to me through my friends, books, magazines I pick up and read, and through circumstances.”

Often God’s still, small voice takes the form of thoughts that are our thoughts, though they are not from us.

When God speaks in your heart it doesn’t matter where your mind has been going; He blocks and overrides all circuits. You are captivated by His voice speaking to you. He commands your undivided attention. There is absolute certainty in what He says. What He says is right. His word has perfect balance and proportion. Everything He shows us fits together seamlessly. The word He gives us is complete. Everything He says compliments everything He’s been showing us.

It’s true that Satan can counterfeit this, but that just proves that God does speak to us in this way. A little later we’ll have a whole message on how to tell God’s voice from Satan’s counterfeit leading.

When I study, when I prepare sermons and lessons, I try to be very aware of the rich and enlightening thoughts that God sends me by means of His Spirit. When I counsel I always try to be sensitive to His leading and direction. When we are involved in spiritual warfare it is essential to be in tune to hear what thoughts God gives me.

Often this still, small voice speaks rich and enlightening thoughts by causing a burning within my heart.

The disciples who talked with Jesus on the road to Emmaus that first Resurrection Sunday experienced this. Luke 24:32 says, “They asked each other, ‘were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?’”

Psalms 39:1-3 talks about this as well. “My heart grew hot within me, and as I meditated, the fire burned.”

One of the more familiar quotes about this comes from the journal of John Wesley for May 14, 1738. “In the evening I went very unwillingly to a society in Aldersgate-Street, where one was reading Luther’s preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation: And an assurance was given me, that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death.”

Haven’t you found yourself moved by something you sense in your spirit? Perhaps it happens during a song or sermon, when listening to a testimony or out in nature? This stirring is God speaking to our hearts through His Holy Spirit, putting His fire within us to highlight something of importance.

Charles Stanley writes: “As you pray and read, trust the Holy Spirit to quicken your spirit to His truth. You may feel this as warmth inside, or you may feel a great sense of absoluteness about a particular verse. Sometimes the words on the page of your Bible may seem to stand out to you as if they were written in bold headlines. Sometimes you may not be

able to get away from a particular passage. It comes repeatedly to your mind, and you can't seem to shake it from memory."

So we see that this still, small voice speaks rich and enlightening thoughts by causing a burning within our hearts. How He speaks is by a gentle, quiet whisper. Where He speaks is to our thoughts and to our hearts. He touches our rational mental capacity (enlightened thoughts) as well as our emotional feelings (burning hearts).



II. WHAT DOES GOD'S VOICE SAY?

Hopefully that makes hearing God's voice a little clearer, but there is one more part I want to add which can be very helpful. What does His voice say? What can we expect to hear from God? What sort of things does He communicate to those who are listening?

To Ezekiel God complained that "these people have ears to hear but they never hear, eyes to see but they never see" (12:2). Jesus repeated this complaint several times as well.

We saw last time the many different people that God spoke to in the Old Testament. Often He spoke to them many times. We see throughout the Bible phrases like "the voice of the Lord" (14 times), "the voice of God" (3 times), "the Lord spoke" (24 times), "God spoke" (6 times), and "the word of the Lord came to..." (99 times). There is no way of knowing how many times this was a verbal voice and how many times it was God's still, small voice speaking rich thoughts to their mind or heart (or both). If it was verbal or not, however, the result was still the same – God spoke to them and they heard Him.

When we look at these occurrences we see they can be grouped into five areas of revelation. God spoke conviction, information, encouragement, enablement in ministry, and revelation of Himself.

For most of us, the first time we heard God speak to us He was convicting us of sin, showing us our need of salvation. Jesus said, "When the Holy Spirit comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me" (John 16:A7-11). I Thessalonians 1:4-5 says the gospel comes to us with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction.

Of course we all know that how we respond that that conviction is a free will choice each will need to make.

In the 1640s George Fox, founder of the Friends or Quaker movement, wandered the fields and lanes of the English countryside, seeking someone who could show him the way to peace with God. He finally became convinced that "there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could I tell what to do; then, oh! Then I heard a voice which said, 'here is one, even Jesus Christ, that can speak to thy condition'; and when I heard it, my heart did leap for joy. Then the Lord did let me see why there was none upon the earth that could speak to my condition, namely, that I might give him all the glory."

One way in which God speaks to us is to show us the sin in our life. He does this before salvation so we will see our need of Him. He also does this in the lives of those who have freely received His free gift of salvation. He shows us sin so we can confess and remove it.

Charles Stanley wrote: “As we read God’s Word, we nearly always come to what I call a ‘gulp point.’ Something we read challenges us to change something in our lives, to gulp and say, ‘Wow! That really hit me. I need to do something about that.’ Sometimes it’s a conviction about sin in our lives. Sometimes it’s a correction in the way we have been taught or the way in which we act toward others. Sometimes it’s a clear call to engage in a new discipline or area of ministry.”

The problem is that we have a tendency to only listen to what we want to hear. A doctor can give us good advice about diet changes or needed exercise, but it’s very easy to ignore his counsel if it means changes we don’t want to make.

I’ve learned to recognize God’s Spirit when He convicts me of sin. He warns me ahead of time through my conscience. He also censures me after I have sinned. While we may not want to hear these things from Him, we can thank Him for faithfully bringing sin to our attention. Suppose He didn’t?

A second type of content God speaks to us is information and guidance.

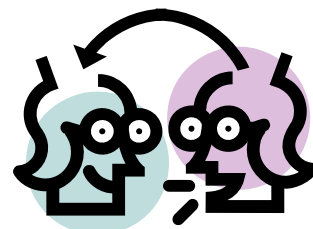
Jesus said, “But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come” (John 16:13).

The Bible abounds with examples of this. Paul said the Holy Spirit warned him of what was to come when he went to Jerusalem (Acts 20:22-23). He reminded the church in Corinth that they had the “mind of Christ” (2:16). Joseph heard of Pharaoh’s dream and God told Him the contents and their meaning. Daniel heard Nebuchadnezzar’s dream and God gave him the interpretation. Jacob (Genesis 46:2) and Samuel (2 Samuel 23:2) both said God spoke His guidance to them. Simeon was moved by the Spirit to find Jesus with His parents in the temple (Luke 2:25-28). Several times the Bible tells us that God guided Him by directing His spirit (Mark 2:8; John 13:21). God spoke to Ananias and told him to go to blind Paul (Acts 9:11-15).

An analogy I like which explains this is the shepherd-sheep illustration. He said that His sheep hear His voice and follow Him (John 10:4, 16, 27). Jesus’ definition of a disciple is one who follows Him, who hears His voice and responds.

St. Augustine tells of a time God’s voice guided him. “I heard from a neighboring house a voice, as of a boy or girl, I know not, changing, and oft repeating, ‘Take up and read. Take up and read.’ I could remember no child’s game with these words. So, checking the torrent of my tears, I arose; interpreting it to be no other than a command from God, to open the book, and read the first chapter I should find.” Thus he came upon Romans 13:13-14 which led to his salvation and transformation.

Twenty three years ago I was between churches and seeking where God would have me minister. A church in western Pennsylvania invited us to come speak and apply so we did. We weren’t sure if God wanted us to go there or not, but they went ahead with their procedure and voted on us. The vote was 100% - unanimous. I remember agonizing over the decision, awaiting their final call to see if we were coming or not. When the phone rang I still wasn’t sure, but as I talked I knew God was telling me to turn it down. I really wanted to get back to pasturing. I hadn’t ever heard of Main Street Baptist Church in Doylestown. Six months later God led us here, and the church vote was 51% in our favor. Denominational leaders urged us to turn down what was then a hot-bed of conflict and strife, but I knew God was leading us to come here so we did.



That’s why it’s so important to be listening to God and letting Him

guide and direct.

A very remarkable illustration of this concerns Peter Marshall, the Scot who in the middle of the twentieth century became one of America's most widely acclaimed ministers. Through his outstanding qualities as a man and a minister, he brought the office of the chaplain of the United States Senate to a new level of prominence.

Back in Britain, on one foggy, pitch-black Northumberland night, he was taking a shortcut across the moors in an area where there was a deep, deserted limestone quarry. As he plodded blindly forward, an urgent voice called out, "Peter!" He stopped and answered: "Yes, who is it? What do you want?" But there was no response.

Thinking he was mistaken, he took a few more steps. The voice came again, even more urgently, "Peter!" At this he stopped again and, trying to peer into the darkness, stumbled forward and fell to his knees. Putting down his hand to brace himself, he found nothing there. As he felt around in a semicircle he discovered that he was right on the brink of the abandoned quarry, where one step more would certainly have killed him.

It's not just the big things, but little things He leads us with as well. Many times I've not been able to find my keys or something I've misplaced. After frantically looking everywhere I finally stop and pray, and then soon after that their location pops right into my mind!

Charles Stanley adds excellent counsel to this. "In the Old Testament when men such as King David inquired of the Lord, the question was nearly always put to the Lord in such a way that the answer was yes or no. I believe this is the foremost way that the Holy Spirit speaks to us hour by hour as we walk through our particular set of circumstances. We can never ask too many times of the Holy Spirit, 'Should I do this – yes or no?' We will sense in our spirits His word of reply to us. Generally, it will be a sense of enthusiasm and eager desire marked with great joy and freedom, or it will be a sense of foreboding, danger, caution, or need for silence. I find that it is much easier to receive the direction of the Holy Spirit by asking for yes-or-no counsel than to say to Him in general terms, 'What do you want me to do?'"

So when we talk about the content of what God speaks we find He speaks conviction, information and guidance, and also encouragement.

God doesn't just speak information to us; quite often He speaks words of encouragement, peace, comfort and strength. "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid" (John 14:27). "And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6-7).

God has given me encouragement and peace about our church. Despite the numbers and financial difficulties, I know He wants me to persevere here.

So God speaks conviction, information and encouragement to us. He also tells us how to carry on the responsibilities and ministries He has given us.

His voice calls people into ministry (I Timothy 1:12; 2:6-7) and then tells those whom He has called what to say. Moses is an example of this (Exodus 4:10-12). I'm sure you've noticed times when you were talking to someone about spiritual things and all of a sudden the right thoughts came to you and you were able to explain something in a way you never thought you could.



When I teach and preach I depend on God to give me the right things to say. That's why I always pray before I start, asking

Him to give me His words to speak and that everyone would hear Him and not me. I need to listen to Him and you need to be hearing from Him as you hear me.

The final form His communication may take is that of revelation of Himself. Often it will just seem to 'hit' us how wonderful, powerful or majestic God is. This is Him revealing Himself to us by His Holy Spirit. He does this so we will respond in praise and worship.

That happens to me when I listen to my son Dan play the piano or when I listen to Southern Gospel Music.

Sometimes we can be so overwhelmed with God's love in our soul that we find ourselves enraptured in an immense feeling of being loved deeply, of God telling us how much He loves us. Our natural response is to worship, to love Him back.

So we've seen this morning that God speaks to us in a gentle whisper. When He does, He speaks rich and enlightening thoughts to our minds. Or He may cause a warm burning in our hearts as He speaks to our emotions and feelings.

The content which He communicates to us consists of conviction, information and guidance, encouragement and peace, enablement in ministry, and a revelation of Himself to cause us to worship Him.

In which of these areas has He been speaking to you during the last week? In which is He speaking to you now? Where do you need to hear Him speaking in the coming week?



Now that you know a little better what God's voices sounds like and the kinds of things He talks about, make sure you are listening for them this week. Many people like to write down these things so they remember and follow through with them.

Make sure you are always listening, for God will be speaking. He will speak to you this week, will you hear Him?

I'd like to close with a story I shared on a Wednesday evening several years ago. It's a great example of listening to God speak.

A young man had been to Wednesday night Bible study. The Pastor had shared about listening to God and obeying the Lord's voice. The young man could not help but wonder "Does God still speak to people?" After service, he went out with some friends for coffee and pie and they discussed the message. Several different ones talked about how God had led them in different ways. It was about ten o'clock when the young man started driving home. Sitting in his car, he just began to pray, "God... If you still speak to people, speak to me. I will listen. I will do my best to obey." As he drove down the main street of his town, he had the strangest thought to stop and buy a gallon of milk. He shook his head and said out loud, "God is that you?" He did not get a reply and started on toward home. But again, his thought still reminds him to buy a gallon of milk. The young man thought about Samuel and how he did not recognize the voice of God, and how little Samuel ran to Eli. "Okay, God, in case that is you, I will buy the milk." It did not seem like too hard a test of obedience. He could always use the milk. He stopped and purchased the gallon of milk and started toward home. As he passed Seventh Street, he again felt the urge, "Turn down that street."

This is crazy he thought and drove on past the intersection. Again, he felt that he should turn down Seventh Street. At the next intersection, he turned back and headed down Seventh. Half jokingly, he said aloud, "Okay, God, I will".

He drove several blocks, when suddenly, he felt like he should stop. He pulled over to the curb and looked around. He was in a semi-commercial area of town. It was not the best but

it was not the worst of neighborhoods either. The businesses were closed and most of the houses looked dark like the people were already in bed. Again, he sensed something, “Go, and give the milk to the people in the house across the street.”

The young man looked at the house. It was dark and it looked like the people were either gone or they were already asleep. He started to open the door and then sat back in the car seat. “Lord, this is insane. Those people are asleep and if I wake them up, they are going to be mad and I will look stupid.” Again, he felt like he should go and give the milk. Finally, he opened the door, “Okay God, if this is you, I will go to the door, and I will give them the milk. If you want me to look like a crazy person, okay. I want to be obedient. I guess that will count for something but if they don’t answer right away, I am out of here.” He walked across the street and rang the bell. He could hear some noise inside. A man’s voice yelled out, “Who is it? What do you want?” Then the door opened before the young man could get away. The man was standing there in his jeans and T-shirt. He looked like he just got out of bed. He had a strange look on his face and he did not seem too happy to have some stranger standing on his doorstep. “What is it?” The young man thrust out the gallon of milk, “Here, I brought this to you.” The man took the milk and rushed down a hallway speaking loudly in Spanish. Then from down the hall came a woman carrying the milk toward the kitchen. The man was following her holding a baby. The baby was crying.

The man had tears streaming down his face. The man began speaking and half-crying, “We were just praying. We had some big bills this month and we ran out of money. We did not have any milk for our baby. I was just praying and asking God to show me how to get some milk.” His wife in the kitchen yelled out, “I ask him to send an Angel with some. Are you an Angel?” The young man reached into his wallet and pulled out all the money he had on him and put it in the man’s hand. He turned and walked back toward his car and the tears were streaming down his face. He knew that God still answers prayers.

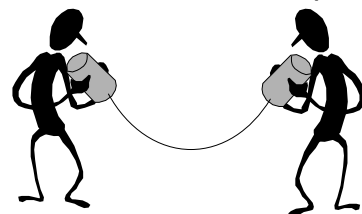
What Can I Do to Hear God’s Voice?

I. WHAT CAN I DO TO HEAR GOD’S VOICE?

Hearing God’s voice is more than just reading a couple Bible verses each morning. Deion Sanders, the famous athlete, tried that. He tells how each evening he’d be deeply involved in all kinds of sin, but in the morning he’d always read his Bible. That was a habit built into him by a devout grandmother. He said he did it regularly just like brushing his teeth, but five minutes after he was done he had no idea what he read. It wasn’t until he accepted Jesus as his Savior that he started hearing God when he read.

The first requirement to hear God’s voice is salvation. While our sin still separates us from God we are not only spiritually blind, we are also spiritually deaf. Since it is God’s Spirit within us that communicates God’s messages to us, we don’t have a ‘receiver’ or ‘transmitter’ until we have God’s Spirit.

However, just because we have accepted Jesus as Savior and have the Holy Spirit inside doesn’t mean we are always attuned to Him. Sin, rebellion, disobedience, self-centeredness, laziness, these and many other things can quench His Spirit. We don’t lose the Holy Spirit when we sin, but we do cut off the communication with God that comes through Him. So we need to be disciples who follow Him and live for Him in order to regularly hear from Him.



When we have accepted Jesus as Savior and have Him first in life, with no unconfessed sin, we will hear from God. God supernaturally opens our spiritual eyes so we can 'see' His truth. He also opens our spiritual ears so we can 'hear' His voice. Ezekiel 12:2 warns, "Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?" So important is this verse that it is quoted seven times in the Gospels and another seven times in the Book of Revelation.

These verses imply first of all a capacity to spiritually hear God and also a choice we can or cannot make to willingly listen to His voice.

A hardened unbeliever went one day to see—but not to hear—George Whitefield when he preached outdoors to a great throng. In order to have a good vantage point, he climbed a nearby tree. Putting his fingers in both ears, he began to watch the mighty preacher. Then a persistent fly lit on his nose. He shook his head, but the fly wouldn't move. Just as he removed a hand from an ear to flick the fly away, Whitefield quoted the verse, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear" (Matt. 11:15). Then he spoke of the willful refusal of many to hear the Spirit's voice. The unbeliever was so impressed by what happened that he opened not only his ears to the gospel, but also his heart.

So before we can listen to God we must have His Spirit within and there can be nothing blocking our listening to Him. We must make that free will choice to listen to Him.



II. WHAT KEEPS ME FROM HEARING GOD'S VOICE?

If you are a user of the Internet then you know that you must first get your modem connected with a server before you can have access to the unlimited knowledge base known as the World Wide Web. You are out of luck if the server is busy, right? You have probably sat there in front of your computer screen many times biting your fingernails or pulling your hair out as you heard the phone line ringing and ringing and never connecting. Or you can connect and then all of a sudden find your connection broken. You must find what is causing the problem and fix it.

Lots of things can break the connection between us and God. One of the most common things is distractions that turn us from His voice.

Luke 10:340 says that Martha was too busy to hear Jesus because she was distracted by meal preparations. Several years ago newspapers told how a new Navy jet fighter shot itself down. Flying at supersonic speed, it ran into cannon shells it had fired only a few seconds before. The jet was traveling too fast! If we don't have time to spend with God, talking to Him and listening to His voice, we are traveling too fast as well. You better slow down before you shoot yourself down!

Sometimes when I am too busy during the day and neglect my relationship with God I find myself waking up during the night for no reason and just laying there. I'd learned to use that time to pray and reconnect with God. It's His way of calling me aside to be with Him. Nancy does the same when I neglect spending quality time with her. She doesn't wake me up during the night, but she does let me know I have been neglecting our relationship. Is God trying to tell you right now that you've been neglecting Him? Listen to what He says!

I find my best time to spend with God is first thing in the morning, often before even getting out of bed. Once I go downstairs, bring in the paper and turn on the computer its much harder for me to give Him the full attention He deserves. Some find evenings work best for them. Whatever it is, just make sure you do it and not let business get in your way.

Martin Luther said, "I have so much to do today that I shall never get through it with less than three hours' prayer." Charles Spurgeon said, "I always feel that there is something wrong if I go without prayer for even half an hour in the day."



Even when times are busy, we must learn to listen. Many years ago before electricity, people had ice houses to store ice from the winter so they could use it in the summer. They would put layers of sawdust all around each block to insulate it and keep it from melting. One day a worker in an ice house lost a very special watch, given him by his father before he died. He and several others dug all through the sawdust but could not find it. After hours of labor they gave it up as lost. A young boy had heard of the problem and went into the ice house after all the others left. Five minutes later he came out with the watch, to the astonishment of all. When asked how he found it so easily the boy said, "I just went in t here by myself, closed the door, lay very still on the sawdust and listened real hard."

When do you best hear from God? What can you do to counter the noises and distractions that keep you from hearing from God?

A second interference that can block us from hearing God's voice is disappointment. The Psalmist cries, "O my God, I cry out day by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent" (Psalm 22:2).

It is very likely that Jonah's family was killed by the Assyrians, so when God sent him to bring them a message that would spare them from judgment, he didn't want to listen to God.

When our prayers don't seem to be answered like we'd like, we sometimes stop praying and drift from God. When we feel hurt by someone, we withdraw from them.

I remember when, as a new Christian, I prayed for something very important to me. I believed God wanted me to ask Him for it and that if I prayed and believed God would answer that prayer. He didn't and I was confused and devastated. I had a decision to make: withdraw from God because I was disappointed in His will or trust Him anyway.

Daniel had to pray for three weeks before he received God's answer (Daniel 10:12-14). We may have to pray for three years, or thirty years.

Can you think of a time in life when you withdrew from God because you were disappointed in His will for you? Are you distant from Him now because you don't like something He is doing in your life?

Distractions can cause us to not listen to God, so can disappointment. Disconnection is something else to be aware of when God's voice isn't coming through loud and clear.

Jesus warned His listeners to watch out for "the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things" (Mark 4:18-19).

Sin will instantly disconnect us from receiving God's message. A group of dolphins got stranded on a beach near Boston. Scientists feel they may have run aground because of a hearing problem. The animals, which use sound waves to judge depths, were found to have worms clogging their sinus cavities and inner ears, making them hard of hearing. The dolphins were unable to gauge the depth of water in which they were swimming. They thought they were in deep water, but found themselves stranded on the beach.

When we allow unconfessed sin in our lives, it blocks our ability to hear God speaking to us. On our own we can easily 'ground' ourselves.

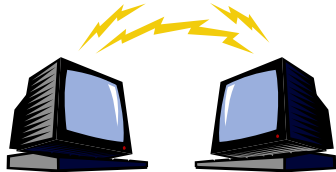
If you found you have lost your connection to God, make sure there is no unconfessed sin in your life.

Is there any sin you are aware of that you haven't admitted to God and asked for His cleansing? If so, stop and do so now.

Not only do distractions, disappointment, disconnection and disinformation make it so we don't hear God speaking, so does disinformation.

While Joshua and Caleb advised the Jews to enter the land, the other 10 spies spread disinformation which misled the people. Some of the information spread today about God and the Christian life is false information, disinformation, and can mislead many. This includes believing things like the saying that bad things don't happen to good people. Others include, "If I had enough faith, my prayers would be answered," "Christians shouldn't grieve," "only those who speak in tongues are really spiritual," "God wants all His people to be healthy and wealthy, if we aren't it's from our lack of faith," "I'm not good enough so God won't listen to me," and "God is sovereign so it doesn't matter if I pray or not."

Based on Judges 6:36-40 some say we should 'put out a fleece' to discern God's will, but that is not true. Others say we must have 'confirmation' on all God says. While it is true that God often does confirm what He says, He doesn't always do so. Also, Satan can say something and then act in such a way as if to confirm it.



A final lie that can hinder our listening to God is the one that says God will give his message for me through someone else, someone more 'spiritual' than I am. Be very careful when someone says, "God told me to tell you...." The Bible says we are to avoid mediums (Deut. 18:10-11) for Jesus is our only go-between (1 Timothy 2:5). God speaks directly to his people.

Believing these and other bits of misinformation will turn us from listening to God. What lies have you believed in the past? Ask God to show you which ones you may be believing now?

Similar to but distinct from disinformation is deception. We can be deceived by Satan's voice, or even our own, and mistake them from God's voice. We will look into this more completely in the last message of this topic. Pride can deceive us into thinking we don't need to hear from God.

Silently ask God to show you what baggage you are carrying around, what deceptions have kept you from listening to Him.

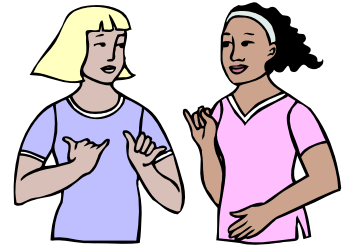
The final danger we will look at concerning ways our hearing from God can be blocked is disbelief.

Four times the Bible says, "Today, if you will hear his voice...." (Hebrews 3:7, 15; 4:7; Psalm 95:7). It's up to us if we hear Him. Do you believe He can speak to you, to you yourself and not just to others? If not, confess your unbelief and ask for forgiveness.

Distractions, disappointment, disconnection, disinformation, deception and disbelief all will block our reception of God's message. Which of these is keeping you from hearing Him? What can you do to remedy this?

III. WHAT DOES GOD DO TO GET MY ATTENTION WHEN I'M NOT LISTENING TO HIS VOICE?

God is faithful. He wants us to listen to Him. He even goes out of His way to get our attention when we aren't listening. My computer gives me a warning so I know I'm disconnected and not receiving signals. God sends warning notices to our spirit as well.



This message may come in the form of an unsettled spirit. When God wanted to get a message to King Ahasuerus he kept him from sleeping (Esther 6:1). If you feel restlessness in your spirit, an unsettled feeling, like something is wrong or missing, take that as God's warning that He wants your attention. Listen to what He has to say.

Another form this message can take is an unsolicited word from another person. This could be an admonition or a correction. God sent Nathan to David with such a message after David sinned with Bathsheba and then didn't confess his sin (2 Samuel 12:1). This could even take the form of complements and words of appreciation or approval which help us get our eyes off ourselves and onto God.

The third type of warning message from God is unusual circumstances, both good and bad. Paul alerted the Corinthians to the fact that, because of unconfessed sin, many of them were sick and some had died (1 Corinthians 12:29-30). Illness, accidents, bankruptcies, failures, divorced, disappointments – all these and other means may be used to get someone's attention and come back to God. This isn't to say that this is the only reason for negative things to happen, nor that all bad things are God's way of getting our attention, but it is certainly something to consider.

God not only uses negative things to get our attention, but also positive. Sometimes God sends blessing to get us to listen to Him again. "Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance?" (Romans 2:4)

So we see that God gets our attention by giving us a restless spirit, an unsolicited word from another person, unusual circumstances, both good and bad, and also by unanswered prayer.

Sometimes, when it seems the heavens are closed and God isn't hearing us, God simply wants us to try harder to connect with Him. While this certainly isn't the only reason for what we call 'unanswered' prayer, sometimes God does use it to make us more desperate to hear from Him so we examine our lives for sin and listen all the closer to Him.

Do you notice any of these in your life right now? Could it be that God is trying to get your attention, to let you know you have lost your connection with Him and not listening to Him? If so confess any sin He points out and take time to open your heart and listen.

LEARNING TO LISTEN

1. Man must have the Lord's guidance to live in a manner pleasing to Him (Jer. 10:23). TRUE
FALSE

2. Who is to lead and guide the Christian (Rom. 8:14; John 16:13)? _____

3. In II Samuel 22:31 David says the way of God is

- ___hard
- ___easy
- ___perfect

4. The Christian's first duty is to obey the king or ruler over him (Acts 5:29). TRUE FALSE

5. Luke 6:46 teaches that if you call Jesus Lord can claim Him as your Saviour you should:

- ___go to church regularly
- ___give to the poor
- ___do the things He asks

6. John 13:17 says if you live according to God's will, you can expect your life to be
_____.

7. A Christian is supposed to conform his life so he lives like everyone else around him (Rom. 12:1-2). TRUE FALSE

8. In trying to decide what is the proper thing for you, as a Christian, to do concerning things not particularly mentioned in the Bible, it is sometimes helpful to ask yourself:

- | | |
|-------------------|--|
| ___ I Cor. 10:31 | a. can I do it in the name of Christ |
| ___ I Thess. 5:22 | b. does it have the appearance of evil |
| ___ Rom. 14:13 | c. will this bring glory to God |
| ___ Col. 1:10 | d. should an ambassador do this |
| ___ II Cor. 5:10 | e. is this walking worthy of the Lord |
| | f. will this cause my brother to stumble (sin) |

9. Psalm 119:105 says one source of guidance is the _____.

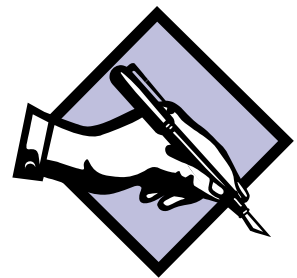
10. If you ask Him, will God guide you (Psalm 32:8) ? _____

11. If it is really God guiding you, you will not be led contrary to the _____.

12. Sometimes _____ may close a door or make it impossible to go contrary to God's will (Acts 16:6-10).

13. Circumstances may seem unreasonable, but if you are in God's will you will be like Joseph and know by the witness in your heart that _____ is with you (Genesis 39:1-2).

WRITE BELOW things you think God is telling you or showing you. As you have your devotions just keep your pencil in hand and jot down impressions, thoughts, things to do, people to contact, prayer items, etc.”



14. DOING YOUR PART IN THE FAMILY

How can I contribute to others in the family?

As soon as a child starts to walk and talk he wants to “help” around the house. He tries to do little things to assist others. While he isn’t able to do much at first, still he tries and tries. He feels great when he can make a contribution to others and ‘help’ someone.

The same is true in God’s family. A new believer isn’t able to do a lot at first, but there should be a strong desire to do what they can. It is natural to one to contribute to the spiritual family and help in any way possible. As with a child, though, this often needs to be learned. This time we will talk about spiritual gifts, for these are God’s ways of using us to help each other.

At the moment of salvation one of the many things we receive are spiritual gifts. These are enablements the Spirit provides for each one. Just as each person has a unique set of talents, each believer has a unique set of spiritual gifts. These are different than talents. These are special skills/abilities God’s Holy Spirit gives each believer to minister to others in the body of Christ.

Spiritual gifts are not given to be used for one’s own benefit. They are for the purpose of ministering to the whole Body of Christ. A spiritual gift is the God-given ability through which the Holy Spirit supernaturally ministers to other believers. If you’re not using your gift the rest of us are getting cheated!

Ephesians 4:12 says spiritual gifts are “for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

Each believer has a unique combination of gifts. Just like three colors, yellow, red and blue, are blended in various combinations to form thousands of colors, so these basic gifts are blended with others to form a unique combination in each believer. No two of us are gifted exactly alike.



<u>TALENT</u>	<u>SP GIFT</u>
Common grace	Special grace
Physical birth	Spiritual birth
Natural ability	Sp endowment
Entertain on natural level	Spiritual growth of bel.
By own strength	By power of Holy Spirit

THE SENDING GIFTS

(Apostle, Missionary, Evangelist)

Apostle means “send one. Messenger.” Just for early church, apostles were someone who was an eyewitness of the resurrection. They were chosen personally by Jesus and had special authority and ability to get the early church started. The gift of Apostleship didn’t pass on after that first generation.

Missionary: the gift of missionary is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister whatever other spiritual gifts they have in a second culture.

Evangelism: the gift of evangelism is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to proclaim the Good News of salvation effectively so that individuals or groups of people may respond to the claims of Christ in conversion and discipleship.

Evangelist: The gift of evangelist is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to share the Good News with unbelievers in such a way that men and women become Jesus’ disciples.

THE SPEAKING GIFTS

(Prophecy, Prophet, Wisdom, Knowledge, Teaching)

Knowledge: The gift of knowledge is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to observe Biblical facts and make conclusions.

Wisdom: The gift of wisdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know the mind of the Holy Spirit in such a way as to receive insight into how given knowledge may be applied to specific needs arising in the Body of Christ.

<u>KNOWLEDGE</u>	<u>WISDOM</u>
Understand	Apply
Know facts	Use facts
Info gathered	Info used
Discovery	Diagnosis
Teacher	Preacher



Teaching: The gift of teaching is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to communicate information relevant to the health and ministry of the body and its members in such a way that others will learn.

Prophet – Prophecy: The gift of prophet - prophecy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to proclaim the written Word with clarity and to apply it to a particular situation with a view to correction or edification.

TEACHING

Communicate
Instruct
To Mind

PROPHECY

Proclaim
Declare
To Emotions

SPEAKING GIFTS

Knowledge: clarify truth
Wisdom: apply truth
Teaching: impute truth
Prophecy: proclaim truth



THE SERVING GIFTS

(Service, Mercy, Giving, Exhortation, Helps, Hospitality)

Service: The gift of service is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to identify the unmet needs involved in a task related to God's work and to make use of available resources to meet those needs and help accomplish the desired results.

Mercy: The gift of mercy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to feel genuine empathy and compassion for individuals who suffer distressing physical, mental or emotional problems and to translate that compassion into cheerfully-done deeds which reflect Christ's love and alleviate the suffering.

Helps: The gift of helps is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to invest the talents they have in the life and ministry of other members of the Body so the other can increase the effectiveness of their spiritual gifts.

SERVICE: helping attitude and act wherever needed

MERCY: compassionate attitude and act to needy person

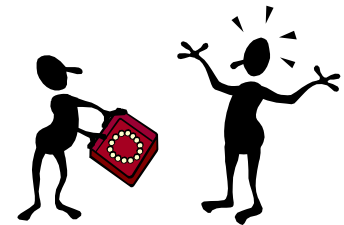
HELPS: assisting with specific need so another can use their gift

Giving: The gift of giving is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to contribute material resources to the work of the Lord with liberality and cheerfulness.

MERCY: compassion of heart, attitude of giving

GIVING: focus on the gift given

Hospitality: The gift of hospitality is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to provide an open house and a warm welcome to those in need of food and lodging.



Encouragement: The gift of encouragement is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to minister words of comfort, consolation, encouragement and counsel to other members of the Body in such a way that they feel helped and healed.

THE SPECIAL GIFTS

(Faith, Intercession, Exorcism, Voluntary Poverty, Discernment, Celibacy, Martyrdom)

Faith: The gift of faith is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to exercise a supernatural capacity for believing God.

Intercession: The gift of intercession is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to pray for extended periods of time on a regular basis and see frequent and specific answers to their prayers (to a degree much greater than that which is expected of the average Christian).

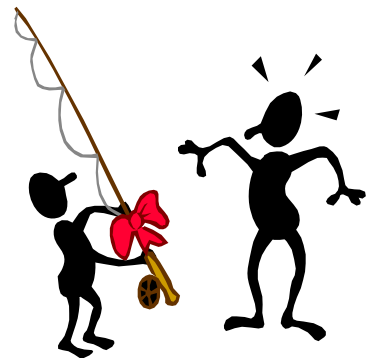
Discernment: The gift of discernment is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to know with assurance whether certain behavior or truth purported to be of God is in reality divine, human or satanic.

Exorcism: The gift of exorcism is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand Satan's workings and know how to stop the work of demons in people's lives.

Celibacy: The gift of celibacy is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to remain single and enjoy it without suffering undue loneliness or sexual temptation.

Voluntary poverty: The gift of voluntary poverty is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to renounce material comfort and luxury and adopt a personal life-style equivalent to those living in a given society in order to serve God more effectively.

Martyrdom: The gift of martyrdom is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to undergo suffering for the faith, even to death, while consistently displaying a joyous and victorious attitude that brings glory to God.



THE SHEPHERDING GIFTS

(Pastor, Leadership, Administration)

Pastor: The gift of pastor is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to assume a long-term personal responsibility for the spiritual welfare of a group of believers.

Leadership: The gift of leadership is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to set goals in accordance with God's purpose for the future and to communicate these goals to others in such a way that they voluntarily and harmoniously work together to accomplish these goals for the glory of God.

Administration: The gift of administration is the special ability that God gives to certain members of the body of Christ to understand clearly the immediate and long-range goals of a particular unit of the body of Christ and to devise and execute plans for the accomplishment of those goals.

THE SIGN GIFTS

(Miracles, Healing, Tongues & Interpretation)

Miracles: The gift of miracles is the special ability that God gave to apostles or near-apostles to exercise God's power over Satan and nature in such a way that observers would know that God was authenticating the man and his message.

Healing: The gift of healing is the special ability that God gave to apostles or near-apostles to exercise God's power over physical ills or even death in such a way that observers would know that God was authenticating the man and his message.

Tongues: The gift of tongues was the special ability God gave some in the body of Christ to speak in a known foreign language which the speaker previously had no ability to speak, as a sign of God's coming judgment on the Jews (which came in 70 AD and ended the need for the gift).

Interpretation of tongues: The gift of interpretation of tongues was the special ability God gave some in the body of Christ to interpret a known foreign language which the speaker previously had no ability to interpret, as God's grace for believers to benefit from tongues which were spoken mainly as a sign of coming judgment to the Jews (which came in 70 AD and ended the need for the gift).

HOW TO DISCOVER YOUR GIFTS

God is a God of variety, in the world and in His church. Each Christian has been given several gifts of the Spirit which are meant to build up other believers in the Body of Christ. As each believer employs his gifts, the church is edified. Although you may believe that you have been given one or more gifts, actually knowing what it is - and using it - may be harder.



How to go about discovering your spiritual capacities:

* **List the gifts.** Become informed about the many gifts in order to recognize your own. You likely have more than one gift. Don't overrate the nature of gifts by thinking of them as something impressive when they may be quite ordinary. Instead of flamboyant, grandstand abilities, they may be silent, steady workings of the Holy Spirit.

* **Go to work.** The Holy Spirit grants gifts to every child of God. The extent to which the divine design is fulfilled depends on your faithfulness. Therefore, you should go to work immediately. Expose yourself to various kinds of Christian service, perhaps first in the area of natural abilities. Don't give up if you have some early failures. Be willing to try something new, that you previously thought you couldn't do.

* **Note your inclinations.** If you are drawn toward a certain area of service, your desire may point to the existence of that gift. To a degree, gifts shape your future. With God, your desire, gift, and calling are related. A gift usually will be preceded by desire and followed by opportunity to use it. Caution: the desire for a gift does not guarantee it. Final assignment belongs to God.

* **Commit.** If you have progressed to this point, it may be time to dedicate yourself and these potential gifts to the Lord. Consciously place your gifts in the Lord's service, expressing willingness to obey Him with your spiritual capacities.

* **Develop your gifts.** The existence of a gift is a call to exercise it. Gifts have been likened to seeds which start small and bloom with proper care. Cultivation of a gift may mean formal training, or being mentored by another person accomplished in the gift.

* **Delight.** When you find your gift(s), there will be joy. This is what I'd rather be doing for the Lord than anything else in the world. This is my thing. This turns me on. Your joy is subconsciously communicated to the recipients of your ministry.

* **Let others discern.** Because delight has subjective elements, submit your "eureka" feeling to the scrutiny of loving and discerning brethren. The confirmation that you do possess a gift is recognition of this gift by others.

* Gifts of the Spirit include: Speaking gifts: Apostolic gift, prophecy, evangelism, shepherding, teaching, exhortation, knowledge, and wisdom; Serving gifts: helps, hospitality, giving, government, showing mercy, faith, and discernment; Signifying gifts: miracles, healing, tongues, and interpretation. There will always be debate on the actual number of gifts. There are several lists in the Bible, and each differ somewhat.

SPIRITUAL GIFTS TEST

INSTRUCTIONS: After each statement write the appropriate number which comes closest to your normal tendency. Or, you can go ahead and write the number in the grid at the end.

USUALLY (5) A LOT (4) SOMETIMES (3) SELDOM (1) ALMOST NEVER (0)

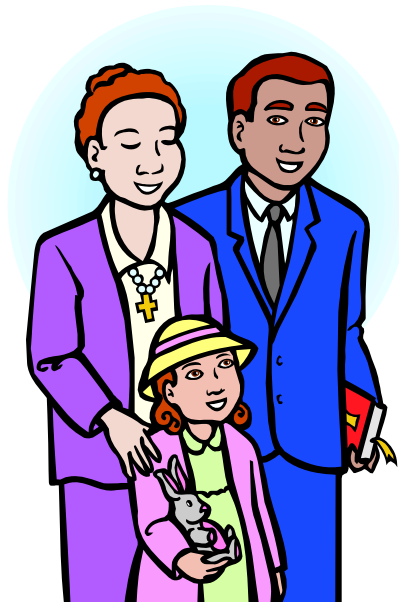
1. People think I speak with authority.
2. I delight in deep study and research of the Bible.
3. People come to me for advice about their personal problems.
4. I enjoy placing people in the proper positions and ministries.
5. I am more interested in doing practical things that need to be done than why they should be done.
6. I would rather support a project with my money than my labor.
7. Visiting the sick is enjoyable to me.
8. When I sense a situation is not right, I feel a deep desire to speak up to bring correction.
9. I enjoy spending time searching out the answers to the issues and questions.
10. I find it enjoyable to talk personally with people about their problems.
11. I find it important to set up objectives and goals for my ministry.
12. No task is too small for me: I must enjoy doing things that need to be done.
13. When I hear of someone in need, my first response is to give them financial aid.
14. I look for ways to cheer up people who are down and depressed.
15. I have the desire to speak up rather than remain silent when I am in a group where key issues are being discussed.



16. I am anxious to do my own research when questions arise.
17. There is joy when I can encourage people who are going through personal problems and trials.
18. I enjoy stimulating people to be more effective in their work.
19. I experience fulfillment when I carry out a task and it is appreciated by others.
20. I like to sense where financial help is needed, rather than being trapped by appeals.
21. I feel drawn to those who are suffering with emotional problems.
22. People often experience feelings of conviction when with me if they are not right with God.
23. I have an ability to explain difficult problems and give the reasons for what I believe.
24. I find joy in showing what can be accomplished as trials are turned into new areas of growth.
25. I am interested in training and disciplining other believers to become leaders.
26. I find it hard to believe that others don't see tasks that need to be done.
27. I find myself living frugally to have money ready for God's projects.
28. I enter into the sufferings of others as if they were my own.
29. When I share God's work I expect to see it bring conviction and repentance.
30. People appreciate my explanations of the scriptures.
31. I find compassion and love welling up for people I counsel.
32. I find joy directing people in reaching their goals and objectives in their lives.
33. I would rather do a job myself than work with a group to accomplish it.
34. I can enjoy giving whether or not it is acknowledged.
35. I find myself concerned and praying for those in emotional distress.
36. Others have shared that I am an effective communicator of God's Word.
37. People often come to me seeking specific answers to their Biblical questions.
38. I would rather listen to the problems of others than share my own.
39. I prefer to take leadership over a group when I have been asked.
40. When I am made aware of a job that needs to be done, I am anxious to do it myself.
41. My fulfillment comes in knowing that my giving was in answer to God's prompting rather than man's pleading.
42. I would enjoy a regular ministry to those who are suffering physically.
43. I seem to have a persuasiveness about my speech.
44. I find myself explaining the meanings of specific words rather than reciting a verse to people.
45. When a fellow believer comes to me who is entangled in sin, my greatest desire is to set him free.
46. When I am placed in a leadership position, I feel challenges.
47. I enjoy doing things that need to be done without being asked to do them.
48. I enjoy being appreciated for my giving, but not notoriety.
49. I seem to notice when others are hurting.
50. I find myself speaking God's word to others rather than taking the time to explain every detail.
51. I systematically organize my studies of the Word with notebooks and research books on the Bible.
52. I dislike "pity-parties" and refuse to participate in them.
53. I easily fit people into the jobs for which they are equipped.
54. I can do a task without thinking through the many details of it.
55. It thrills me when I find my giving is an answer to prayer.
56. It gives me great joy to minister to those wounded emotionally.
57. I find I would refer ministering to others through the Scriptures rather than from personal experience.
58. I have noticed that people appreciate the things I have shared from my research of the Word.
59. I write letters from time to time to friends which proved to be very encouraging to them.
60. I presently serve in a leadership position in my church.
61. I prefer to do the work by myself rather than delegate it.
62. I believe I am called of God to place my money in His projects.
63. I am willing and eager to spend time and energy with those who are suffering.
64. I would be willing to correct another believer by showing him his error and giving him a Scriptural principle to help him, with the result that the correction was applied to his life.
65. I would like to teach regularly.
66. I have found it in my experience that I am easy to talk to and often have people share with my heart to heart.
67. I have served in several positions requiring my organizational ability.
68. I am very skillful with my hands and enjoy doing maintenance jobs on church property.
69. I consider it a great honor and privilege to give to worthwhile Christian projects.

70. I would like to help down-and outers through some church-related program.
71. I know for certain that a number of things have happened in an individual's life and in my church situation in general, because I have given a Scriptural admonition which was needed.
72. I believe if I taught, lives could be changed.
73. People often look to me to encourage someone who is facing a hard time.
74. I have overseen the church property in some supervisory responsibility.
75. I can fix almost anything and have gladly use my skill to help church members who need my help.
76. I have been able to do without things (to me they are luxuries anyway) that others consider necessary in order to give more to God's work.
77. I like to cheer up physically handicapped people.
78. I would like to be asked to speak on moral issues.
79. People apply the things I have taught them to their lives
80. I find that I am sensitive to people and can recognize that they are hurting.
81. I have been chosen on several committees which were formed to solve some administrative problems in conjunction with our church programs.
82. I have helped a number of people in my church with practical things, even though it meant I put off something I need to do for myself.
83. God somehow seems to bring to my attention financial needs of people in my church.
84. I would like to help in an educational program to help underprivileged children and adults.
85. When I speak I usually get people's attention.
86. I have read the Bible through a number of times.
87. I try to go out of my way to give a cheerful word to people around me and find that I usually encourage people in a general way.
88. I often am asked to arrange for details of meetings, making sure everything is ready.
89. I have often been one of the first to volunteer for something the pastor felt was needed concerning physical labor around the church.
90. I have consistently give more than 1/10 of my income to God's work.
91. I would like to help take food baskets to poor people.
92. People either strongly agree or strongly disagree with my statements.
93. If I were to teach, I would use the lecture method.
94. I often counsel with people.
95. I have been placed in charge of several programs which required organizational ability.
96. I don't mind unexpected guests in the home if I know we are healing them.
97. I am certain that God has given me special abilities to make money. I know that this is because He expects to use me as a channel to give large amounts to his projects.
98. I would like to distribute clothing to needy people.
99. I find myself taking a definite stand on issues.
100. I believe I could hold people's attentions well enough to teach 50 minutes or more.
101. I am a good listener.
102. I enjoy doing long-term projects.
103. I wouldn't mind if the pastor or someone else in the church asked me to help accommodate guests in my home
104. I would enjoy contributing financially to programs helping orphans or other underprivileged.
105. I would enjoy working with orphans
106. When I speak out on an issue, sometimes my voice takes on deep emotions tones which God can use to break hearts so that there is hearing to my message.
107. I would like to lead a discussion group to help people discover truth for themselves and apply it to their lives.
108. I enjoy counseling an individual to give him steps of action.
109. When I am in charge of a project, I desire harmony among the workers so that all may run smoothly.
110. I find real satisfaction in doing practical things that will help others and try to seek opportunities to do so joyfully.
111. I like to give to a person who is involved in a specific ministry to others.
112. I could become empathetically involved with alcoholics if I worked with them.
113. People come and tell me I have spoken directly into their lives after I have spoken.
114. If I were to teach, I would plan my teaching to accomplish measure objectives and would check periodically for effectiveness.

115. If a person was having trouble with his job, I would try and change the attitude of the person.
116. If a person was having trouble with his job, I would change his responsibilities.
117. I prefer to accomplish sort-term projects and goals.
118. I find myself viewing ministries from a financial perspective.
119. I believe I could have a cheerful influence on people in a prison rehabilitation program.
120. I am more interested clearing up error than in keeping harmony.
121. I have been called by other churches to teach various subjects to them.
122. I like to use personal interaction to encourage spiritual growth.
123. When I am asked to organize an activity, I delegate many of the responsibilities to others.
124. When I am asked to perform a job, I do most of it myself.
125. There have been times when I sensed some special financial need but did not have the finances to meet it.
Money then came in through an unexpected source. I know that God wanted me to meet the need. So I gave.
126. I could get empathetically involved in helping drug addicts.
127. After I have spoken I like to see an immediate response of greater commitment.
128. Sometimes I would rather do research for a lesson than teach the lesson.
129. I would rather talk to an individual than a group.
130. I like to take a project, break it down into various parts, and systematically organize a plan to accomplish the final goal.
131. I would rather meet people's personal needs than counsel them.
132. When I feel led by the Lord to give, I like to give generously, without thinking of the sacrifice this may involve.
133. In small groups with which I have been associated, it is not uncommon for someone to tell me that something I said has been a real comfort to them.
134. People seem to want to confess their sins to me.
135. When I am helping people find solutions to their problems, I start with Scripture and relate it to their experience.
136. When I am helping people find solutions to their problems, I start with human experience and relate it to scriptures.
137. I am able with discipline to work under pressure and accomplish things, as long as I know my goals and objectives.
138. I find it difficult to say "no" when I see something practical which can be done to help someone in need.
139. I think it is sinful if a person fails to manage his/her financial assets well.
140. I am more interested in the atmosphere of a worship service than the structure of the service.



Key to Survey-List number value of your answer in appropriate column

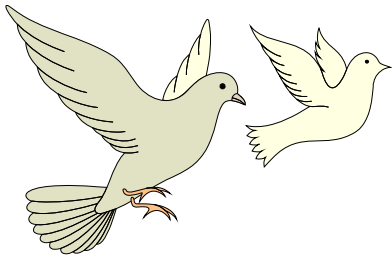
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43	44	45	46	47	48	49
50	51	52	53	54	55	56
57	58	59	60	61	62	63
64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77
78	79	80	81	82	83	84
85	86	87	88	89	90	91
92	93	94	95	96	97	98
99	100	101	102	103	104	105
106	107	108	109	110	111	112
113	114	115	116	117	118	119
120	121	122	123	124	125	126
127	128	129	130	131	132	133
134	135	136	137	138	139	140
Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____	Total _____

P R O P H E T	T E A C H E R	E X H O R T E	R U L E R	S E R V E R	G I V E R	M E R C Y
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DOES GOD WANT US TO SPEAK IN TONGUES TODAY?

BAPTISM IN THE SPIRIT, SECOND BLESSING, TONGUES & SUCH MATTERS What a land-mine this subject is! It gets so divisive. I'm sure God hates to see that among His children. I don't write this to be divisive, but God does require each of us to come to our own conclusions on this matter, based on the Bible. I don't try to explain how or why others feel led as they do, I don't in any way judge or condemn them, I only know how God is leading me from His Word. I have thoroughly studied this whole issue with as open a heart as possible, even wishing there were some higher form of spirituality and victory that would take me to a higher plane. Still, I feel totally convinced God is showing me through His Word that these things are not for me nor the people I shepherd. What is happening in Pentecostal and Charismatic circles I do not know. I only know how He leads me.

The Bible teaches that each believer is **filled with the Holy Spirit** at the moment of salvation (I Cor 10:1ff; 12:3; 6:19; Eph. 4:5; Rom. 5:5). One cannot be saved without the Holy Spirit indwelling them (John 7:37-39; 14:16-17; I Cor 6:19-20). From there on it is not a matter of getting more of the Holy Spirit but of the Holy Spirit getting more of us! As we totally submit and live a holy life He fills and works through us.



Then what about Acts 2, 8, 10 and 19, when the Holy Spirit came on those who were already believers? **Acts 2** is a one-time, non-repeatable experience (not even repeated in Acts 8, 10 or 19). Just like the Second Person of the Trinity made a unique, one-time entrance into the world through a virgin in a stable, so the Third Person made His entrance in a unique, one-time way. When Jesus came back to earth after the resurrection to the apostles, Paul or John on Patmos, He never repeated the virgin-in-a-stable entrance. Acts 2, also, is non-repeatable.

Acts 2 is a transition, from Old Testament law when the Holy Spirit only indwelt some believers some times, to New Testament grace, when the Holy Spirit indwells all believers for their whole life. The apostles had already accepted Jesus' claims and were saved in the old dispensation, then when the new dispensation started and the Spirit came they naturally would be the first to receive Him in that way. That is non-repeatable, too. In **Acts 8** we see this same truth applied to half Jews and half Gentiles, in **Acts 10** to Gentiles in Palestine, and in **Acts 19** to Gentiles outside of Palestine. They were similar to Acts 2 to show that Jews and Gentiles were now equal in the same Body, that the same thing happened to each. Each one showed the changeover from Old Testament law to New Testament grace. There had to be a definite time of change, showing the transfer had been made and those believers accepted. Still, what happened was different enough to show that it wasn't Acts 2 repeated again. Those were the only times anything even resembling Acts 2 happened in Acts, and it only happened once for each new group as the gospel spread from Jerusalem. All others received the Holy Spirit immediately at salvation.

Tongues is not proof of Spirit baptism. Many received the Holy Spirit but not tongues: 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2:38-41), early church believers (Acts 4:31), Samaritans (Acts 8:14-17), Paul (Acts 9:17-18), John the Baptist (Luke 1:15-16), Jesus (Lk. 3:21-22; 4:1,14,18,21) and many others (Acts 4:8,31; 6:5; 7:55; 11:24; 13:9,52). Speaking in tongues is never mentioned in the leadership qualities in Titus or I Timothy. The Bible makes it clear that obedience is the proof of the Holy Spirit's indwelling, not tongues (Eph 5:18f).

Tongues in Acts and Corinth were the same. The same Greek word ('glossa' meaning 'tongue, to speak, language') is always used of known foreign languages and is used in both Acts (2:6-11, etc) and Corinth (I Cor 14:21; 12:10). In Acts it is obvious that the listeners heard known languages spoken by those who had no previous knowledge of the language. There is no indication that what Corinth experienced was different. It is only the church at Corinth that is mentioned as using tongues, and then many corrections were needed because it was a very carnal church (I Cor. 3:1-3).

The purpose of tongues was to show Jews that God's judgment was on them. They were to spread God's message to Gentiles but failed. God would show He was judging them for that by

bringing His word to them by Gentiles in Gentile languages. This was prophesied in Isa. 28:9-12; 33:19f; Deut 28:49; and Jer 5:15. Paul said tongues fulfilled those prophecies (I Cor 14:21-22). When the Jews didn't heed this sign and repent, God's judgment came upon them in 70 AD when Jerusalem was destroyed. After 70 AD there is no instance of tongues being used in the early church. Signs are placed before what they are to mark, not after! Paul said (I Cor. 13:8-12) that tongues "will be stilled." The Greek word, 'pauo,' is in the middle voice; they will stop by themselves and not start again. History records only a very few, very isolated, very minor outbreak of tongues from Acts to the present. These groups were often heretical in some or all of their other beliefs. Obviously tongues did stop. There is nothing to indicate that they would ever begin again, for their purpose has been fulfilled. When Joel 2 talks about the Holy Spirit coming back after the Tribulation, there is no mention of tongues!

Then what about those with the gift of interpretation? First, the Greek word for this refers to someone who interprets known languages, like from Spanish to German. The use of foreign languages was to show God's judgment to the Jews present. The content of the message was God's good news, which the Jews should have been spreading. Since speaking in an unknown language would mean nothing to Gentiles present, Paul said there had to be an interpreter present when the gift was used (I Cor 14:26-28). This was necessary for the weak and immature Corinthian believers (14:20-22) who were ignorant of God's truth (12:13). It was to be kept to a minimum (14:6-12) because it was an inferior gift (I Cor. 14:4). Paul himself only used his ability to speak in unknown languages in Jewish synagogues, not Jewish services (14:39).

Applying these criteria to tongues today (known foreign language, showing God's judgment on the Jews, used only with Jews present, sees as a lesser/minor gift whose use was to be kept to a minimum, etc.) shows that what is happening today is different from what happened back then.

Tongues are not a heavenly language. The Greek word makes it clear they are a KNOWN language (Acts 2:6-11; I Cor 14:21; 12:10). This is different than the 'groanings' of Romans 8:26 for those are clearly said to be unutterable (not able to be spoken). The "tongues of angels" (I Cor. 13:1) is a hyperbole (overemphasis to make a point) like "faith to move mountains." Besides, when angels spoke in the Bible, it was always in the known language of those to whom they were speaking.

Tongues are not a private prayer language. All spiritual gifts are given for the sake of others, not the one having the gift (I Cor 12:7, 12f; 14:19,27), that's why an interpreter had to always be present in Corinth (I Cor 14:26-28). Every time the gift of tongues was given in the Bible it was given to a group, not an individual. It was always used in a group, too, no instance of private use is recorded. The tongue is to be controlled by the speaker, not beyond his control (I Cor. 14:28-33). Plus, tongues were to be a sign to unbelievers, not believers (I Cor 14:22). Jesus Himself warned about praying words we don't understand (Mt 6:7). Paul said he always understood what he said when he prayed, even in tongues (I Cor 14:15). When asked how to pray Jesus gave the Lord's Prayer, not tongues.

Dangers of speaking in tongues today. Paul warns about Satan's ability to counterfeit this (I Cor 12:2-3) as he has in other religions and cults today. Tongues is said to be an inferior gift because it is self-centered (I Cor 14:4) and leads to emphasis being put on emotions which can lead people astray (II Cor 6:11-12; Rom 16:17-18). We are told to pray with understanding (I Cor 14:13-17) and control our spiritual gift (I Cor 14:28-40). God arbitrarily chooses which gifts to give to whom (I Cor 12:7,11,18,28). We are told to not seek any particular gift (I Cor 12:31; 14:1-4). Tongues speaking can become a substitute for spirituality (I Cor 14:26-28). Worse of all, it can produce a false security by those who put faith in it as proof that God loves and accepts them. Most who practice tongues-speaking do not believe in eternal security of salvation, so their speaking in tongues becomes their proof of acceptance by God. Our faith must be in Jesus' work on the cross, not in our ability to speak in 'tongues.' Those without the gift can feel pressured to fit in with the rest of the group.

IS IT GOD'S WILL FOR EVERYONE TO BE HEALED TODAY?

There are those today who believe that Jesus not only paid for sin on the cross, but that He also paid for our sickness. They say that each is received by faith, if you have enough faith to receive it. Loss of faith, then, causes the loss of these benefits of faith. They claim some are especially gifted in healing and can heal those who come to them. They say God did miracles in the Bible and he is still a miracle-working God today.

What about this? Is this true? This is not just one peripheral issue, but stands very central in our salvation and Christian life. Is God's sovereignty or man's free will the final and ultimate deciding factor? It must be God's sovereignty. The motive for living for Jesus should not be fear of losing our salvation. The goal of living for Jesus should not be a problem free life. Pain and suffering isn't to be faced by whipping up enough 'faith' so that God removes it (or living with the feelings of failure and guilt if it isn't removed and we believe that is our fault by not having enough faith). What about these claims of 'faith healers'? What does the Bible say?

Rx

IS THE GIFT OF HEALING FOR TODAY? While it's true that Jesus and the Apostles healed, it was done as a sign to authenticate that they were from God (Mt 12:39). This was God's way having people listen to them instead of all the counterfeits around. When they were fully authenticated, there was no longer any reason for the sign. In AD 35 all were healed but by AD 60 some were not (Epaphroditus, Paul's thorn in the flesh). Then by AD 67 very few were being healed (Trophimus was left at Miletus sick, Timothy's stomach was unhealed, etc.). Jerusalem, the scene of many early miracles, had not one miracle done in it after Stephen was stoned. The people had the evidence but rejected it. James, the oldest book in the

Bible, says that if someone is sick we are to pray for them (James 5:14).

SHOULD WE SEE MIRACLES TODAY LIKE IN BIBLE TIMES? Actually if you list all the miracles in the Bible you will find almost all of them fit three time periods. They aren't evenly spread out throughout history but cluster in the times of Moses/Joshua, Elijah/Elisha and Jesus/apostles. In each of these times a new mess had developed so God sent a new message through a new messenger whom He authenticated by miracles ("signs"). One more time of miracles is coming, called the Tribulation.

IS FAITH A PREREQUISITE FOR HEALING? Jesus didn't make faith a requirement for healing. Many that He healed didn't have faith. The impotent man at the pool didn't even know who He was. The man with the withered hand and the man with dropsy were healed as a sign to religious leaders who were present, they didn't ask to be healed. The cripple that Peter and Paul healed outside the temple didn't exercise any faith. Of course the demoniacs who were delivered and those brought back from the dead didn't exercise faith. Then there are others who had strong faith but weren't healed: Stephen, Paul, Timothy, Job, David, Elisha, etc.

IS 'HEALING' TODAY THE SAME AS IN BIBLE TIMES? Today's 'healers' must meet the same characteristics of Jesus and the apostles to claim they are doing what was done then. Jesus and the apostles healed with a word or touch wherever and

whenever. There was no special place or time, no chants or music, no gimmicks, nothing. Do today's faith healers walk down the hall in a hospital and empty every room? That's how Jesus and Peter did it. Also, Bible miracles were done instantly, not gradually or slowly. There was no healing to 'claim' or lose. Healing was then done totally, not partially, and it was never lost. Everyone was healed. There was no screening done. 100% of every one, no matter the need, was healed. Organic diseases were healed: limbs grew back instantly, strong enough to walk on, eyes were open, leprosy instantly gone and healthy flesh grown. Then, too, the dead were raised. Today's faith healing doesn't nearly meet these characteristics.

DOES GOD NOT HEAL? Yes, a sovereign God can always heal. He is always able to heal, but He is not always willing. Healing isn't guaranteed. Healing isn't based on our having enough faith. Miracles by Jesus and the apostles were done as a sign to authenticate the One who could heal an unseen soul. God can and does heal, but He doesn't gift others to do it, nor does He say that is the recommended norm for His people.

WHAT ARE WE TO DO WHEN SICK? When we are sick it's good to first make sure it isn't for sin or disobedience. If there is sin that God is using the sickness to point out, confess it and God will forgive and then use that illness for good (Romans 8:28). It's fine to pray, asking God to heal if that is His will. We are to submit to His will, not demand He do what we want. Ask Him to use the pain and suffering for His glory (that we and others can see His greatness through His provision and peace) and our growth (make us trust Him more and become more like Jesus). Use the best available resources: diet, rest, exercise and medical help. Realize that all healing does ultimately come from God. Leave the results to His will, though.

Granted, this whole subject of faith and healing can be a confusing and guilt-producing area. Specific verses can be found to seemingly support most any view. However an overview of the Bible and its teaching about these things definitely seems to substantiate the above view of healing. Always remember, our faith must be in Jesus. HE is the object of our faith, never a human person or group. Put faith in Jesus, not faith in your faith! HE is the one we are to look to and glorify. Always keep your eyes on Him. Trust and serve Him no matter what.

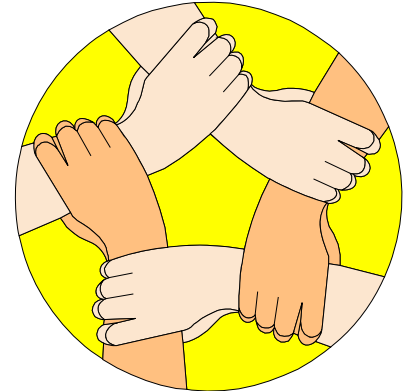


15. GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY

What does my church believe and practice?

THE CHURCH IN GENERAL

God puts babies in families with more mature people to take care of them and train them. A baby can't live on its own, it must have help from those who are grown. The same thing is true spiritually as well. New believers need older believers to help them grow and get them started. All believers need each other to keep growing. Even grown, mature adults need the others in a family for help, support, protection, encouragement, fellowship and enjoyment. That is true in earthly families as well as spiritual families.



Hebrews 10:25 Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another — and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

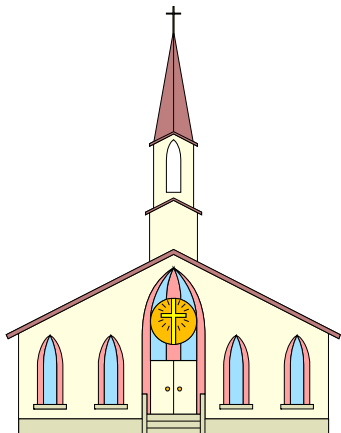
God calls our spiritual families 'the church.' This session we will talk about the church in general as well as local churches, finishing with talking about how our church works.

The emperor Diocletian set up a stone pillar on which was inscribed these words: For Having Exterminated The Name Christian From the Earth. If he could see that monument today, how embarrassed he would be! Another Roman leader made a coffin, symbolizing his intention "to bury the Galilean" by killing His followers. He soon learned that he could not "put the Master in it". He finally surrendered his heart to the Savior, realizing that the corporate body of Christ and its living Head, the Lord Jesus, cannot be destroyed by the onslaught of mortal men.

The history of the church has been represented by the Waldensians in a picture of an anvil with many worn-out hammers lying all around it. Beneath this scene are the words: One Anvil -- Many Hammers. Organized religion may fail; but the living organism composed of all born-again believers will stand forever. God is calling out of this world a people for His name who will dwell with Him throughout eternity. It is called the 'church.' Nothing, not even hell itself, will be able to destroy this church (Matthew 16:18).

THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH The Greek word translated 'church' (ekklesia) means "a called out group." It was used of a local assembly or gathering of people. In the New Testament it refers to those who have accepted Jesus as Savior during the time period starting with the resurrection and ending with the Rapture. It is the Bride of Christ. Those who accept Jesus before or after that time are part of redeemed Israel, not the Body of Christ. The church truly has a special position in God's plan and program. He is the Head, we are the Body. He is the Groom, we are the Bride. We are a distinct people of God, not part of Israel and not replacing Israel in God's plan. Basically the church is everyone from every country, of every age and background, who is a born-again person from the resurrection to the Rapture. The

church is not basically a building, denomination, or local group of people but each one who is saved during the Church Age.



THE LOCAL CHURCH Still, the Bible does talk about the local church (“assembling, gathering”) as well as the universal church. Local churches all are part of the universal church. While there seem to be many more factions and divisions among the church than is necessary, one can understand that a variety of local church groups is necessary to meet all the individual needs, backgrounds and commitments people bring with them.

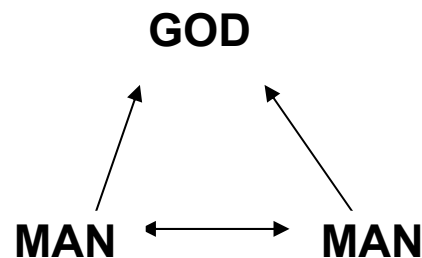
What is the local church? Basically it is a group of believers, only secondarily is it a building or denomination. Someone has said the church is a hospital for sinners, not a display case for saints. The church is not an ark for the saving of just a select few or a ferryboat to take effortless passengers to the shores of heaven. It is not an eternal life insurance company, nor is it a social set which welcomes certain people and excludes all others. Rather, the church is a lifeboat for the rescue of sin-wrecked and perishing souls. It is a family, in which love and service are expected from each person to each person. It is the representative, the ‘body,’ of Jesus Christ on earth, reflecting His spirit and controlled by His will. The purpose of the local church is two-fold. It is to go to those without and share the plan of salvation with them. It is to take the good news of Jesus to a lost and dying world. It is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread. Often it fails miserably, though. More than a hundred years ago D. L. Moody lashed out as a loving critic to certain parts of the church of his time for its misappropriation of energies. The church reminded him, he said, of firemen straightening pictures on the wall of a burning house. In a single sentence he drew a vivid picture of what any of us can become in any generation when we forget the basic activities given to us by the Lord of the church.

The church also exists to meet the needs of its members. Any Body needs to meet the needs of its parts for each part to function in a healthy manner. This takes balance between teaching (God communicating to man), worship (man communicating to God) and fellowship (man communicating to man). They must all be present. Teaching & learning God’s Word (hearing from God) must come first, though (Acts 2:42).

Following the analogy of the human body, each person in the church is gifted at the moment of salvation with a particular gift mix to be used for the sake of others in the Body (I Cor 12). These gifts are to be used together for each other (I Cor 12, 14), encouraging, helping and building each other up in Jesus. This is how the church is to function.

The Holy Spirit is the power source for the church, Whom Jesus sent after ascending to heaven. He gives the wisdom, power, strength, gifts, guidance, direction and grace needed to function for God.

The Bible doesn’t give any strict commands about church government. There were spiritual leaders (elder/pastor/bishop) and physical leaders (deacon) who divided the responsibility. As to more than that, if one bishop ruled many churches, each person in the local church had an equal say, or if it was somewhere in between, we don’t know. History records all types of church governments. That isn’t a Biblical absolute. Meeting spiritual and then physical needs is required, though.



‘CHRISTIAN’ CHURCH TODAY The Christian church today is divided into three main groups: Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Protestant. This is the main breakdown of the Christian church. Among Protestants it is broken down even further. Divisions are on the basis of theological belief (Calvin vrs Arminian; liberal vrs conservative, etc.), historical and cultural beginnings (denominations like Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anabaptist, etc.) or geographical locations (by country, language spoken, etc.). Still, each one who has accepted Jesus as Savior, if in one of these groups or not, is part of God’s real church, His Body and Bride, that will rule and reign with Him for ever and ever.

Dick Halverson, the Chaplain of the Senate, notes: In the beginning the church was a fellowship of men and women centering on the living Christ. Then the church moved to Greece where it became a philosophy. Then it moved to Rome where it became an institution. Next, it moved to Europe where it became a culture. And, finally, it moved to America where it became an enterprise. Let’s make it and keep it the Body of Christ here on earth.

BAPTIST CHURCHES

What is a Baptist?

by James (Jimmy) T. Draper, Jr.

October, 2000

Baptists are people of a remarkable history, a resilient spirit, and a responsible commitment. Many things have been written and spoken in recent years about these people called Baptists. But what is a Baptist? What essentials define the individual and the corporate body of Baptists? Let me suggest some characteristics of a Baptist in today’s world that are consistent with what a Baptist has been historically.

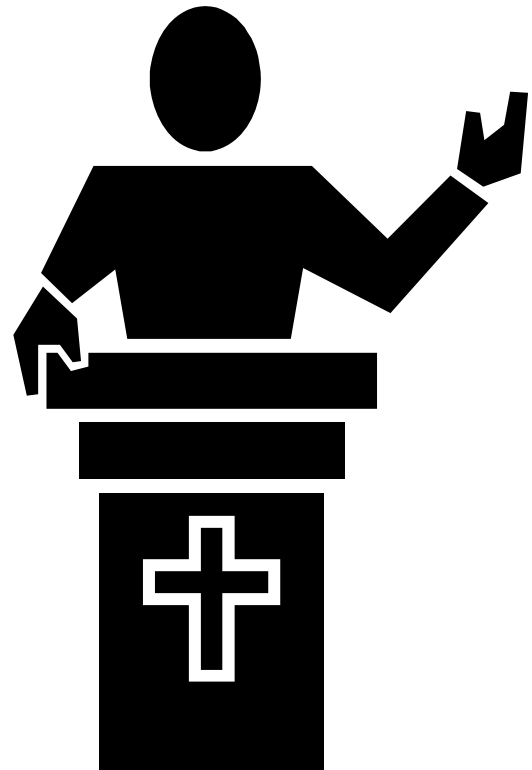
1 A Baptist is an individual who has experienced salvation through personal faith in Jesus

Christ. Baptists do not believe in proxy faith, where a priest or any other person mediates between the individual and God (1 Tim. 2:5). Every individual must come to the time in life when he/she receives Jesus Christ as personal Savior. This is the basic building block in the making of a Baptist.

2 A Baptist is one who acknowledges the sufficiency of Scripture. Such an individual believes the Bible is God’s truth without any error. That is the foundation of all we do and believe. God’s Word clearly declares, *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).

Baptists have always recognized and often drawn up “confessions of faith.” These have been and continue to be guides in understanding the basic beliefs of Baptists, but no confession has a creedal power over any individual or church. God’s Word is our final authority and we recognize its sufficiency.

3 A Baptist is one who acknowledges the Lordship of Jesus Christ. All of our worship and service centers on *Him*. *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. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell (Col.1:18-19).

We also recognize that the Bible testifies of Jesus Christ and is our source of understanding of His Person, Presence and relationship with us. All we teach and experience regarding Jesus Christ must be consistent with the revealed truth of God in the Scripture. In *The Encyclopedia of Southern Baptists*, E.Y. Mullins states:

“Jesus Christ is the crown of the revelation recorded in the Scriptures. In him all is unified. The lordship of Christ is a fundamental Baptist teaching. In all our doctrine of the Bible we seek to express the meaning of Christ *as disclosed therein*” (author’s emphasis in italics) (p. 143). All of our experience with Jesus is validated and confirmed by the truth of the written Word of God.

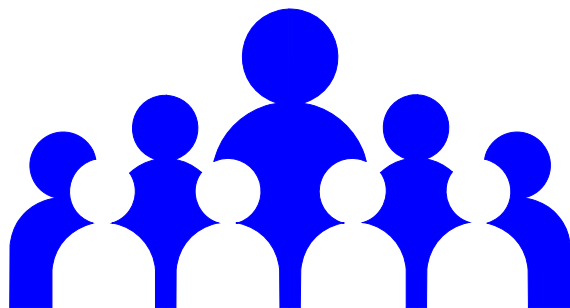
4 A Baptist is Trinitarian in his/her understanding of God. We believe the Bible teaches that God is eternally One in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Each is fully God, yet God is One. There is no division in the godhead and no Person of the godhead is less than fully divine. God is Father, Who created the world and all that is in it, Who planned our redemption from before the foundations of the world, and Who has a wonderful plan and purpose for each of our lives.

God is Son, even our Lord Jesus Christ, Who became the perfect sacrifice for our sins. He was fully divine, yet fully human. This is a mystery beyond our comprehension, but we know that He was everything man needed in God and everything God desired for man. His virgin birth, sinless life, vicarious death, and promised return is foundational to our faith.

God is Holy Spirit. Jesus Christ said, I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he *may abide with you forever; even the Spirit of truth; ... I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you* (John 14:16-18). The Holy Spirit is the very Presence of God in our midst today. He lives within us and guides us in all we do as He leads us to understand the depths of God’s Word. His purpose is to magnify and glorify Jesus Christ, and our experience with Him will always be consistent to the Scripture.

5 A Baptist is one who recognizes the autonomy of the local church. There is no such thing as “The Baptist Church.” There are only local Baptist churches. The local Baptist Church is “Baptist Headquarters.” No individual or entity outside of the local Baptist church has any authority or control over that congregation. Each congregation is free and empowered to minister as it sees the will of God for its ministry and mission. A Baptist church, like first-century New Testament churches, is a local independent body of born-again baptized believers joined together in Christ for worship and ministry in their community and around the world. There is no hierarchy in our denomination that has authority over the local church. While Baptists do believe that the New Testament teaches that all the redeemed of all ages belong to the church eternal, we know that the references in the New Testament to the church primarily refer to a local body of believers, who have voluntarily come together to carry out the mission of the church.

To the church God has committed two ordinances, the Lord’s Supper and baptism. Neither of these ordinances are sacraments. Neither have power to transmit saving grace. Both are to be preceded by acceptance of Christ by faith as Savior and Lord. Baptism precedes participation in the Lord’s Supper. Neither baptism nor the Lord’s Supper are essential to



salvation, but both are vital to a full and meaningful Christian life. The church is to keep faithfully these ordinances until Jesus comes again. Both the Lord's Supper and baptism are symbols of our faith and testify of the work and ministry of Jesus Christ. As the name Baptist implies, we insist upon baptism by immersion of the body of the believer in water.

6 A Baptist is one who believes in the command of the Great Commission and has a deep commitment to evangelism and world missions. The church exists as a place of nurture and worship, but it is also a place of witness and outreach to the ends of the earth. The marching orders for the church are clearly seen in Matt. 28:18-20. A Baptist is one who has accepted that challenge and assignment from our Lord Jesus Christ. We understand that our Lord Jesus Christ has the world in His heart and the closer we draw to Him, the more missionary we will become.

7 A Baptist is one who fully advocates and supports the cause of religious liberty and freedom for all. We believe that the church and state must maintain separate identities and functions for the good of both. Throughout Christian history, whenever religion has controlled the state or the state has controlled religion, both have been corrupted, and religious and civil liberty have suffered. We do not believe, however, that this truth prohibits the involvement of Christians in public life. Christians must be involved in public life at every level. Individual Christians and Christian institutions should seek to influence government at every level in the realm of public morals, but must not seek to control the state. Neither should the state seek to control people's personal religious practices or the expression of organized religion.

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH **STATEMENT OF FAITH**

REV. JERRY SCHMOYER

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
DOYLESTOWN, PA.

1. THE SCRIPTURES

We believe that "all Scripture is given by inspiration of God," by which we understand that the whole of the book called the Bible, nor do we take the statement in the sense in which it is sometimes said that the works of human genius are inspired, but in the sense that the Holy Spirit gave the very words of the sacred writings to holy men of old; and that His Divine inspiration is not in different degrees, but extends equally and fully to all parts of these writings, historical, poetical, doctrinal, and prophetic, and to the smallest word and inflection of a word, provided such word is found in the original manuscripts. (II Timothy 3:16-17; II Peter 1:21; I Cor. 2:13; Mark 12:26, 36; Mark 13:11; Acts 1:16; 2:4)

2. THE TRINITY

We believe that the Godhead eternally exists in three persons, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; and that these three are one God having precisely the same nature, attributes and perfection and worthy of precisely the same homage, confidence and obedience. (Mark 12:29; John 1:1-4; Matt 28:19-20; Acts 5:3-4; II Cor 13:14; Hebrews 1:1-3; Rev 1:4-6)

3. GOD THE FATHER

A. We believe that God is the Creator of all things.

B. We believe that God, by the word of His power, instantaneously created the heavens and the earth without pre-existing materials. We believe in creation, as revealed in the Scripture.

(Gen. 1:1; John 1:1-3). We also believe that creation took place in six literal, twenty-four hour days.

4. CHRIST

A. We believe that Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the second person in the Godhead, existing with the Father and the Holy Spirit, became man, without ceasing to be God, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, as no other man was ever born or can ever be born of a woman, thus to continue forever as both very God and very man, one Person with two natures, human and divine. (John 1:1; Luke 1:35; Phil. 2:5-8; Matt. 1:23)

B. We believe Jesus Christ is the true God-man, (John 10:30) uniting a perfect and complete divine nature with a perfect and complete, yet sinless, human nature. (John 1:14,18; 1:4, 8:58; Phil. 2:6-7; II Cor. 5:21; I Peter 2:22)

C. We believe in His literal, physical, bodily, personal resurrection from the dead. (1 Cor. 15:3, 4, 20, 21; Rom. 3:21-26; Rom. 4:25)

D. We believe that Christ is the Redeemer by His substitutionary or vicarious death for redemption of sinners, on which He provided unlimited atonement for all sins of all times, and thus sufficient for all men, but that this atonement is applied only to those who accept Jesus Christ as personal Savior. (Rom. 3:25; Heb. 10:4, 5, 11-14; I Pet 2:22, 24; Isaiah 53:5- 6; John 3:16-18; I John 2:2, I Timothy 4:10)

E. We believe that Christ is ascended into Heaven to be at the right hand of God to intercede for the believers as high Priest and advocate. We also believe that as the Judge He will reward the works of believers at the Bema (judgment seat of Christ). He will judge unbelievers at the Great White Throne judgment. (Heb. 7:25; Heb 1:3; 4:14-18; I John 2:1f; John 5:22)

F. We believe that Christ will return to the earth and that there are two distinct phases revealed in the Scripture; the rapture of the saints and the Second Coming of Christ. These two phases are seven years apart. (I Thes. 4:13-18; I Cor. 15:51-52)

G. We believe the return of Christ for the saints (The Rapture) is imminent, literal, bodily, personal, pretribulational and premillennial. The imminent return of Christ does not mean that this glad event must be immediate, but we hold rather that it is over-hanging, that it may occur at any moment, and that no prophesied event stands between the believer and that hour. (John 14:2-3; I Cor. 5:5-9; Titus 2:13; James 5:8-9; Rev. 3:10; 22:17-22; I Thes. 5:9)

5. THE HOLY SPIRIT

A. We believe the Holy Spirit is a divine, eternal Person, and that He is not just an influence. He has intellect, emotions, and will of His own. (Acts 5:3-4; Matt. 28:19; I Cor. 13:14; Heb. 1:14; John 15:26; 16:13-14; I Cor. 12:11; Eph. 4:30; I Cor. 2:11)

B. We believe the present ministry of the Holy Spirit is restraining sin in the world, convicting the world of sin, righteousness, and baptizes them into the church, the body of Christ, indwells them permanently, seals them unto the day of redemption, bestows spiritual gifts upon each one, and fills those yielded to Him. (John 15:26, 27; 16:7-15; John 3:8; I Cor 12:13; John 14:16; Eph. 4:30; I Cor. 12:4-11; Eph. 5:18; Rom 8:9; I Cor 6:19)

C. We believe that speaking in tongues is not a sign of either regeneration or sanctification, nor a necessary sign of the filling or baptism of the Holy Spirit. We further believe that speaking in tongues and the other signs of working miracles, such as divine healing, gradually faded as the New Testament Scriptures were completed and their authority became established. (I Cor. 12:4-11, 30; II Cor. 12:12; Eph 4:7-12; I Cor 13:10; I Cor 14:21-22; Mark 16:18-20)

D. We believe that God does hear and answer the prayer of faith, in accord with His own will, for the sick and afflicted. (John 15:7; I John 5:14f; James 5:14-16)

6. SIN

A. Angels - Satan

We believe Lucifer, who was the highest angel in rank, through the sin of pride, is the originator of sin, thus becoming the enemy of God and His people (Isaiah 14:12-17; Ezekiel 28:11-19; I Tim. 3:6; Eph. 2:2)

B. Fall of Man

We believe that in Adam all mankind is born in sin and has sinned and thus became sinful both in nature and in practice. Thus Adam's first sin may be called "original sin", hence, all mankind is guilty of that "original sin" and being totally depraved and justly condemned or under the judgment of God with no hope of salvation within himself. (Rom. 15:12-21; Rom 3:12; Ps. 51:5; Eph. 2:1-3; Isaiah 64:6; I Cor 2:14; Gen 3:6; II Tim. 3:13

We believe that total depravity of the human race has been transmitted to the entire race of man, except Jesus Christ alone was sinless by virtue of the virgin birth. Therefore, man not only does not possess any spark of divinity but is essentially and totally (unchangeably) depraved, having enmity against God and being incapable by any educational process whatever of undoing his own guilt before God.

7. SALVATION

A. *We believe salvation is the gift of God brought to men by His Grace and that His Grace is the only basis of eternal salvation of man, apart from any sacraments, good works, or human merit. (Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5; I Peter 1:18-19; Rom 6:23; Acts 4:12; Gal 4:3-4)*

B. *We believe that salvation has been offered to all men, but is received only by those who repent and turn to a personal faith in Christ Jesus as their Saviour and Lord. We believe these things alone are saved. (Eph 1:17; Heb. 9:22; I John 1:2; John 3:5-7; Rom 3:10-19; Isaiah 53:5-6; Rom 3:26; I Peter 1:23)*

C. *We believe a sinner is immediately justified by God and receives eternal life at the moment of his conversion. (Rom 5:1-9; Rom 4:5; Rom 3:24-30; 8:30)*

D. *We believe sanctification is the permanent "setting apart" of the born again believer from the domain of this world. The basic meaning of the word "sanctification" is "to set apart unto God for service." (Heb 10:10, 14; II Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21)*

E. *We believe the Word of God teaches the eternal security of the believer which rests in the faithfulness of God, not the faithfulness of man. We believe that God's Word, however, clearly forbids the use of Christian liberty as an occasion to the flesh. (Rom 1:16; John 10:28; Rom 13:14; Gal. 5:13; Titus 2:11-14)*

8. THE CHURCH

A. *We believe the church is a New Testament institution composed of people of all races, colors, and nations who are born again and united to the risen and ascended Son of God, and that through the Holy Spirit we are all baptized into one body, the Body of Christ. (Col. 3:11; I Cor. 12:13; Acts 13:1)*

B. *We believe the local church is the visible expression of "The Body of Christ" and should therefore be open to people of all races, colors, and nations. We further believe that God's program for this age is to be carried out through the local church, which is the pillar and ground of the truth. (Eph. 1:22-23)*

C. *We believe that when Christ founded His church on earth, He did it for four distinct purposes:*

FIRST: That the Church, the Body of Christ, might worship God the Father in Spirit and in truth by the offering of the sacrifice of praise to God continually. (John 4:23; Heb. 13:15)

SECOND: That through the Church, He might proclaim to the world salvation through faith in the finished work of Christ on Calvary. (John 3:16; Matt 28:19-20)

THIRD: That the saints might be edified and fully equipped unto the work of the ministry. (Eph. 4:11-13). And that, through gracious and holy living, the church might be lights unto a lost and dying world, the slat of the earth, and living testimonies of the indwelling Christ to each other as well as to those without. (Matt. 5:13-16; Titus 2:10-14; Eph. 5:1-17)

FOURTH: Fellowship.....That loving, caring, close, sacrificial fellowship and support among believers is essential to support and encourage each other, and that each believer needs to give as well as receive this closeness with Christ at the center. (Matt. 18:20; John 13:34; Acts 2:42; Heb 10:25; I John 1:3)

D. We believe there are tow Scriptural ordinances: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe Scriptural baptism is the immersion of a believer in water, which pictures his identification with the death, burial and resurrection of Christ. (Acts 2:41-42; 10:17-18; Rom. 6:3-4) We believe baptism is to be administered under the authority of the local church. We also believe in infant and child dedication.

E. We believe the Lord's Supper is the commemoration to the Lord's death until He comes and should be preceded always by solemn self-examination. (I Cor. 11:24-32) We believe the Lord's Supper should be administered regularly by the local church.

F. We believe the local New Testament church is autonomous, self-governing, self-supporting and self-propagating. (Acts 13:1-3; I Cor. 16:1-2; Matt. 18:15-17; Matt 28:18-20)

G. We believe that every Christina is bound by Scripture to hive his unhindered cooperation to the local church. (Matt. 16:16-18; I Cor. 12:12-17; 2:42-47; I Tim. 3:15-16)

H. We believe in: (1) the separation of the local church from all affiliation and fellowship with those who deny the varities of the Christian faith; (2) the separation of the individual believer from all worldly practices that would dishonor the Saviour; (3) the separation of the church and State. (II Tim 3:1-5; Rom. 12:1-2; 14:13; I John 2:15-17; II John 9-11; Matt. 22:21)

I. We believe that civil government is of divine appointment for the interests and good order of human society and that magistrates are to be prayed for, conscientiously honored, and obeyed; except in things opposed to the will of our Lord Jesus Christ who is the only Lord of the conscience, and the coming Prince of the Kings of the earth. (Rom. 13:17; II Sam 23:2; Ex. 18:21-22; Acts 23:5; Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:20; Acts 4:19-20; Dan. 3:17-18)

J. We believe church leadership to be composed of:

-Pastors-teachers (Eph. 4:11) - one man who has the responsibility of exercising the prime leadership in toe local body. He is also an elder, who presides over the Board of Elders.

-Elders (I Tim. 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1-4) - men who also work in the area of spiritual leadership, sharing authority and responsibility for the life of the church with the Pastor. Their position individually is under the Pastor, but as a group/board share equally all responsibility for the church. Those working specifically in areas of ministry such as youth, Christian Education, counseling, etc., are to be elders.

-Deacons. (I Tim. 3:8-13; Acts 6:1-8) - men who have the responsibility of ministering primarily to the temporal and physical needs of the church. They are under the authority and oversight of the elder board.

- All Believers have a vote on all matters except spiritual (elder board's responsibility) and other items the elder board would consider detrimental to brig to a vote. The elder board can bring anything it sees fit to a vote of the people.

9. THE FUTURE

A. We believe in the dispensational study of Scripture. (I Cor. 15:28)

B. We believe that with the Church gone (Rapture) during the tribulation period, the Satanic-empowered Antichrist, the last great Gentile world emperor, will set up his will for the world economy, government, and religion. (II Thes. 2:8-12; Rev. 13:1-18; Matt. 24:23-24; Dan. 2:41-42; 7:8, 24)

C. We believe at His return to the earth at the end of the Great Tribulation, the Battle of Armageddon will be held and Christ will quickly emerge the victor. (Matt. 24:30; Rev. 19:11-12)

D. We believe the Millennial Kingdom which as been promised to Israel according to His covenants will be established, at which time the nation of Israel will be restored to the preeminent position in the Kingdom over the Gentile nations. (Luke 12:35-40; Isaiah 65:17-25; Zech. 14; Luke 1:32-33; Rev. 20:4; Isaiah 35:1-9)

E. We believe there are two resurrections: (1) the souls of the saved at death go immediately to be with Christ in heaven, where they abide in joyful fellowship with Him until their bodies shall be raised from the grave and changed into the likeness of His glorious body; (Phil. 1:22-24; II Cor. 5:1-8; I Cor. 15:51-53; I Cor. 3:11-15) and (2) the souls of the unsaved at death descend immediately into Hades where they are kept under punishment until the Judgment of the Great White Throne at the close of the millennium, at which time their bodies shall be raised from the grave, and they shall be judged according to their works.

(Luke 16:19-31; Rev. 20:11-15; Matt. 10:28)

F. We believe the New Heavens and the New Earth shall be established in which "God shall be in all." (I Cor. 15:28; Rev. 21-22)

10. EVANGELISM AND MISSIONS

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and of every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations. The new birth of man's spirit by God's Holy Spirit means the birth of love for others. Missionary effort on the part of all rests thus upon a spiritual necessity of the regenerate life, and is expressly and repeatedly commanded in the teachings of Christ. It is the duty of every child of God to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by personal effort and by all other methods in harmony with them gospel of Christ. (Gen. 12:1-3; Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 6:1-8; Matt. 9:37-38; 10:5; 13:18-30,37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Tim. 10:13-15; Eph. 3:1-11; I Thess. 1:8; II Tim. 4:5; Heb. 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; I Peter 2:4-10; Rev. 22:17)

11. MATERIAL POSSESSIONS

God is the source of all blessings, temporal and spiritual; all that we have and are we owe to Him. Christians have a spiritual debtorship to the whole world, a holy trusteeship in the gospel, and binding stewardship in their possessions. They are therefore under obligation to serve Him with their time, talents, and material possessions; and should recognize all these as entrusted to them to use for the glory of God and for helping others. According to the Scriptures, Christians should contribute of their means cheerfully, regularly, systematically, proportionately, and liberally for the advancement of the Redeemer's cause on earth. (Gen. 14:20; Lev. 27:30-32; Deut. 8:18; Mal. 3:8-12; Matt. 6:1-4, 19-21; 25:14-29; Luke 12:16-21, 42; 16:1-13; Acts 2:44-47; 5:1-11; 17:24-25; 20:35; Rom. 6:6-22; 12:1-2; I Cor. 4:1-2; 6:19-20; 12; 16:1-4; II Cor. 8-9; 12:15; Phil. 4:10-19; I Peter 1:18-19)

CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS

MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH
Doylestown, Pa.

We declare and establish this constitution to preserve and secure the principles or our faith, and to govern the body in an orderly manner. This constitution will preserve the liberties of each individual church member and the freedom of action of this body in its relationship to other churches.

HISTORY OF MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH

The building was purchased on Tuesday, June 13, 1967. The first Wednesday evening Service was on Wednesday, June 14, 1967 with 14 people. The first Sunday evening Service was on June 18, 1967. Reverend Robert L. Smith was the first Pastor and he started on June 1, 1967. There have been eight Pastors from 1967 to 1981. Pastor Jerry Schmoyer arrived in 1981.

I. NAME

This body shall be known as the MAIN STREET BAPTIST CHURCH of Doylestown, PA.

II. PURPOSE

The purpose of this church shall be the advancement of the Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It shall seek to attain this end through public worship, preaching the Gospel, teaching God's Word, consistent Christian living by its members, close loving fellowship, personal evangelism, missionary outreach, and Christian education.

III. STATEMENT OF FAITH

For Statement of Faith, see separate sheet.

IV. CHURCH COVENANT

For Church Covenant, see separate sheet.

V. MEETINGS

Section 1. The church shall hold regular meetings of worship, teaching, training, & fellowship.

Section 2. The church shall hold regular business meetings to discuss the material and spiritual life of the church and to project plans for the future. All business meetings shall be conducted according to ROBERT'S RULES OF ORDER, REVISED. The quorum shall consist of those who attend the business meetings, providing it is a stated meeting or one that has been properly called.

Section 3. Other meetings of the church as a whole, or of authorized groups within the church, shall be set according to the needs of the congregation.

VI. ORDINANCES

Section 1 - Baptism: A person who receives Jesus Christ as Savior by personal faith; and who indicates a commitment to follow Christ as Lord, shall be received for baptism.

A. Baptism shall be by immersion in water.

B. Baptism shall be administered by the Pastor or whomever the church shall authorize.

Fathers and husbands who are a part of the Body shall baptize those of their own family with assistance of the Pastor.

The elders shall assist in the preparation for and observance of baptism.

Section 2. - The Lord's Supper: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby those who know Christ as Savior, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, commemorate the death of Jesus Christ and anticipate His Second Coming.

- A. The Lord's Supper shall be observed as the church may determine.
- B. The Pastor and elders shall be responsible for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

VII. MEMBERSHIP

Section 1: **General** - This is a sovereign Baptist Church under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. The church retains unto itself the exclusive right of self-government in accordance with this constitution in all phases of the spiritual and temporal life of this church.

Section 2. **Candidacy** - Any person, adult or child may offer himself or herself as a candidate for membership in this church. They must be in agreement with our Statement of Belief and willing to agree to the Church Covenant. All such candidates shall be presented to the church at any regular church service for membership in any of the following ways:

1. By profession of faith in Christ as Savior and Lord and followed by Baptism by immersion.
2. By letter of recommendation from any Bible-believing Church stating the individual has made a public profession of faith in Christ and has been baptized by immersion. This must be supported by Church leaders making sure there has been a true conversion experience.
3. By restoration upon a testimony of prior conversion experience and baptism by immersion when no letter is obtainable.

Section 3: **Termination of membership** - Membership may be terminated in any of the following ways: (1) death (2) transferring to another Church (3) exclusion by action of this church (church discipline) (4) written request by the individual concerned (5) changing to another faith - those who unite with a church of another faith to which this church does not grant letters (6) lack of involvement in the life work of the church for a one (1) year period.

Section 4: **Discipline** - Should a member become an offense to the church and its good name or a bad example to other believers by reason of immoral or unchristian conduct or belief (for example: disorderly conduct- II Thes 3:6-15; divisiveness- Rom 16:17-18; sexual immorality, drug abuse, greed, idolatry, slander or dishonesty- I Cor 5:11; worldly teachings- I Tim 4:6-7; teachings contrary to God's Word- II John 9-11; etc.), the church will seek by New Testament means to reclaim the individual to the cause of Christ and His Church. These steps are 1) being positive that there is sin that needs to be dealt with (I Tim 5:19), 2) praying for the person (Gal 6:1; Mt 5:23-24), 3) then talking to the person in private if the sin continues (Mt 18:15; Rom 15:14; II Tim 4:1-2), 4) taking a mature believer who the person will respect if the sin still continues and again challenging them to stop, trying in love to reclaim them to Christ (I Cor 6:1-6; Mt 18:16), 5) If it continues the church leadership should become involved, doing what they can do to reclaim the person. If all fails the church as a whole must be told about the problem (Mt 18:17a, I Tim 5:20) so others aren't misled by the person's sin and so all can pray for them. 6) If no repentance comes they are to be removed from the church fellowship temporarily or permanently (Mt 18:17b, I Cor 5:3-13). This is to show them the seriousness of the situation. They are to be prayed for and loved as anyone who lives like an unbeliever is loved and prayed for.

Section 5: **Voting Rights of Members** - Every adult (same as voting age in Government elections) member of this church is entitled to vote at all elections and on all questions submitted to the church in conference, provided the member is present or provision has been made for absentee balloting.

Section 6: **General Duties of Members** - It shall be the duty of members of this Church to attend the meetings and services appointed by its authority, to cultivate personal holiness and family devotion, to sustain the public worship to Almighty God and the ordinances of the Gospel, to contribute for the support of the ministry, the necessary expenditures of the Church, the spread of the Gospel and the relief of the needy; to watch over and counsel one another in the spirit of brotherly love; to strive for the growth of the whole body in Christian knowledge and holiness, and to govern their actions, conversation and hearts by the precepts of God's Word.

VIII OFFICES OF THE CHURCH

1. PASTOR- TEACHER:

A. This church fully recognized that God has called certain men to the responsibility of exercising the prime leadership with the body of Christ to function in the ministry of a Pastor and, in obedience to our Lord, shall willingly, humbly, and lovingly submit ourselves to the leadership of the Pastor of this Church in the Lord (Heb. 13:17). He is an elder, meeting their qualifications but is the "elder" of the elders of the whole body.

B. The Pastor- teacher shall by virtue of his office, discharge all the functions of the pastoral and teaching ministry in cooperation with the body of elders of this church. This Church regards the body of Christ as composed of an equal brotherhood the members of which, though having different functions & responsibilities, all "regards not the person of a man." (I Cor 12:12-31)

C. The Pastor- teacher shall be a male member of this Church and in his life measure up to the scriptural standard of conduct for a pastor. (I Tim 3:1-11; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1-4).

D. By virtue of his office, the pastor- teacher shall be ex-officio member of all Church committees, and shall be a member of the Board of Elders.

E. The Pastor- teacher shall be called by the Church in accordance with action taken in a business meeting and thereby receive his authority to administer his office. A two-thirds (2/3) majority of the vote cast shall constitute a choice.

F. In case the Pastor-teacher errs in the doctrine as established in "The Statement of Faith" or conduct as above (I Tim 3:1-11; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1-4), the body of elders shall warn him and seek to correct him. If he fails to heed their warning and continues his error, the body of elders shall refer the matter to the Church for action. If he refuses to heed the warning from the Church, he shall forthwith be discharged by 2/3 vote at the special called business meeting. In all other cases, there shall be a two (2) months notice of termination from either the Pastor or the Church. The Pastor shall vacate the parsonage 90 days after notice of termination.

G. In event the pulpit is vacant (no pastor, for whatever reason), the elders should first look among the body of elders to find an interim and/or pastor-teacher. If none is available or qualified look to the body of elders of like-minded, fellowshiping church in our areas-those who are familiar with our local body and its philosophy of ministry. We believe the first priority should be to look within the local congregation for those God is training for all areas of leadership and ministry.

H. A pastor shall be chosen and called by the church whenever a vacancy occurs. His election shall take place at a meeting called for that purpose of which at least one week's notice to the body of elders has been given. A pulpit committee of at least five members shall be chosen by the body of elders with elders comprising as many members as possible-preferably all five. The committee shall bring to the consideration of the church only one man at a time. Election shall be by ballot, an affirmative vote of three-fourths of those voting being necessary for a choice. The pastor thus elected, shall serve until the relationship is terminated by the request of either the church or the pastor.

2. ELDERS

In the New Testament church, Christ has provided men called elders whom He has enabled and commissioned to govern with pastor-teachers in His church. Men who bear this office share equally with the ministers the authority in and responsibility for the life of the church.

Those who fill this office should be examples to the flock of their sound faith, life, conduct, and their wisdom and discretion. I Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:7-9; I Peter 5:1-4.

Elders are to be chosen by the existing body of elders and pastor, recognizing those God has pointed out as being spiritual leaders in the church. A training program shall be provided to help them develop their skills/gifts that fit into our local ministry. The church shall vote the final approval of those chosen to be elders, a 3/4 majority being necessary for them to be elected.

The number shall be adequate to deal with those currently involved in the Body here in a personal, close way, in as much as there are qualified men to serve in this position.

Special jobs may be designated for some by the Body of Elders, Youth Work, Christian Education, Counseling, etc.

3. BODY OF ELDERS

- A. The Body of Elders are recognized as being that body of God ordained men appointed by the church body, to whom God has given the responsibility and gifts for exercising the spiritual rule and watchcare (oversight) of the flock. Their qualifications are stated in I Timothy 3:1-7 and I Timothy 5:17.
- B. The Body of Elders shall be composed of the pastor and all the active elders of the congregation.
- C. The pastor shall serve as chairman of the Board of Elders.
- D. The Body of Elders shall have the general oversight of the spiritual life and work of the church including the worship, preaching, teaching, ordinances, evangelism, visitation, discipline. They shall oversee the work of the deacon board also.
- E. Because they are “undershepherds” and not “lords” the elders shall rule the congregation according to the direction of Christ, the Chief Shepherd, as expressed in the Scriptures and the needs of the membership. They shall conduct at least one congregational meeting per year to report the status of the work to the congregation; and when they deem advisable, present recommendations to the congregation. They have the final say in matters of spiritual nature.
- F. The Body of Elders shall in every way cooperate with the Pastor in the work of the ministry, and they shall in no way conduct themselves in the spirit of Diotrephes. (III John 9, 10)
- G. The Body of Elders shall promote Christian instruction and shall maintain the ministry to the church membership, providing for the Lord’s Supper and aiding in its administration, considering all applicants with the Pastor for church membership and all requests for letters of dismissal, cooperating with the Pastor in providing leadership of the meetings in his absence, and maintaining a ministry of spiritual training for new leaders and other discipleship training.
- H. The Sunday School Superintendent shall be chosen annually by the Body of Elders from within their own Body, or someone well qualified which they choose.
- I. All church literature shall be designated or approved by the Body of Elders in cooperation with the Pastor.
- J. The Body of Elders shall meet regularly for training and considering the ministry and business of the church.

4. CHURCH SECRETARY

- A. The Church Secretary shall be elected annually by the Body of Elders.
- B. He shall be responsible for the keeping of complete records of transactions of all business meetings of the church. This shall be read for approval at the next following business meeting.
- C. He shall keep a record of names and addresses of members with dated manner of admission and dismissal, also a record of baptisms and a list of those suspended. He shall issue letters of dismissal and recommendation voted by the church, preserve on file all communications & written reports, and give legal notice of all meetings where such is required by this constitution.

5. DEACONS

- A. The office of deacon is presented in the Scriptures as an office of service. A deacon should be a man of deep spiritual life, exemplary conduct and sound judgment (I Tim 3; Acts 6:1-8). His office is one of sympathetic service to the church and to the distressed, friendless or sick, after the example of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Board of Deacons shall be composed of all deacons duly elected by and from the congregation, and who meet the qualifications of the Scriptures. They shall be mature men who demonstrate spiritual wisdom and compassion so that they might serve the needy in a Christ-like and merciful manner.
- B. Women can be chosen by the deacons, with the elders approval, to assist these deacons in their ministry to women and children (I Tim 3:11).
- C. Deacons are to be chosen by the Body of Elders with the approval of the Body of Deacons and are under the authority and oversight of the Body of Elders. The church Body must vote approval by a 3/4 majority vote.
- D. The number shall be determined by the needs of the availability of qualified men to fill the role.
- E. The general responsibility of the Deacons is one of sympathetic and benevolent service to the church, the distressed, friendless and sick, showing the mercy and concern of the church for the material and natural needs of others. The Deacons shall assume the responsibility to care for such specific benevolent and material services as directed to them by the Board of Elders. They are responsible for the church finances, buildings, properties and possessions. The function of the Deacons is to see that the material and natural needs of the church constituency are met so that the Elders can give freely of their time and concern to the spiritual needs of the congregation.

The Body of Deacons shall visit the sick, needy and distressed members of the church, using such benevolence funds as needed. The Body of Deacons shall hold in trust all property belonging to the church and shall take all necessary measures for its protection, management and upkeep. They shall not contract any indebtedness, or expend more than one hundred dollars (100.00) except as directed by the Official Board or by a majority vote at any regular meeting of the Church. They shall not have power to mortgage, lease or transfer any property without specific vote of the church authorizing such action. They shall, acting as trustees imposed by the state, perform such other duties as are imposed upon them by the church and state.

6. LEADER OF MUSIC AND WORSHIP

The Director of Music shall, with the Pastor-teacher, be responsible for the choir, congregational singing, and the scheduling of special music for regular and special services.

7. PIANIST-ORGANIST(s)

The Pianist-Organist(s) shall, with the Music Director, be responsible for playing for all regular and special church services, including preludes and postludes, offertories, choirs, congregational singing, special musical numbers, and be responsible for beginning all services promptly on time.

8. USHERS

- A. The Church Ushers shall be appointed from among the membership of the Church by the Official Board.

- B. The duties of an Usher will be to serve during the regular and special services of the church, performing such tasks as designated by the Pastor or Official Board of the Church.
- C. Officers- The Board of Elders shall designate and present to the full body for acceptance other officers as many as may be required and shall determine their duties and terms of office.

IX DISSOLUTION PROVISIONS

Upon the dissolution of Main Street Baptist Church of Doylestown, PA, the Elder Board shall, after paying or making provision for the payment of all the liabilities of the church, dispose of all of the assets of the church to such organizations which are operated exclusively for charitable, educational, religious or scientific purposes as shall at the time qualify as an exempt organization under section 501 (C) (3) of the Internal Revenue code of 1954 (or corresponding provision of any future United States Internal Revenue Law), as the Elders of the church shall determine. Any such assets not so disposed of shall be disposed of by the Court of Common Pleas of the county in which the church is then located, exclusively for such purposes as said Court shall determine, which are organized and operated exclusively for such purposes.

December 9, 1989

Dissolution provision approved May 2, 2004,s

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GETTING TO KNOW YOUR EXTENDED FAMILY

1. Abraham and Joshua were too busy doing the work of God to have time for family worship (Gen. 18:19; Joshua 24:15). TRUE FALSE

2. God holds parents responsible for training their children (Eph. 6:1-4). TRUE FALSE

3. The church:

☐ I Cor. 12:12-13

a. called the Body of Christ

☐ I Cor. 12:17

b. has Christ as the Head of the Body

☐ Eph. 4:15

c. All believers members of the Body

4. The word 'church' is used to refer to a local group of believers as well as ALL believers (Gal. 1:2; Philemon 1:2). TRUE FALSE

5. The New Testament does not tell Christians they should meet together for worship and teaching (Heb. 10:25). TRUE FALSE

6. Hearing the Word preached will strengthen your faith and help you grow spiritually (Rom. 10:17; I Peter 2:2). TRUE FALSE

7. What will help keep unity in a church or group (Col. 3:14)? _____

8. Matthew 28:19-20 teaches that the church's main commission is to raise the standards of living among people who are less fortunate than we are. TRUE FALSE

9. According to Acts 2:40-42 and 13:1-3, what did the early church do?

10. II Corinthians 9:7 teaches you are to give:

☐ a tithe

☐ what the church asks you to give

☐ as you feel you should, with a good attitude

11. Paul recommended that you should give if you had extra money (I Cor. 16:2). TRUE FALSE

12. What are you to lay up in heaven (Mt. 6:20-21)? _____

13. Colossians 3:23 says you should do all things as unto _____ and Matthew 5:16 teaches that it should bring _____.

14. What did God give for you (John 3:16)? _____

15. What will He give you (Rom.8:32 ; Phil. 4:19)? _____

16. BRINGING NEW LIFE TO OTHERS

How can I help others understand about salvation?

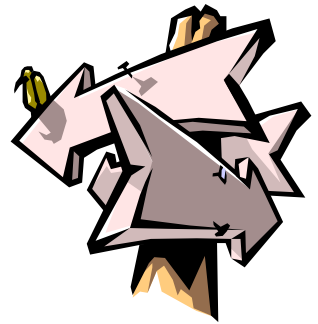
1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

1 Peter 3:15 Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

I. THE COMMAND OF IT

WE ARE TO BE SALT & LIGHT

Matt 5:13-16 "You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. 14 "You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.



What does it mean to be salt and light?
How does this apply to witnessing to unbelieving world today?
Give some examples ...

II. THE EXAMPLE OF IT

JESUS' COMMAND PREACH REPENTANCE & FORGIVENESS

Luke 24:45-49 Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. 46 He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, 47 and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high."

Would Jesus have preached 'tolerance' if He were preaching today?
Why is 'power from on high' essential to preach?
How do you make sure you have it?

PAUL'S COMMAND

2 Tim 4:1-6 In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: 2 Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage-with great patience and careful instruction. 3 For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. 4 They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. 5 But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.



What does it mean today to 'correct'?
What does it mean today to 'rebuke'?
What does it mean today to 'encourage'?

DRAW THINGS OUT TO ULTIMATE CONCLUSION in their thinking, take them down road to emptiness, inconsistency, etc.

Example: Abortion OK because it's my decision to decide if it is murder or OK

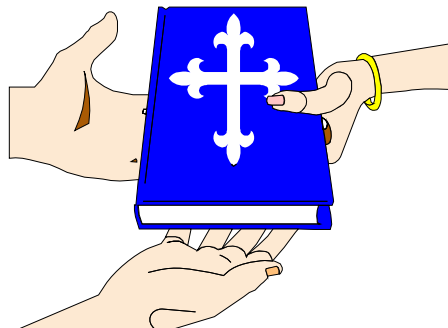
Then: I can rob or murder you because that's my decision?

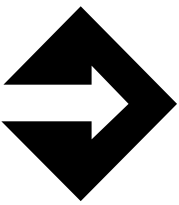
No, for you as victim have rights, too (so does unborn baby)

FAITHFUL WITNESS

Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. Mt. 10:32

I promised that your house and your father's house would minister before me forever. But now the LORD declares: Far be it from me! Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be disdained. 1 Samuel 2:30





THE FOUR SPIRITUAL LAWS

Have you heard of the four spiritual laws? Just as there are physical laws that govern the physical universe, so are there spiritual laws that govern relationships with God.

* LAW 1: God loves you, and has a wonderful plan for your life.

* God's love: ***God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16).***

* God's plan: [Christ speaking] ***I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly (John 10:10).***

* Why is it that most people are not experiencing the abundant life? Because...

* LAW 2: Man is sinful and separated from God. Therefore, he cannot know and experience God's love and plan for his life.

* Man is sinful: ***All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God (Rom. 2:23).*** Man was created to have fellowship with God, but because of his own stubborn self-will, he chose to go his own independent way, and fellowship with God was broken. This self-will, characterized by an attitude of active rebellion or passive indifference, is evidence of what the Bible calls sin.

* Man is separated: ***The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).*** A great gulf separates the Holy God from sinful man. Man may try to reach God and the abundant life through his own efforts, such as a good life, philosophy, or religion - but he inevitably fails.

* LAW 3: Jesus Christ is God's only provision for man's sin. Through Him you can know and experience God's love and plan for your life.

* He died in our place: ***God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8).***

* He rose from the dead: ***Christ died for our sins...He was buried...He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...He appeared to Peter, then to the twelve. After that He appeared to more than five hundred...(1 Cor. 15:3-6).***

* He is the Only Way to God: Jesus said to him, ***I am the way and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me (John 14:6).*** God has bridged the gulf that separates us from Him by sending His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross in our place.

* LAW 4: We must individually receive Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord; then we can know and experience God's love and plan for our lives.

* We must receive Christ: ***As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name (John 1:12).***

* We receive Christ through faith. ***By grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast (Eph. 2:8-9).***

* When we receive Christ, we experience a new birth: Read John 3:1-8.

* We receive Christ through personal invitation: ***Behold, I stand at the door & knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him (Rev. 3:20).***

THE ROMANS ROAD

Rom 3:10 NO ONE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO BE IN GOD'S PRESENCE

As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;



Rom 3:23 EVERYONE IS SINFUL IN GOD'S SIGHT
for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Rom 5:12 SIN BRINGS DEATH AND JUDGMENT

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-

Rom 5:8 JESUS DIED FOR US

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Rom 6:23 SIN BRINGS DEATH BUT JESUS BRINGS ETERNAL LIFE

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

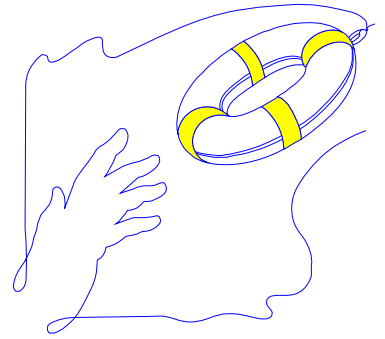
Rom 10:9-13 JUST ACCEPT JESUS' FREE GIFT OF SALVATION

9 That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved. 11 As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile-- the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

SHARING YOUR TESTIMONY

I. LIFE BEFORE CHRIST

Where were you spiritually before receiving Christ, and how did that affect you - your feelings, attitudes, action, and relationships?



II. HOW I CAME TO KNOW CHRIST

What motivated you to invite Christ to be your Lord and Savior? Specifically, how did you receive Christ and His forgiveness? If a church played a part in your conversion, tell how you came in contact with that church and who or what you remember from your first visits.

III. HOW LIFE IS DIFFERENT AFTER CHRIST

How did your life begin to change after you trusted Christ? What other benefits have you experienced since becoming a Christian?

BRINGING NEW LIFE TO OTHERS

1. Only preachers and missionaries should be able to witness for Christ (I Peter 3:15). TRUE
FALSE

2. Take the message:

- | | |
|------------------|----------------------------|
| _____ Mark 16:15 | a. to the uttermost parts |
| _____ Acts 1:8 | b. to every creature |
| _____ Rom. 1:16 | c. do not be ashamed of it |

3. Romans 10:17 teaches faith comes by:

- ___ the Word of God
- ___ practicing
- ___ being baptized

4. The Bible teaches in John 14:6 that all religions lead to heaven. TRUE FALSE

5. An idol worshipper will be saved if he is sincere in his faith (Prov. 14:12; Acts 4:12; Rom. 1:20; 2:12-16; I Cor. 10:20). _____

6. How many different kinds of sinners are named in Rev. 21:8? _____

Are liars included in this list? _____

Do you know anyone who has never lied? _____

Do you believe Ezekiel 18:4? _____

Does everyone need a Saviour? _____

7. What main points of the plan of salvation must be understood:

- Romans 3:23
- Romans 6: 23a
- Romans 6:23b
- Galatians 3:13
- John 1:12
- I John 5:11-13

8. Besides a lack of knowledge, we often fail to witness because we are afraid (Prov. 29:25).
TRUE FALSE

9. To help you witness more effectively you should pray for:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| ___ Acts 4:19,31 | a. compassion |
| ___ Matt. 9:36 | b. wisdom |
| ___ Eph. 6:19 | c. boldness |
| ___ James 1:5 | d. words to speak |

10. Should you ever argue when trying to witness to someone? _____

11. Will you witness to someone in the next 24 hours? _____

If you don't have someone you can talk to, at least write a letter to someone who isn't a Christian explaining the plan of salvation to them.

17. SPIRITUAL CHILD CARE

How can I help others grow after salvation?

When a baby grows up and reproduces, it is responsible to help the world grow and mature. Adults in all ways are responsible to help others in need. They grow spiritually as well. A maturing believer has a responsibility to help others grow. That is what one is maturing: reaching out to help others instead of just thinking about what others can do to help them. This lesson is geared to helping you disciple others around you. That means, now that you have gone through this process of learning and growing, you are responsible to pass this on to others. That is the Biblical example



I. BIBLE EXAMPLES OF MENTORS

The Bible is full of examples of mentoring and coaching. It records of generation after generation receiving God's word and passing it on to the next generation. Much of this is done person-to-person in mentoring and coaching relationships as one person influences another.

The greatest example of mentoring is God reaching out to tutor and guide mankind, as He continues to do today. He is the ultimate mentor, the perfect coach and developer.

On a human level, however, we see numerous **OLD TESTAMENT** examples of mentoring. Many are implied and can be seen when we 'read between the lines.' Adam, for example, must have trained his sons and taught them the importance of sacrifice. There are scores of examples of one person influencing another, for good or for bad. Eve influenced Adam, Sarah had her way with Abraham and Job's wife advised Job, but these wouldn't be called mentoring relationships. Still, there are a large number of examples of mentoring mentioned in the Bible.

Noah passed on God's directions to **Shem, Ham and Japheth**. They spent 100 years together working on the ark and for at least two of the sons Noah's faith became their own faith.

Abraham's life shows several coach and mentoring relationships. He tried to impact **Lot's** life by taking him under his wing but Lot chose to not respond to God as Abraham had responded. **Eliezer** his servant, on the other hand, followed his master's instructions and also seems to love and follow Abraham's God as well. Clearly Abraham coached and trained Eliezer. Abraham himself was encouraged and motivated at a time of need by **Melchizedek**. At just the right time God sent Melchizedek to not only teach Abraham but to support him. There may well have been numerous meetings between those two men of God and each would have benefited from the other as happens in peer mentoring. In addition, God said Abraham brought up his **family** after him, to follow his God – that is mentoring at its finest. Lot, by contrast, was a poor example and mentor to his family and lost them.

It seems **Isaac** was not a proper mentor/father to **Jacob** and **Esau**, showing favoritism and allowing division in his family. His wife, **Rebekah**, coached Jacob in how to act and what to say in gaining the blessing, obviously revealing a family pattern that had been in existence for some time. This dysfunctional family is a clear example of mentoring in ungodly ways.

A few years later **Joseph** became counselor and advisor to **Potiphar** and then later to **Pharaoh**, both of whom took his advice. As a result all Egypt prospered and Joseph's family was preserved. Joseph is seen coaching his brothers to understand that what they meant for evil God meant for good. It was a lesson that they never really understood that Joseph completely forgave them.

The book of **Job** shows coaching and mentoring in detail. **Bildad, Zophar** and **Eliphaz** tried to counsel and influence Job but he rejected their wrong opinions. **Elihu** tried to correct them and Job as well. Throughout it all Job attempted to guide them in the reality of the situation but they weren't open to his perspective. Everyone tried to coach everyone else, but until God intervened and spoke truth to the situation no real mentoring took place. Then God mentored them all in the truth.



A lot of mentoring went on in the life of **Moses** as well. During the first forty years of his life, Moses was mentored in the ways of the Egyptians. God mentored Moses during the second forty years, those in the wilderness watching sheep. That experience taught and matured Moses, preparing him to lead the nation of Israel. He developed a close relationship with **Jethro** (Ruel) during that time. Later, Jethro coached Moses in the importance of delegating work. Moses took his advice and his work load was lightened considerably. This was a great improvement for Moses and for the people who needed assistance.

Moses then began to mentor others. He worked closely with **Aaron**, coaching him in what to say to Pharaoh. When Aaron stumbled Moses took over. Aaron was not as responsive to Moses' mentoring as he could have been, for when Moses wasn't with him he let others influence him (i.e. Golden Calf).

Joshua was another recipient of Moses' mentoring, working with him one-on-one and preparing him to take over leadership. Joshua spent years living with and assisting Moses. He learned his lessons well for he became a truly godly and wise leader. It seems Moses also worked with **Caleb** as well. He was another man who responded well to Moses' input and left a godly legacy. Perhaps Moses' mentoring influence is the reason these two were the only ones who believed God could defeat the giants and give them the land.

While it may sound strange, there were times Moses actually counseled God. When God wanted to destroy Israel and start over with a new nation which would come from him, Moses explained to God why He shouldn't do that. We know Moses didn't really coach God, but he took on that role when he thought it was needed. God was pleased with this response of Moses. He didn't destroy the Jews but did as Moses requested.

During the time of the judges, **Deborah** clearly mentored **Barak** in the work he was to do. Barak's lack of faith held him back in his own growth and development. He did bring victory to Israel, but remained dependent on Deborah instead of following God on his own.

About the same time we read of the special relationship between **Ruth** and **Naomi**. Plainly Naomi took Ruth under her wing as a mother would her daughter. She also taught her what she needed to learn about Jewish customs to be able to fit in and find a husband. Naomi coached her through the whole process of connecting with Boaz. In fact, Ruth then has to gently coach **Boaz** along by reminding him of his responsibility as the next of kin. Boaz responded well and followed through by pursuing his rights and responsibility as next of kin.

In that same time period we see **Samson** who, instead of taking advice from his **parents** about who to marry, told them what he wanted them to do. There's no doubt that Samson rejected his training and all his parents tried to build into him. It wasn't until he lost his sight and strength that he was open to God's mentoring in his life. Then he acted in obedience to God. It took imprisonment and blinding for him to be open to God's guidance in his life.

From when he was very young on, **Samuel** was mentored by **Eli**. He was trained for the priesthood specifically but also for life in general. He became a faithful, godly man. Samuel is then seen quite often mentoring others. He tried to influence **Saul** to follow God, and then when Saul sinned Samuel tried unsuccessfully to get him to repent.

Samuel's life is quite closely tied to **David** as well. He not only anointed David as king but helped him through some difficult times when Saul was trying to kill David. Samuel gave David advice he followed. Earlier on Saul had tried to coach David in how to go about killing Goliath but David refused his offer of help.

David was also coached by **Abigail** when he was going to kill her husband, Nabal. She gave good recommendations which kept David from making a serious mistake and sinning. Fortunately David recognized her counsel as wise and followed it.

Nathan, too, counseled David when David was suffering the consequences of his sin with Bathsheba. He challenged David as to his sin and held him accountable for it. David responded to this correction, confessed his sin, and got back right with God.

David and **Jonathan** are a good example of peers mentoring each other. Their friendship is classic. They sacrificed for each other and helped each other through some difficult times. Jonathan reached out to help David when King Saul tried to kill him, giving him advice that saved his life. Each one benefited greatly from the friendship and support of the other.

As a father, however, David neglected building into his son **Absalom's** life as he could have. Absalom rebelled against David, his father, and tried to take the throne from him. **Ahithopel**, who had coached David for many years, turned instead to coach Absalom. However God influenced Absalom to take **Hushai's** coaching instead. Following his wrong advice led to his defeat. We must be very careful whose advice we follow.

Later in life David tried to do a better job of mentoring his son **Solomon** and preparing him for the throne. Later Solomon recorded much of the counsel that he passed on down to his sons in the book of Proverbs, an excellent book for mentoring and coaching. Many people, like the Queen of Sheba, came to Solomon for wisdom and coaching and he gladly helped them all. His wisdom was godly and accurate, and many benefited from him. The blemish on Solomon's life, though, came from following the influence of his ungodly wives who led him from God.

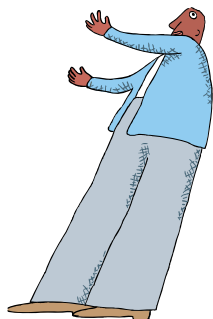
Regrettably, Solomon's son **Rheoboam** wasn't adept at taking good advice. Turning down the wisdom of the **elders**, he opted instead to follow the coaching he received from his **peers**. As a result he increased taxes. This ultimately resulted in the division of the nation into north (Israel) and south (Judah). Peer pressure does not make for good peer mentoring.



Another clear example of mentoring occurred during the times of **Elijah** and **Elisha**. Elijah trained Elisha as a prophet and man of God while Elisha helped Elijah with his physical needs. Elisha learned well from Elijah and went on to replace him as God's spokesman to the people. Elijah tried counseling **Ahab**, but he was more influenced by **Jezebel** and didn't respond to Elijah's attempts to turn him to godly ways. Jezebel led him in ways that led to his downfall and destruction.



Hosea sacrificially mentored **Gomer**, who at first rejected his efforts but later learned the hard way to listen and learn from him. Their relationship is a picture of how God reaches out to His people. It is also a good example of how husbands need to mentor/coach their wives.



Several godly prophets came along side the kings of Israel or Judah and tried to coach them in the ways of God. Some had success, most did not. **Isaiah** was able to have a godly influence on **King Hezekiah**, who turned to Isaiah in times of need and heeded his counsel. **Jehoiada** the priest mentored young **Joash** who became a godly king, at least for awhile. When his mentor died he drifted from what he had been taught and turned to sin.

Although they were peers, **Daniel** had a great impact on the lives of **Hananiah, Azariah & Mishael**. He was a natural leader and used his gifts to train and encourage them in taking a faithful stand for God. Hananiah, Azariah & Mishael must have been great peer support and encouragement for Daniel and for each other. They helped Daniel and Daniel helped them. Mentoring can be a two way street, meeting needs of all involved.

Daniel was recognized as a man of great wisdom and counsel by **Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, and Darius**. All utilized these gifts personally and for betterment of their kingdoms.

Daniel's life had a great and long-lasting impact on many around him. When a man of wisdom has mentoring skills others notice and are attracted to him.

Similarly, **Nehemiah** coached **King Artaxerxes** in his court. When asked how to go about restoring the walls of Jerusalem, Nehemiah was ready with plans and suggestions. When he got to Jerusalem, Nehemiah worked with the leaders to rebuild the walls and gates of the city. First he allowed them to advise him of the problem, and then he included them in working through the situation. This is an excellent pattern for mentors to use: ask questions to gather information and then suggest positive solutions.

In Jerusalem Nehemiah, the secular governor, and **Ezra**, the spiritual teacher, worked well together. They balanced each other and brought good leadership to Israel. The same was true with **Joshua**, **Haggai** and **Zechariah**. Both groups of peers coached and encouraged each other as they shared the heavy load of leading the Jews as they rebuilt their city and lives in Palestine. Working together as a team allows people to take advantage of their strengths and to support each other. It's a very effective form of peer mentoring.

Finally, during the time of **Esther** much mentoring and coaching was going on again. Quite clearly **Mordecai** mentored Esther as he raised her as his own daughter. **Ahasuerus** was counseled by his advisors to put away his wife, Queen **Vashti**, when she didn't do as he commanded. **Haman** was counselor/coach to Ahasuerus, at least until Mordecai took that important position. His influence was self-centered and not for the betterment of the king. That eventually caught up with him and caused his downfall. Mordecai coached Esther through the challenge of what to do about the edict to kill the Jews. Esther followed his guidance even though it was dangerous and difficult for her. Esther then advised Ahasuerus about how to resolve the situation Haman had caused. Her advice was followed and the Jewish nation preserved. Advice we give can have consequences that reach much further than we could ever imagine.

LIFE OF JESUS

No one is a better example of the perfect coach or mentor than **Jesus Christ** himself. The whole pattern of His life revolved around this: calling men to follow him, living and traveling with them day after day, and teaching them by word and deed. This was the mentoring pattern every rabbi followed. The gospels record example after example of Jesus mentoring those who followed Him. From the large group he called twelve to a special relationship and training. From among those twelve He developed an extra close relationship with three: Peter, James and John. He worked differently with Peter than with Nicodemus, with John than with Judas, with Mary than with Martha. However in all cases he was clearly the guide and tutor. Much could, and has been written about Jesus and discipleship.

Other examples of mentoring during Jesus' life on earth would include **Elizabeth** taking in pregnant **Mary** and helping her to fulfill her role as the mother of Jesus. A close friendship developed as they encouraged each other and shared God's goodness. It was something that both benefited from and an example of how God brings the right people together at the right time.

Also we see **John the Baptizer** mentoring those who came to him and then pointing them to Jesus. His training set the foundation for many of those who would become disciples of Jesus. While his ministry was short, the results of what he built into others lasted long after he died.

The **disciples**, spending all their time together, must have mentored each other as well as they talked amongst themselves and watched each other grow in faith. Going out by two's provided them opportunities to support and build into each other.

ACTS & EARLY CHURCH

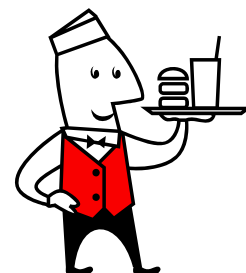
Examples of mentoring abound in the book of Acts, for the disciples followed the example of their Master in training others as He trained them.

As leadership roles developed, these functions were based on mentoring relationships as well. **Peter** and **John** became leaders in the early church and mentored the church as a whole. They worked together as peer mentors in this new and important responsibility. When their work load

became burdensome deacons were chosen to help so the leaders could focus on their roles as advisors and guides. **Local church pastors** also followed the mentoring and coaching role as they ministered to the people in their care. They disciplined young believers and trained new leaders. The New Testament epistles are examples of Paul's teaching of those he was training and mentoring. His letters to Timothy and Titus clearly illustrate how Paul went about doing this.

Clear and specific examples of mentoring abound in the early church. God, in His mentoring process with **Peter**, sent him to coach Cornelius as he sought a relationship with God. Peter responded by obeying and taking the gospel to a Gentile, even though that was something entirely new to him.

Barnabas was an outstanding example of mentoring. He was chosen by God to take **Paul** under his wing in the early years and mentor Paul in the faith. He also mentored **Mark** and probably many others as well. Paul went on to be the great church-planter of the early church, and Mark to serve faithfully in addition to writing the gospel of Mark. What a great impact Barnabas has had on Christianity through his mentoring work with Paul and Mark!



Along the same lines, **Aquila** and **Priscilla** mentored **Apollos** who became a great spokesman for Jesus. They even mentored, or at least coached Paul when he first came and lived among them.

Paul himself mentored many others: **Mark**, **Onesimus**, **Philemon**, **Timothy**, **Titus** and many unnamed **local church leaders** as well. Timothy, for example, traveled with Paul for quite a while and then applied what he learned to his ministry to the church at Ephesus. Titus, too, traveled with Paul for awhile and then pastored on his own. This mentoring process must have been one of the most rewarding and encouraging parts of Paul's ministry. Watching those we mentor move on to begin mentoring others is very rewarding. This was one of the basic principles of his life's work, as it was of his Master's. "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us." (I Thessalonians 2:8)

Paul tried to coach **Felix** and **Festus** in the faith but they refused to respond to his counsel. The results for them were disastrous.

From that time to today, the gospel has come down to us as one generation mentored the next. That pattern is ours to follow today as well. Jesus mentors us through the indwelling Holy Spirit and the Bible. We are privileged to be used by Him to mentor and coach others. There can be no higher calling in life than this!

II. TRAITS OF ONE WHO DISCIPLES OTHERS

In order to be one who does a good job discipline others there are some character traits that are necessary. For one thing, you must **develop an eternal perspective**. You can't just take it one day at a time and live for today and you must pass that on to others. Living for today doesn't satisfy, it doesn't fill that 'God-shaped vacuum.' Jesus, Who is our example, didn't spend His time equipping people for this life but for the next life.



As a maturing Christian we are responsible to **model the Savior**. He is our model and goal, not others. Don't compare yourself with others but with Him. Remember there is nothing we can do that will cause God to love us more, nor is there anything we can do that will cause God to love us less.

In order for this to happen we must **become servant**. Jesus is our example in washing the disciples' feet. We must be committed to obey and serve God.

III. WHAT A DISCIPLER BUILDS INTO OTHERS

A widow who had successfully raised a very large family was being interviewed by a reporter. In addition to six children of her own, she had adopted 12 other youngsters, and through it all she had maintained stability and an air of confidence. When asked the secret of her outstanding accomplishment, her answer to the newsman was quite surprising. She said "I managed so well because I'm in a partnership!" "What do you mean?" he inquired. The woman replied, "Many years ago I said, 'Lord, I'll do the work and You do the worrying.' And I haven't had an anxious care since." That's just how God wants us to live each day -- trusting in Him for His provision while we do what He would have us do, no matter how hard it may seem.

Living by faith is the key to the Christian life. Some have the idea that living for God means everything will be fine and perfect, but then there is no faith necessary. The Christian life is not always smooth and easy. Faith is necessary to stay faithful and focused when things are hard and painful. Faith only grows when it is challenged and stretched. Like a physical muscle needs resistance to force it to grow stronger, so our faith muscles need opposition to become stronger. That is what living the Christian life is all about. It's a life-long process of growing spiritually.

GROWTH "Grow in grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ" (II Peter 3:18) Peter states. Growing in grace means growing in daily Christian experience (external). Growing in knowledge means learning God's Word (internal). Both are necessary. We enter God's family by the new birth (John 3). After physical or spiritual birth, growth is expected. A baby who doesn't grow is considered sickly and abnormal (I Cor 13:11). The same is true after spiritual birth (I Cor 3:1-3).

VITAL SIGNS OF LIFE We know our physical bodies are alive because we see evidence of it: pulse, breathing, etc. I John shows some spiritual vital signs, showing there is spiritual life. These include believing in Jesus (5:1), desiring to have victory over sin (5:18; 3:9), progress in victory over sin (5:4) and love for other Christians (3:14).

COMMUNICATION It doesn't take long for a newborn to communicate their needs. First it is crying, then action, and finally words. Part of our spiritual growth includes growing in our communication skills with God: prayer, meditation, listening to Him and learning His will.

FEEDING Babies automatically, instantly want to eat. With new life comes the desire for nourishment (I Cor 3:1-3). Spiritually we are to have an appetite for and feed on the Bible. When a person loses his physical appetite, it is a sign of sickness and poor health. The same is true spiritually. We need regular nourishment from God's Word to grow spiritually.

WALKING Babies need to learn to walk. This is a gradual process, one step at a time. It takes balance, timing and strength. It means getting up when one falls down. Muscles must be stretched to the limit to grow stronger. Spiritually, too, those who are born again are to walk by faith, empowered by God's Holy Spirit (John 16:7; Eph 5:18). We can't walk by our own strength but only in His (John 15:1-8). Obstacles and trials which block our path are to be overcome by faith. We are to faithfully persevere and keep walking in Jesus' footsteps, becoming more and more like Jesus. Walking downhill is easy, but going uphill against obstructions takes faith. This is a normal part of Christian living. We can't think something is wrong with us if there are struggles for they are to be expected. Some teach that if we think positive thoughts that mainly good things will happen to us. Others believe that if we have enough faith we won't have to endure life's pains and unpleasanties. Neither of these are true.

PROTECTION FROM DISEASE Life is dangerous -- physically and spiritually. New-borns are especially vulnerable to disease and danger. Germs are everywhere. Spiritually we face danger from sin, Satan and the world. Protection only comes from keeping our eyes on Jesus.

WASHING Babies often need cleaning, for getting dirty is a part of life! They are born pure but soon contaminated. Spiritually we are clean when born again, but need constant washing by the blood of Jesus to cleanse us from all sin (1 John 1:9). This is done by confession. If a person doesn't cleanse themselves, they will become sickly and unhealthy. The same is true spiritually.

FAMILY SUPPORT Babies are born into families for they can't live on their own. They need help from those already grown. Spiritually, too, new believers need fellowship with more mature believers to help them grow and mature as they should.

REST There must be rest for growth to take place. Growth is stunted when there is no sleep or rest. Spiritually, too, we must rest in Jesus, pace ourselves, and not overwork. Growth comes in spurts in human bodies and nature in general. Growth isn't continual, it comes in cycles of growth followed by rest when that growth is assimilated deeper in preparation for the next growth spurt. The same is true spiritually. Don't expect to be stretching and growing all the time. It, too, comes in spurts.

Remember, only God brings growth. We can't make ourselves grow, but we can provide the right conditions for God to bring the growth. After salvation growth is the natural expected result. We live for Jesus not to gain or keep our salvation, but in appreciation of being freely given it. Our first major decision is to accept or reject God's free gift of salvation. This costs us nothing, Jesus paid it all. We merely accept it and our sins are gone for all eternity. We will be with God forever in heaven. After we accept this free gift, though, we have another decision: how are we now going to live our lives each day. Will we live for ourselves, as before salvation. Or will we live for Jesus, submitting to Him and being His servant. This step does cost us, and it affects our life on this earth. Jesus called this being a disciple. In salvation we freely accept, here we give of ourselves to live for Jesus each moment of each day. This is the basis for living the Christian life. One can't really live or grow spiritually until this commitment is made. When it is made, though, we aren't to assume things will be smooth or easy for us. Trials and difficulties stretch our faith and help us grow more like Jesus. We turn closer to God for help and comfort. Others see His power as we respond to life's trials in a Christ-like manner. This is what living the Christian life is all about. It's a privilege, but also a responsibility. You can't live the Christian life if you aren't a Christian. But just being a Christian (having been born into God's family) doesn't automatically mean you are living the Christian life. Check yourself: do you have spiritual life (born again)? Are you committed to living for Jesus instead of yourself? Do you show the signs of life? Are you growing in your communication, nourishment, walk and so forth? Living for Jesus is the best you of a life.



SPIRITUAL CHILD CARE

1. A good soldier of Christ should not become entangled with the affairs of this life (II Timothy 2:4). TRUE FALSE
2. Follow-up work is best done in a class or individually: _____.
3. What characteristics must a good servant of the Lord have according to II Timothy 2:24:
_____ not strive, be gentle, apt to teach, patient
_____ strong, powerful in prayer, alert
_____ a god example, wise, sincere
4. Follow-up work should begin:
_____ the first Sunday after people are saved
_____ as soon as a class can be organized
_____ as soon as they are saved
5. Most Christians grow into mature, useful, witnessing Christians. TRUE FALSE
6. Good follow-up will sometimes reveal that the person has not fully understood the Gospel nor made a real decision for Christ. TRUE FALSE
7. Paul's prayer in Colossians 1:9-11 is a good example of the things for which we should ask the Lord on behalf of a new Christian. TRUE FALSE
8. The example you set for others is not as important as what you say. TRUE FALSE
9. Most people like to memorize. TRUE FALSE
10. The counselor talking with someone should be observant and not take things for granted. TRUE FALSE
11. How important is the place of prayer in your witnessing and your follow-up work?

12. What is the biggest problem people face that keeps them living for God and growing as Christians? _____
13. What can be done about this problem?

18. LOOKING AHEAD

What does the future hold?

Babies don't think about the future. Neither do young children. They just think about the present – their own needs and pleasures right now. As they start to grow they begin to remember things in the past and hopefully learn from them. It isn't until they are much older and wiser that they start to think of the future and wonder what will come next. At first there is no conception of time: how long it is until Christmas or their next birthday is beyond their conception. Gradually they get a better perspective of time. Then they start thinking more of tomorrow and looking forward to future things.



As they grow and mature they will start planning for the future and anticipating what will happen. A sign of maturity is when they start making today's decisions based on future considerations and ramifications. A baby never does this. How we see the future determines how we live today.

The same is true spiritually. As you have grown in Christ and see things from a different perspective you have started to wonder what the future holds. This final session will give you an overview of future events. This will greatly help you set your values and priorities for today. You will no longer live just for today, but live today based on what will come in the future.

OUTLINE OF PROPHECY (from the Old Testament)

God's way has been to reveal His future plans to man, not keep them hidden (Gen 18:17-19). From the Old Testament we can clearly see God's plan for man. The New Testament adds details and elaborations, but the original plan was given to the Jews.

God set apart the Jewish nation as His specially chosen people to spread His Word (Deuteronomy 4:5-8; 6:4-9). They (you) have always been the "apple of God's eye" (Zechariah 2:8) and the object of His grace (Zechariah 13:1). However because of their disobedience and unfaithfulness, God sent them into captivity in Babylon. His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 15) was unconditional (Genesis 15:12) so no matter what, He will still keep His promises to Abraham and his descendants.

God said this dispersal in Babylon would last 70 years (Jeremiah 25:11-12; 29:10). As that time drew to a close, Daniel, who was aware of the prophecy, asked God what would happen next (Daniel 9:1-23). God told him that the 70 years of captivity would be followed by 70 "sevens" (Daniel 9:24-27). The word for these "sevens," 'heptad,' can be translated "7 year period" (Genesis 29:17). Thus God told Daniel that Israel's future would consist of 70 7-year periods, or 490 years (Daniel 9:24-27).

This period would start with "the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem" (Daniel 9:24), which we see as happening March 14, 445 BC (Nehemiah 2:1-8). The first 69 of these 7 year 'heptads,' or 483 years, would end when "the anointed One will be cut off" (Daniel 9:26). We see this to have been fulfilled April 6, 32 AD. It was that day, called Palm Sunday, that Jesus publicly offered Himself as the Messiah-King and was turned down (Zechariah 9:9;

Matthew 21:1-11; Luke 19:28-40). The period between March 14, 445 BC and April 6, 32 AD was exactly 483 years, to the day! People then and there went by 360 day years, following the 12 month, 30 day lunar calendar (Esther 1:4; Revelation 12:6, in referring to the 70th 'heptad,' says the last 3 ½ years will be 1260 days long which equals 360 day years for these 'heptads.'). Thus 483 years of 360 days each equals 173,880 days. Now, from 445 BC to 32 AD is 476 calendar years, times 365 days in a calendar year. This results in 173,740 days. Add to this 116 leap year days during that time and include 24 days from March 14 to April 6 and the grand total is 173,880 – the same as prophesied!

If the first 69 'heptads' were literally fulfilled, we believe the last will be, too. We believe this is still future. It will begin when the "ruler who will come" (Daniel 9:26 - we call him the 'Antichrist') will make a 7-year peace treaty with Israel, which he will break in the middle (Daniel 9:26-27). He will be similar to Antiochus Epiphanes (Daniel 8:9-14) but much, much worse (Daniel 11:36-45). He will "destroy the city and the sanctuary" (Daniel 9:26). We see these things as yet future.



Thus we believe we live in the time between the 69th and 70th week. We see this as a parenthesis in God's dealings with Israel, with Israel set aside because of their rejection of the Messiah (Jesus). It was prophesied that the Jews would be scattered (Deuteronomy 28:64; Leviticus 26:33) and the land desolated (Leviticus 26:33; Deuteronomy 29:22-23). The Jews would be persecuted (Deuteronomy 28:65) but preserved (Isaiah 66:22; 49:15-16; Jeremiah 30:11; 31:35-37). They would be blinded spiritually (Isaiah 6:9-10). This began in 70 AD with the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple.

We also see the new nation of Israel as the beginning of the end of this 'setting aside' time. God said they will be regathered (Ezekiel 36:22-28; 37:1-7; Deuteronomy 30:3-8; Isaiah 10:22-23; 11:10). The land will be reclaimed (Isaiah 35:1-7; Joel 2:21-26) and they will again become a nation (Isaiah 66:7-8) with military strength (Zech 12:6). Some even feel the return to Hebrew was prophesied (Zephaniah 3:9).

We believe that the next event in God's plan will be the 'Rapture.' This is when Jesus will return to take to heaven those who believe in Jesus for salvation (Acts 1:9-11; John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:13-18; I Corinthians 15:51-53). When this happens the current 'parenthesis' we are living in will end and God's focus will again be on His chosen people, the Jews.

The 70th 7-year period prophesied in Israel's future, the Tribulation, will then commence (Daniel 9:27; Ezek 39:9). Satan will know his time is short so he will increase his attacks against God by attacking God's people on earth – the Jews and any Gentiles who turn to God (Daniel 12:1). He will empower a man we label the Antichrist (Dan 7:25; Ezek 28:9-12). He will be Gentile, from the area that the Roman Empire used to rule (Daniel 7:7-28). This man will have supernatural intelligence and persuasive powers (Dan 8:23). He will be very crafty (Ezek 28:6) and all will like him. He will start by bringing peace to the world (Daniel 8:25; 9:27) so all nations will follow his undisputed leadership (Daniel 11:36; 7:25). He will be similar to Nimrod in instituting one world government, monetary system and language (Genesis 10:8-12; Daniel 11:36; 7:23). Israel especially will be taken with him, for he will make a 7-year peace treaty with her, guaranteeing her safety from all her enemies (Daniel 9:27). The Antichrist will be assisted by a man who will unite all world religions into one and lead them. He will be a Jew (Revelation 13:11) and will be able to do 'miracles' by Satan's power (Revelation 13:11-18; 19:20). To counter this God will seal and miraculously empower 2 special witnesses to preach during this time. They will be Jews similar to Moses and Elijah who can do miracles and can't be harmed (Revelation 11:1-6). There also will be 144,000 Jewish evangelists (12,000 from each tribe) who will be preaching about Jesus (Revelation 17:1-8).

The Antichrist will be very prideful (Daniel 7:8, 2011:36-39). In the middle of the 70th 'heptad' he will break his covenant with Israel and set himself up in the temple to be worshipped as God (Daniel 12:11; 11:36-39). This "time of Jacob's trouble" (Jeremiah 30:7) will bring much destruction on the

earth and its peoples (Ezekiel 38:19-23; 39:9, 25-29). Satan will go wild in his attacks on God's people (Daniel 7:25; 9:27; 11:36). Millions will be killed. Plagues, similar to those God sent upon the Egyptians in Moses' day but much worse, will be poured out on the earth (Revelation 6 - 18). Any Jew who worships God will be killed (Daniel 9:27; 12:11). Jerusalem, despite being his headquarters (Daniel 11:45) will be devastated (Daniel 9:26-27; 12:10). God will use this to turn the Jews back to Him. "They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son" (Zechariah 12:10).

For various reasons such as geographical location, political power and wealth of natural resources, the nations of the world will vie for control of Palestine. They will gather from Megiddo south into Edom (Ezekiel 38:9; Joel 3:2; Isaiah 34:1-6; 63:1) to fight each other and the Antichrist and his armies from the Revived Roman Empire (Europe - Daniel 7:7-28). We call this battle 'Armageddon' (Joel 3:11-16; Daniel 11:40-45; Ezekiel 38:19-23; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-4; Isaiah 33:1-34:17; 63:1-6; Jeremiah 25:27-33). God Himself will come from heaven and instantly and completely destroy all His enemies (Psalm 2:2; Zechariah 12:1-9; 14:1-4; Daniel 11:45; etc.).

Then He will set up His thousand-year Millennial Kingdom with the Messiah on the throne (Daniel 12:1-3; Ezekiel 40 - 48; Isaiah 11:7; 65:2-5; Joel 3:17-21). Jerusalem will be the center (Zechariah 8:3; 3:14-17) and the Jews will finally be safe in their land (Ezekiel 20:33-38). God's unconditional promise to Abraham (Genesis 15:2) would be finally fulfilled (II Samuel 7:8-17).

THE RAPTURE

Scientists at the Goddard Space Flight Center report that one of the largest stars in our galaxy is about to self-destruct. Eta Carinae, which has a mass 100 times greater than that of our sun, is giving signs that its life is about over. Researchers say that it could become a supernova -- a blazing, exploding star -- within the next 10,000 years. What was especially interesting about the Science 82 report was the statement that since light from the star could take 9,000 years to reach the earth, the actual explosion could have already taken place.

This striking fact reminds me of the nature of biblical prophecy. For example, the predictions found in Revelation 8 are often written in the past tense. This is done because even though the prophet is writing of a future event, he has already "seen" it. Also, in the mind of God it's as if the events have already happened (Rev. 8:10). The prophecy that means the most to Christians today is the next one in God's timetable -- the rapture.

THE PROMISE OF THE RAPTURE John 14:1-3 says: "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am." Jesus' promise is that He will literally and physically come back, the same as he left (Acts 1:10-11).



THE PLAN OF THE RAPTURE I Thessalonians 4:13-18 “Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who fall asleep, or to grieve like the rest of men, who have no hope. We believe that Jesus died and rose again and so we believe that God will bring with Jesus those who have fallen asleep in him. According to the Lord's own word, we tell you that we who are still alive, who are left till the coming of the Lord, will certainly not precede those who have fallen asleep. For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage each other with these words.” Paul’s order of events here are, first of all 3 sounds: Jesus’ shout of joy to finally be able to come for His bride, Michael and the angels battle cry against Satan and his forces, and God’s trumpet calling His people home. This applies only to Christians in the Body of Christ (cross to the rapture). Those who have died have gone straight to heaven where they have received a temporary body. At the rapture their old body will be brought back together and restored to them, and then the living saints will be transformed so their bodies will be eternal bodies (we’ll never have to die). Both groups will instantly be taken up to heaven where Jesus will appear. Jesus won’t touch foot on earth at this time.



THE PARTICULARS OF THE RAPTURE (I Corinthians 15:51-53) “Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed-- in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. For the perishable must clothe itself with the imperishable, and the mortal with immortality.” This whole event won’t take long -- as long as it takes for light to travel from the eye surface to the retina (“twinkling of an eye”).

Jesus says we are to watch and wait for this blessed event! (Titus 2:13; Matthew 24:42-43; 25:13; Micah 7:7). Our absent Lord has given special commendation to those who not only WAIT

for His return, but also earnestly WATCH for Him. The difference between these terms is illustrated by the story of a fishing vessel returning home after many days at sea. As they neared the shore, the sailors gazed eagerly toward the dock where a group of their loved ones had gathered. The skipper looked through his binoculars and identified some of them: "I see Bill's Mary, and there is Tom's Margaret and David's Anne." One man became concerned because his wife was not there. Later, he left the boat with a heavy heart and hurried up the hill to his cottage. As he opened the door, she ran to meet him saying, "I have been waiting for you!" He replied with a gentle rebuke, "Yes, but the other men's wives were watching for them!" Jesus wants us to be both waiting and watching, and we can't do that if we are involved in the world or sin!

AFTER THE RAPTURE After we are taken up to heaven, and that could happen at any time for there is no unfulfilled prophecy left to happen, we will be rewarded for the faithful service we did for God on earth (I Cor 3:12-15). This will be a seven-year time of celebration (the marriage feast) called “**The Marriage Supper of the Lamb**” (Rev. 19:7-8). On earth during this time will be a terrible, terrible time called the **Tribulation** (Revelation 4-18). This will be God’s judgment on those who have rejected him. At the end of this time Jesus (and His saints with Him) will return and end the battle of Armageddon by instantly destroying all opposition and setting up His kingdom on earth. Then begins a thousand year reign of Jesus on earth called the **Millennium**. After a short rebellion which is quickly put down, Satan, demons and

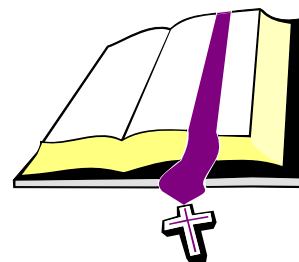
all unbelievers are consigned to hell for all eternity. For God's people, **eternity** with Him begins.

AFFECT ON DAILY LIFE NOW Seeing these things about to come, we should be motivated to make sure we have accepted Jesus as our Savior and make sure He is the Lord of our life. We can find comfort and encouragement in these things as we remember that this life and everything in it is temporary. It should help us to live for Jesus each moment of our lives.

What a wonderful practical tie there is between this truth of the coming of the Lord and our appearing before Him, and the living of our daily life! "Every one who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure." Let me illustrate that by the life of Martha Snell Nicholson who, for more than thirty-five years, was so transcendently triumphant through those many weary years that she wrote some of the finest Christian poetry which has ever been written. A number of years before she died she wrote about her hope of the coming of the Lord. This is what she says: "The best part is the blessed hope of his soon coming. How I ever lived before I grasped that wonderful truth, I do not know. How anyone lives without it these trying days I cannot imagine. Each morning I think, with a leap of the heart, 'He may come today.' And each evening, 'When I awake I may be in glory.' Each day must be lived as though it were to be my last, and there is so much to be done to purify myself and to set my house in order. I am on tiptoe with expectancy. There are no more gray days -- for they're all touched with color; no more dark days -- for the radiance of His coming is on the horizon; no more dull days, with glory just around the corner; and no more lonely days, with His footsteps coming ever nearer, and the thought that soon, soon, I shall see His blessed face and be forever through with pain and tears."

HOW TO INTERPRET PROPHECY

Prophecy composes about 20% of the Bible, so correct interpretation of it is important. Many prophecies have already been literally fulfilled, so we know the remaining ones will be fulfilled literally. For example, the destruction of Babylon, Assyria, Philistia, Moab, Damascus, Cush and Egypt in Isaiah 13-21 have been literally fulfilled.



All scripture is to be taken in its normal, literal sense. The language of Scripture is no different than any other written or spoken language. All language is full of figures of speech. Similes, metaphors, etc., about when we talk, but that doesn't mean we interpret everything as symbolic. When Jesus said "I am the door," everyone knew what He meant. The use of figures of speech doesn't take away from literal interpretation.

This is especially true in Revelation. No one expects an eagle to rescue a pregnant woman and fly her to the desert (Revelation 12:13-17). The symbols represent another reality either in the past (from our perspective) or yet to occur in the future. We need to be careful how we interpret the meaning of the symbols. It is doubtful that the eagle represents the United States, as someone once suggested, in spite of the fact that the eagle is our national symbol. We need to interpret the symbolism in terms of how it would have been understood by its original readers. Since the interpretation of this kind of prophetic symbolism is so difficult, it is probably best not to hold on to a given interpretation with unbending certitude. Even though we can't understand all the details of a symbolism, those alive when it happens will recognize it clearly. We can know the general interpretation: a person/nation who gives

birth to someone else is rescued from those trying to kill it. That part is clear and is enough to work with.

It is important to put yourself in the position of those who first read the Scripture. What would they have thought? How would they have taken the meaning? After all, it was written first to them then, not just to us now. Therefore it is important to know the historical context of the passage. What were the readers experiencing? What was happening in their lives? Why did the writer say what he did? How would he have assumed they would have taken what he wrote. You see, prophecy must be understood the same normal communication.

To interpret prophecy in its normal meaning, we must take it in context of what is written before and after it. Look at the sentence, paragraph, chapter, book and whole Bible. Let the context interpret the prophecy. Scripture should witness to scripture. Contradictions are never acceptable. Since God's Word is inerrant (I Timothy 3:16, etc.) it cannot be self-contradictory. If two passages seem to contradict, truth has not yet been discovered.

Remember that some prophecies have a near (immediate) and far (future) fulfillment. Quite often a prophet would prophecy something that was to happen in his lifetime as well as the far future. Isaiah 7:14 about a virgin/young woman giving birth was fulfilled in Isaiah's day and also by the Messiah Jesus (Matthew 1:23). Dan 9:27; 11:31; 12:31 about the "abomination of desolation" had a near fulfillment (Antiochus Epiphanes in 167 BC) and far fulfillment (Antichrist in Tribulation).

God has not made prophecy hard to understand – He WANTS us to know what He is saying or He wouldn't say it! (Amos 3:6-8; Isaiah 55:8-11; Mark 13:23). He wants us to study and understand it, so He doesn't hide His truths from us. He sends His Spirit to teach us His truths (John 16:12-15). Pray and ask for guidance as you study prophecy, and read it like you would any literature, and He will make it clear to you. It's His plan for us!



LOOKING AHEAD

1. Part of your prayer time should be secret prayer between you and God (Mt. 6:6). TRUE
FALSE
2. How many periods of time did Daniel set aside to commune with God each day (Dan. 6:10)
? _____
3. In Isaiah 40:29-31 God promises those who wait upon Him that He will renew their
_____.
4. God promised Joshua that his way would be prosperous and he would have good success if he would meditate upon and keep His Word (Joshua 1:8). TRUE FALSE
5. You can fool men by your outward appearances, but the Holy Spirit can use the Word of God to show the real _____ and _____ of our hearts (Heb. 4:12)
6. How should you regard the thoughts and truths the Holy Spirit reveals to you (Psalm 139:17)? _____
7. The Bible says:
_____ Eph. 6:18 a. commit thy way unto the Lord
_____ Prov. 15:8,29 b. true prayer should be guided by the Holy Spirit
_____ Jer. 29:13 c. sin hinders prayer
_____ Isa. 59:1-2 d. the prayers of the upright are a delight to the Lord
_____ Psalm 37:4,5 e. should seek the Lord with your whole heart
8. I Timothy 4:15 teaches that meditation is a waste of time. TRUE FALSE
9. In Acts 13:1-4 the Holy Spirit impressed His message on a praying church and
_____ and Saul were sent on their first missionary journey.
10. What place is mentioned in Matthew 26:36 where Jesus went to pray?

11. John 4:23 teaches that God seeks those who go through the outward motions of worshipping. TRUE FALSE
12. In John 14:21 Jesus promises to manifest (reveal) Himself to the obedient Christian. In verse 22 a disciple asks how He will do this. In verse 26 and in John 16:13-14 He says it will be done by _____, who will teach you and glorify Christ.
13. Do you have devotions each day: a time when you read your Bible and pray? _____

TOPICAL INDEX

To help understand, defend and share your faith

By Rev. Jerry Schmoyer ©
jerry@schmoyer.net 215-348-8086

Abortion is murder: Exodus 21:22-25; Psalm 139:13-15; Romans 14:22-23; Jeremiah 1:5; Genesis 2:7; 9:6

Angels, creation of: Colossians 1:16; Job 38:6-7; Jude 6; Hebrews 12:11

Angels, ministry to believers today: Hebrews 1:14; Acts 12:7; 27:23-24; I Corinthians 4:9; I Timothy 5:21; Luke 15:10; 16:22; Acts 8:26; Jude 9

Angels, nature of: Hebrews 1:14; Mark 12:25; Luke 20:36; Psalm 8:4-5; II Peter 2:11

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Atonement for sin: Exodus 12:13; Matthew 26:28;; 28:5-7; Luke 24:39; John 1:29; 19:33; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20

Believe, what does that mean? Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12; I Corinthians 15:1; Colossians 2:6; II Thessalonians 2:10

Bible, importance of studying it: Luke 6:40; John 5:39; Acts 20:32; Ephesians 6:17; II Timothy 2:15; James 1:21-22; I Peter 2:2; II Peter 1:2

Bible, inspired Word of God: II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:19-20; I Corinthians 2:13; II Peter 3:15; Hebrews 1:1; 2:3; 4:12; I Peter 1:10-12, 25; II Samuel 23:1-2; Matthew 24:35; John 10:35; 17:17

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Conscience used by God: Acts 24:16; Romans 14:14, 23; II Timothy 1:5; Titus 1:15; Matthew 6:22-23; Romans 1:14-15; 9:1; I Corinthians 10:27-29

Creation is by God: Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 24:1; 8:3; Exodus 20:11; I Samuel 2:8; Psalm 33:6; 146:6; Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 51:15; Acts 14:15; Ephesians 3:9

Creation shows God: Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-2

Demons, activity of: Daniel 10:10-14; Revelation 16:13-16; 12:3-4; Ephesians 6:11-12; Matthew 4:24; 9:33; Luke 3:11, 16; Mark 5:13; Colossians 2:15; I Timothy 4:1

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False Teachers: Matthew 7:13-27; Jeremiah 23:16, 32; Deuteronomy 18:20-22; Matthew 24:4-5; 11, 24; II Pet 2:1-3

Free will of man: Proverbs 1:23; Isaiah 31:6; Ezekiel 14:6; 18:32; Matthew 18:3; John 6:29; 19:1; I John 3:23

Freedom from law, legalism: law a unit, go by all of it or none (Matthew 5:19); law given only to Israel (Leviticus 26:46; Romans 2:14; 9:4); law fulfilled by Christ (Galatians 3:13); law done away with (Romans 6:15)

God judge those who have never heard? Romans 1:18-25; 2:1, 14-16; Acts 14:15-17; Hebrews 11:6

God, a Trinity: Matthew 28:19; 3:16-17; Genesis 1:26; 11:7

God, above & separate from creation: John 4:24; Hebrews 1:3

God, creator: Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Nehemiah 9:6; Psalm 24:1; 8:3; Exodus 20:11; I Samuel 2:8; Psalm 33:6; 146:6; Isaiah 40:12; Jeremiah 51:15; Acts 14:15; Ephesians 3:9

God, existence: Genesis 1:1-3; Romans 1:20

God, grace: Romans 3:24; 11:5; Ephesians 2:8; II Peter 3:18; Genesis 6:8; Psalm 51:1; John 1:16; Romans 5:2; II Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:16

God, holy: Exodus 15:11; Leviticus 19:2; Habakkuk 1:13; Revelation 4:8

God, personality: personal (John 4:24; Hebrews 1:3); Remembers (Isaiah 43:25; Jeremiah 31:20; Hosea 8:13); Speaks ((Exodus 3:12; Matthew 3:17; Luke 17:6); Knows (Jeremiah 29:11; II Timothy 2:19; I John 3:20)

God, seen in creation, nature: Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-2

God, sovereign: Exodus 18:11; 15:18; Matthew 6:10, 13; 11:25; Deuteronomy 4:39; I Chronicles 29:11; Daniel 6:26; John 7:17; Ephesians 1:11; I Tim 2:4; 6:15; Rev 19:6

Heaven: Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:34-38; 23:43; Revelation 7:9; 8:1; I Corinthians 13:12; 15:42; Philippians 1:23; I John 3:2; II chronicles 2:6; Mark 16:19; Deuteronomy 26:15; Job 3:17; Psalm 17:15; 73:24; Matthew 3:17; 5:3; Luke 16:19-31; 12:32; John 14:1-3; I Thessalonians 4:17

Hell & punishment are real: Revelation 20:15; 14:9-11; Matthew 5:22; 8:11-12; 13:42, 50; 22:13; Mark 9:44-48; Luke 3:17

Holy Spirit indwells believers: I Corinthians 1:21; 5:5; I John 2:20, 27; John 3:3-8; 7:37-39; 14:16-17; Romans 5:5; 8:9; I Cor 2:12; 6:17-19; 12:13; John 7:37-39

Holy Spirit: John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 20:22; 16:8-14; I Corinthians 2:10-15; Matthew 1:18; 3:11, 16-17; 10:20; Isaiah 63:10; Acts 5:3-4; Ephesians 4:30; Acts 8:29; 13:2; Luke 12:12; John 16:7-18

Homosexuality is sin: Romans 1:26-32; I Corinthians 6:9-10; Leviticus 20:13; Genesis 2:18-22; I Timothy 1:8-10

Hypocrisy doesn't invalidate Christianity: Matthew 23:23-36; Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 7:23; Proverbs 26:23-26; Titus 1:16; I John 1:8, 10

Israel, God's special protection of: Isaiah 11:11-14; 19:19-25; Genesis 12:3; Jeremiah 48:12-15; Ezekiel 29:9-10; 35:1-5

Jesus, Deity of: John 1:1, 34; 5:17-23; 10:30, 36-38; 12:45; 13:20, 45; 14:1, 9; 17:11, 21-22; 20:24-31; Ephesians 1:20-23; Philippians 2:6-10; Hebrews 1:18; Matthew 1:23; 3:17; 8:29

Jesus, fully human: Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:52; 19:10; I John 1:1; Matthew 26:12; 4:2; Hebrews 4:15

Jesus, the only way to God: John 14:6; 8:24; 3:16-18; 10:30; Matthew 26:63-64; Acts 4:12; Galatians 1:8; I Corinthians 3:11; I John 2:23; Luke 10:16

Jesus' resurrection, physical & literal: Luke 24:39-44; John 20:27-28; Mark 16:14; I Corinthians 15:15

Jews, God's chosen people: Deuteronomy 14:2; 7:6-7; 10:14-15; Ezekiel 22:17-22

Jews, God's special protection of: Isaiah 11:11-14; 19:19-25; Genesis 12:3; Jeremiah 48:12-15; Ezekiel 29:9-10; 35:1-5

Law, legalism – believers free from: law a unit, go by all of it or none (Matthew 5:19); law given only to Israel (Leviticus 26:46; Romans 2:14; 9:4); law fulfilled by Christ (Galatians 3:13); law done away with (Romans 6:15)

Life after death: Matthew 17:1-3; 22:32; John 11:25; Genesis 35:18; II Corinthians 5:8; Philippians 1:21-23; John 3:36; Luke 23:43

Life, only God can create: Jeremiah 10:16; Col 1:16-17; Job 33:4; Gen 1:26; Ps 8:6

Marriage, believers only marry other believers: II Corinthians 6:14-18

Materialism, attitude to money, accumulating money, uses of money, etc: see verses at end of this booklet

Materialism, attitude to: Proverbs 30:8-9; 10:15; 28:22; Matthew 19:23-24; II Corinthians 9:8; II Thessalonians 3:10; Ecclesiastes 10:19; Acts 8:20; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Mark 8:36-37

Mercy killing: Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; 7:17; Job 3:11; Jeremiah 20:14, 18; Romans 14:7-8; Philippians 1:21-24; Hebrews 9:27; Revelation 9:6; Luke 7:11-18; Matthew 9:18-26; John 11:43

Miracles really happened: Matthew 8:14-15, 26-27; 9:2, 6-7, 27-30; Mark 1:32-34; John 2:1-11; 6:10-14

Miracles really happened: John 10:24-25; 20:30-31; 3:2

Money, attitude to: Proverbs 30:8-9; 10:15; 28:22; Matthew 19:23-24; II Corinthians 9:8; II Thessalonians 3:10; Ecclesiastes 10:19; Acts 8:20; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Mark 8:36-37

Money, materialism, attitude to money, accumulating money, uses of money, etc: see verses at end of this booklet

Nature shows God: Romans 1:19-20; Psalm 19:1-2

Occult, spiritism wrong: Leviticus 19:31; 20:6-7, 27; Exodus 20:27; 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; I chronicles 10:13-14; Isaiah 8:19-20; Galatians 5:20; Revelation 21:8

Prayer, promises: Matthew 18:19; 21:22; Mark 11:24; Isaiah 65:24; Jeremiah 33:3; Matthew 7:7-8; John 14:13; I Thessalonians 5:17; Ephesians 8:18; Hebrews 4:16; Philippians 4:6-7; I Timothy 2:1

Resurrection of Christians: Psalm 49:15; 16:9-10; Luke 14:14; II Corinthians 4:14; Job 14:12-15; 19:25-27; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:15; I Corinthians 15; Philippians 3:20-21; I Thessalonians 4:16-18; John 11:23-26

Resurrection of Jesus, physical & literal: Luke 24:39-44; John 20:27-28; Mark 16:14; I Corinthians 15:15; I Corinthians 15:1-19; Matthew 27:62-66; 28:1-17; Mark 16:9-14; John 20:19-31

Salvation by faith only is too easy: Matthew 19:16-26; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 20:31

Salvation only through Jesus John 14:6; 8:24; 3:16-18; 10:30; Matthew 26:63-64; Acts 4:12; Galatians 1:8; I Corinthians 3:11; I John 2:23; Luke 10:16

Salvation, a free gift: Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 1:12-13

Salvation, Atonement for sin: Exodus 12:13; Matthew 26:28;; 28:5-7; Luke 24:39; John 1:29; 19:33; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20

Salvation, available for whoever comes: Ezekiel 33:11; Romans 10:13; I Timothy 2:4; II Peter 3:9; Matthew 12:50; 18:4; 10:32

Salvation, can't be lost: John 3:16-18, 36; 5:24; 6:37-40; 10:27-30; 20:30-31; Romans 8:14-16, 28, 37-39; 14:8; II Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:13-14; 3:12; Hebrews 6:4-6

Salvation, man can't save self: Psalm 49:7; Luke 11:24-26; I Peter 1:18-19; II Peter 2:20-22

Salvation, man's need of: Isaiah 64:6; Romans 5:12; Hebrews 9:27; I John 1:10

Salvation, not earned by good works: Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 3:20, 27; 4:4-5; 5:8; 6:232; 11:6; Galatians 3:11; James 2:10; I Peter 2:24; Titus 3:5

Salvation, not everyone will get to heaven: Matthew 25:46; Luke 16:19-31; John 3:18, 36; 5:28-29; 6:37-40; I John 3:10; Revelation 20:10-15

Salvation, provided by Jesus: John 3:15-18, 36; 14:7; 10:10; Isaiah 53:5-6; I John 4:10; 5:12; Romans 5:6-8; I Peter 2:24; 1:18-19; II Corinthians 5:21; I John 5:11-13; Acts 4:12; Ephesians 1:7

Salvation, received by faith: Romans 10:13; John 5:24; Acts 17:31; Galatians 3:22; 5:6; John 3:16

Satan, defeating: Matthew 4:1-11; John 15:7; 17:15; Ephesians 6:10-18; II Thessalonians 3:3; James 4:7; I Peter 5:8-9; I John 4:4; 5:18; Romans 8:28; II Cor 2:7; Jude 8-9

Satan, fall of: Ezekiel 28:11-19; Isaiah 14:12-20; I Tim 3:6

Satan, nature of: Ezekiel 28:12-14; Ephesians 6:11-12; Job 1:12; John 8:44; I John 3:8; I Peter 5:8; Revelation 12:10; II Thessalonians 3:3

Sex, outside marriage forbidden: Matthew 5:27-32; 19:9; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 18-20; Hebrews 13:4; Exodus 20:14; Deuteronomy 5:18; 24:1-4; Luke 18:20; James 2:11; II Peter 2:14; I Corinthians 5:9; Ephesians 5:3; Leviticus 20:10; I Thessalonians 4:3

Sex, to show love in marriage: Genesis 3:16; 18:12; 26:8-9; 2:23-25; Deuteronomy 24:5; 34:7; Proverbs 5:15-19; Song of Solomon 7:6-10; Hebrews 13:4; I Corinthians 7:3-4

Sin defined: Romans 3:23; 14:23; Galatians 5:19-21; James 4:17; I John 3:4

Sin paid for by Jesus: Exodus 12:13; Matthew 26:28;; 28:5-7; Luke 24:39; John 1:29; 19:33; Romans 5:6-8; Ephesians 1:7; Colossians 1:20

Sinfulness of man: Mark 10:18; Isaiah 53:5-6; 59:1-2; Rom 3:10-12, 23; 6:23; James 2:10; I John 1:8-10; 3:4; 5:17

Sins of believers, forever gone: John 3:18, 36; II Thessalonians 1:7-9; Romans 8:1; II Peter 3:9-14; Revelation 20:11-15

Soul sleep wrong: Matthew 17:1-3; 22:32; John 11:25; Genesis 35:18; II Corinthians 5:8; Philipians 1:21-23; John 3:36; Luke 23:43

Spiritism, occult wrong: Leviticus 19:31; 20:6-7, 27; Exodus 20:27; 22:18; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; I chronicles 10:13-14; Isaiah 8:19-20; Galatians 5:20; Revelation 21:8

Spiritual warfare promises, memory verses: see verses at end of this booklet

Suffering and Evil, why exist John 9:1-3; II Peter 3:9; Revelation 21:1-8; Romans 8:28

Suffering, attitude to: Philipians 1:29; 3:10; I Peter 2:19-21; 5:10; John 15:2; 13:7; Hebrews 12:7; 11:25; Revelation 3:19; Romans 8:18, 28; II timothy 2:12; I Peter 4:12-19; Hebrews 2:10; 5:8; II Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 5:45

Suffering, reasons for: Job 1 – 2; Hebrews 5:8; II Corinthians 12:7; I Peter 1:7-8; John 16:33; II Corinthians 4:8-11;; 1:3-24; II Timothy 2:10-13

Trinity: Matthew 28:19; 3:16-17; Genesis 1:26; 11:7

Truth: Psalm 51:6; 25:5; John 14:6; 16:13; 1:17; 8:44; 14:17; 17:17; Matthew 5:33-37; John 8:31-36; Ephesians 4:25