

The Christian Life

MASTER OUTLINES & STUDY NOTES

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Bible Study Outlines

These Bible studies are based on:

The Christian Life

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Compiled by Porter Barrington

NKJV

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FORWARD

The Bible is the most important book ever written. It is God’s written Word to man. The New Testament tells about the Lord Jesus Christ, Himself. It tells of His birth, His death, and His resurrection.

These outlines have been put together by Porter Barrington, who has been an evangelistic pastor all of his adult life. The Word of God has been at the heart of his entire ministry.

The Christian Life Study Outlines and Notes are the amplification of a ministry of over 35 years, both in the pastorate and in the field of teaching and evangelism. These lessons by Porter Barrington on the Great Doctrines of the Bible are simple without being ordinary, short without being shallow, brief without being dwarfed, positive without being over-formal and comprehensive without being complicated.

They were produced to fill a need in the life of the average Christian, to provide an incentive to know more of God’s Holy Word. If diligently studied, they will help to establish you in the faith and give you spiritual confidence.

It is suggested that you study the Master Outlines in the order given; one each day for fifteen days, and at the end of fifteen days, you will know more about the New Testament than you ever thought possible. This study is equal to an advanced course in Systematic Theology. If you review these lessons often, you will continue to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Outline One: The Bible

The Bible is The Word of God

It is important for a new or renewed Christian to start right; therefore, the first lesson is designed to help establish your faith in the Bible, for it IS the word of God. Keep in mind that the Bible is not a book of philosophy, although it is philosophical. Do not go to the Bible for a scientific argument. However, there is no discrepancy between ascertained facts of science and the Bible. The Bible is not a book of history, but is found to be accurate when recording history. The Bible was given to us from God, revealing Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and God the Son, the only Savior John 14:6. He is the center and the circumference. It is Christ from Genesis to Revelation John 5:39.

The Bible is as high above all other books as the heavens are above the earth. Someone has said of the Bible: "Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe and practice it to be right."

1 The Bible claims to be the inspired word of God – (II Timothy 3:16-17): 16) "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17) that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

Note:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God." Upon this statement of fact, evangelical Christianity stands. The Bible claims to be the inspired Word of God. By "inspiration" we mean that the Holy Spirit exerted His supernatural influence upon the writers of the Bible. The writings were inspired – not necessarily the writers, for the Bible nowhere claims to have been written by inspired men.

- 1) **The Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible** (II Peter 1:21). Christ told His disciples that he would leave "many things" unrevealed, and that the Holy Spirit would come and choose certain persons and through them reveal His perfect will unto man; and that the Holy Spirit would be the believer's teacher (John 16:12-15).
- 2) **Man is the instrument used by the Holy Spirit to write the Bible**
- 3) **Results:** the infallible Word of God. Therefore, the Bible is free from error and absolutely trustworthy. (Psalm 119:89 and Matthew 24:35)

2 The Bible is a difficult book (I Corinthians 2:14-16): 14) "But the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he

know them, because they are spiritually discerned. 15) But he who is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is rightly judged by no one. 16) For "who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ."

Notes:

The Bible is a difficult book because it came from the infinite to the finite – from the unlimited, all powerful God, to limited man. Therefore, you cannot understand the Bible as you would understand the writings of Plato or Socrates. You can study the great philosophers with the natural mind, and by diligent application, grasp their profound meanings. If the Bible could be understood by natural man, it would be a natural book and could not be the Word of God. Since the Bible is from God, and therefore spiritual, before you can receive its teachings, you must be born of the Spirit John 3:6 and filled with the Spirit Ephesians 5:18. Always approach the Bible praying that the Spirit will be your teacher and will guide you to a better understanding of His Holy Word, or it will remain a difficult, closed book (John 16:12-15).

- 3 The Bible is a book of oneness** (2 Peter 1:21): **21** "for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

Notes:

The oneness or unity of the Bible is a miracle. It is a library of 66 books, written by over 35 different authors, in a period of approximately 1,500 years. Represented in the authors is a cross section of humanity, educated and uneducated, including kings, fishermen, public officials, farmers, teachers and physicians. Included in the subjects are religion, history, law, science, poetry, drama, biography and prophecy. Yet its various parts are as harmoniously united as the parts that make up the human body.

For 35 authors, with such varied backgrounds, to write on so many subjects, over a period of approximately 1,500 years, in absolute harmony, is a mathematical impossibility. It could not happen! Then how do we account for the Bible? The only adequate explanation is: "Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit."

- 4 The Bible claims special power** (Hebrews 4:12): **12** "For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

Notes:

"For the word of God is living and powerful..." The Bible claims:

- 1) **Dividing power as a sword (above verse).** The Bible will separate man from sin II Psalm 119:11 or sin will separate man from the Bible Isaiah 59:2
- 2) **Reflecting power as a mirror James 1:22-25.** In the Bible, we see ourselves as God sees us – as sinners Romans 3:23
- 3) **Cleansing power as water Ephesians 5:26.** David prayed that God would "wash him from iniquity" and "cleanse him from sin." Psalm 51:2
- 4) **Reproductive power as seed 1 Peter 1:23.** We are children of God because we have been born into the family of God by the incorruptible seed of God. This is the new birth John 3:1-7
- 5) **Nourishing power as food 1 Peter 2:2.** The Bible is spiritual food for the soul. No Christian can remain strong in the Lord and not study the Word of God

- 5 The Bible commands the believer to study the scriptures** (2 Timothy 2:15)
15) "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God, a worker who does not need to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

Notes:

"Study to show thyself approved unto God" is a command. As you study the Bible, you will discover that it does not just contain the Word of God – it **IS** the Word of God. You must also keep in mind that the Word of God contains the **words** of God, as well as the words of Satan, demons, angels and man – both good and bad. God is truth and cannot lie. Satan "is a liar and the father of it" John 8:44. Man is natural and is therefore limited, and does not always speak the truth. To illustrate: Matthew 22:15-46. In this portion of Scripture, we have the words of Jesus, of the Pharisees, of the Herodians and of the Sadducees. The Pharisees, Herodians and Sadducees were trying to entangle Jesus in His teachings, that they might accuse Him of breaking God's law. Their words were spoken with evil intent, revealing the thinking of the natural man, along with the words of God that came from the lips of Jesus.

As you study the Bible, ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Who is speaking: God, demon, angel or man?
- 2) To whom is he speaking: to the nation Israel, to the Gentiles, to the Church, to men in general or to some individual man or being?
- 3) How can this Scripture be applied to my own life to make me a better Christian?

Outline Two: God

The Bible reveals God as the only infinite and Eternal Being, having no beginning and no ending. He is the Supreme Personal Intelligence, and Righteous Ruler of His universe. He is life, and therefore, the only source of life (John 5:26).

Man is natural and cannot know God by wisdom (Job 11:7). God is a person and can be known only by revelation. In the Old Testament He revealed Himself to and through His prophets? In the New Testament He reveals Himself through Jesus Christ (Hebrews 1:1-3)

1 The existence of God (Hebrews 11:6): **6)** But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Notes:

The Bible nowhere attempts to prove or argue the existence of God. "For he that comes to God must believe that he is."

The existence of God as a fact taken for granted by the writers of both the Old and New Testaments. "In the beginning God" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible opens by announcing the sublime fact of God and His existence. There are arguments for the existence of God; they are not conclusive but are food for thought:

- 1) **Universal belief in God comes from within man.** It is innate in man, and comes from rational intuition.
- 2) **The argument from "cause and effect."** Everything that began owes its existence to a cause. We have a watch; we must have a watchmaker. We have a building; we must have a builder. We have creation; we must have a creator. This creation could not have come into existence without an intelligent, personal creator, any more than the alphabet could produce a book without an author.
- 3) **The argument from anthropology.** Man's moral and intellectual nature argues for a moral and intellectual creator.
- 4) **The Bible and the Christ that it reveals;** His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious death and His bodily resurrection – all of this and much, much more – argue for the existence of God.

2 The Personality of God (1 Thess. 9) **9**) For they themselves declare concerning us what manner of entry we had to you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,

Notes:

The Bible reveals God as personality. He is called "the living and true God" – One possessing self-consciousness and self-determination. His personality is shown in what He does, such as:

- 1) **God loves.** "God so loved the world" (John 3:16)
- 2) **God hates.** "These six things the Lord hates" (Prov. 6:16 OT)
- 3) **God cares.** "He cares for you" (1 Peter 5:7)
- 4) **God grieves.** "He was grieved in His heart" (Gen. 6:6 OT)

Only a personality can love, hate, care and grieve; therefore God must be a living, eternal and personal being.

3 The Nature of God (I John 4:8): **8**) He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Notes:

God is described 4 ways in the Bible. Since God cannot be defined, they are incomplete. However, they do throw light upon the nature of God. They are:

- 1) **"God is love"** (I John 4:8). This is the nature of God in His divine compassion.
- 2) **"God is light"** (1 John 1:5). The nature of God's divine character; there is no darkness in Him.
- 3) **"God is consuming fire"** (Hebrews 12:29). This is the nature of God in His divine holiness.
- 4) **"God is a Spirit"** (John 4:24). This is the nature of God in His divine essence.

The attributes of God reveal His nature. Do not think of His attributes as abstract, but as vital mediums through which His holy nature is unveiled – attributes ascribed to Him, such as:

- 1) **Life is ascribed to God** (John 5:26).
- 2) **All knowledge is ascribed to God** (Psalm 147:5).
- 3) **All power is ascribed to God** (Revelation 19:6).
- 4) **Filling the universe with His presence is ascribed to God** (Psalm 139:7-10).

God is everywhere but not in everything. If God were in everything, man could worship any object and he would be worshipping God. God is spirit. (John 4:24)

4 The Grace of God (Eph. 2:8) For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God,

Notes:

Grace is the love and mercy of God in action. Mercy is negative, and love is positive; both together mean grace. To show mercy in love is grace. God showed mercy in love when He sent His Son to bear our sins in His own body on the cross (John 3:16).

- 1) **The grace of God saves forever** (Romans 8:38, 39).
- 2) **The grace of God is unconditional**; that is, we are not saved if we "hold out unto the end", or "fail not" or "do our best." We are saved by the grace of God, apart from works (Ephesians 2:8, 9).
- 3) **The grace of God is sufficient** (2 Corinthians 12:9).
- 4) **The grace of God makes no discrimination** (Revelation 22:17).
- 5) **The grace of God justifies** (Romans 3:23, 24).
- 6) **The grace of God makes every believer an heir** (Titus 3:7).
- 7) **The grace of God teaches the believer how to live** (Titus 2:11, 12).

The grace of God is nothing less than the unlimited love of God expressed in the gift of His Son, our Savior. It is the undeserved love of God toward sinners.

5 The Trinity of God (Matthew 3:16, 17): **16)** "When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. **17)** And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Notes:

By the Trinity of God we mean His tri-personal existence as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – three distinct persons in one God.

- 1) **The Father is recognized as God** (1 Peter 1:2) and is all the fullness of the Godhead (John 1:18).
- 2) **The Son is recognized as God** (Hebrews 1:8 – and is all the fullness of the Godhead in the flesh (John 1:14).

- 3) **The Holy Spirit is recognized as God** (Acts 5:3,4) and is all the fullness of the Godhead acting upon man, convicting him of sin (John 16:7-11) and guiding the believer into all truth (John 16:12-15).
- 4) **The doctrine of the Trinity is not explained in the Old Testament, but is rather implied**, (Genesis 1:26).
- 5) **The doctrine of the Trinity is revealed in the New Testament.** In verses 16 and 17, we have Christ being baptized in water, the Father speaking from heaven, and the Holy Spirit descending as a dove. We are to baptize in the "name (not names) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

Even creation implies the doctrine of the Trinity.

- 1) **In creation**, we have space, matter, and time in one creation.
- 2) **In space**, we have length, width, and height in one space.
- 3) **In matter**, we have energy, motion, and phenomenon in one substance.
- 4) **In time**, we have past, present, and future in one time.
- 5) **In man**, we have body, soul, and spirit in one man (1 Thessalonians 5:23).
- 6) **In the Holy Trinity**, we have Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in one God.

Outline Three: Jesus Christ

Christianity is unlike any other religion, because it is more than a religion—it is the story of the life of the Son of God. Christ is Christianity and Christianity is Christ. He is the main subject of each book of the New Testament, and fulfills all the promises of God in the Old Testament. From His incarnation to His Second Coming (Revelation 17:14), He is the God-man, Christ Jesus in glory, exalted above all creatures, having “all power in heaven and in earth”. Matthew 28:18

During His earthly ministry, He claimed to be God in human flesh. He is what He claimed, or He is not. (Revelation 1:8). Before His claim can be denied, there are some things that must be accounted for:

- His virgin birth
- His holy, sinless life
- His many miracles
- His vicarious (on our behalf; substitutionary) death
- His bodily resurrection

1 The Deity of Jesus Christ (John 1:1) 1) In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Notes:

The deity of Jesus Christ, or His God nature, is established in the New Testament. Some of the facts are:

- 1) **He is called God by the apostle John** (John 1:1)
- 2) **He is called God by the apostle Thomas** (John 20:28).
- 3) **He is called God by God the Father** (Hebrews 1:8).
- 4) **He claimed to be God in that He was with the Father before creation** (John 17:5)
- 5) **He claimed to be God in that He was before Abraham.** Abraham rejoiced to see My day...” (John 8:51-59)
- 6) **He received worship, and only God is to be worshipped** (Matthew 14:33). Angels refused worship (Revelations 22:8, 9). Man refused worship (Acts 10:25, 26)
- 7) **He forgives sin** (Mark 2:5-11). Only God can forgive sin.
- 8) **He is creator and maker of all things** (Colossians 1:16)

- 9) **He is Sustainer of all things** (Hebrews 1:3). Only God can control the universe.
- 10) **He claimed to have "all authority ... in heaven and on earth"** (Matt. 28:18).
- 11) **He walked upon the blue waters of Galilee**, commanded the winds and the waves, healed the sick, raised the dead, gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, cast out demons, made the lame to walk, turned water into wine, and fed five thousand with the lunch of a lad

2 **The Humanity of Jesus Christ** (Romans 1:3) **3**"concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh,"

Notes:

The Humanity of Jesus Christ is seen in His human parentage (Matthew 2:11)

- 1) **He developed as a normal human being** (Luke 2:52)
- 2) **He was subject to all the sinless infirmities of the human nature:**
 - **He hungered** (Matthew 4:2)
 - **He was thirsty** (John 19:28).
 - **He was weary** (John 4:6)
 - **He wept** (John 11:35)
 - **He was tempted** (Hebrews 4:15)

Jesus is man, and yet He is more than man. He is not God and man, but the God-man. He is God in human flesh. His two natures are put together in such a way that the two natures become united in one person, having a single consciousness and will.

3 **The Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ (Luke 1:26-35) 26** Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, **27** to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. **28**) And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed are you among women!" **29**) But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. **30**) Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. **31**) "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. **32**) "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. **33**) "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." **34**) "Then Mary said to the angel "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" **35**) "And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the

Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

Notes:

The virgin birth of Jesus Christ is without duplicate in history. It was by virgin birth that God became man, one person but two natures: God nature and the nature of man-man without sin (Hebrews 4:15). The union of the two natures became the God-man Christ Jesus.

- 1) **The first hint of the virgin birth is found in** (Genesis 3:15). The One to defeat Satan was to be born of "the seed" of the woman. This is a biological miracle: there is no "seed" of the woman. From this, we are to understand that One was to be born of a woman without a human father (Luke 1:34, 35)
- 2) **Isaiah prophesied of the coming Christ** (Isaiah 7:14).
- 3) **Isaiah prophesied of Christ** (Isaiah 9:6, 7). This means that God gave His only begotten Son who was with Him from eternity, and the Child Jesus was born of a virgin. God gave His Son "unto us."
- 4) **According to prophecy, He was to be born in Bethlehem** (Micah 5:2)

4 The Death of Jesus Christ (Philippians 2:8). And being found in the appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Notes:

The death of Jesus Christ is mentioned more than 120 times in the New Testament and is spoken of many times by the prophets in the Old Testament.

- 1) **The death of Jesus Christ was Vicarious** (Matthew 20:28). He was God's substitute for sinners (2 Corinthians 5:21). *On the cross, Christ was made sin for the sinner, the sinner is made righteous.*
- 2) **The death of Jesus Christ was natural** (John 19:31-37). By a natural death, we mean that His spirit and soul were separated from His body.
- 3) **The death of Jesus Christ was unnatural** (Romans 6:23). By an unnatural death, we mean that since He was sinless, in that He "committed no sin" (1 Peter 2:22)
 - a) **"had no sin"** (1 John 3:5)
 - b) **"knew no sin"** (2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - c) **before He could die**, He had to be "made sin for us." Therefore, His death was unnatural.

- 4) **The death of Jesus Christ was preternatural** (Revelation 13:8). By this, we mean that the death of Jesus was not an afterthought with God; it was the forethought of God.
- 5) **The death of Jesus Christ was supernatural** (John 10:17, 18). Jesus said, "No one takes life from me." Then He said, "I lay it down of Myself". "I have power to take it up again." This He did on the cross, after three days and three nights, He took life up again when He arose from the dead.

Only God in the form of man could die a vicarious, natural, unnatural, preternatural, and supernatural death.

5 The Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:1-20): **1)** Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. **2)** And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. **3)** His countenance was like lightning and his clothing as white as snow. **4)** And the guards shook for fear of him, and became as dead *men*. **5)** But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. **6)** "He is not here; for He is raised, as He said. Come; see the place where the Lord lay. **7)** "And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you." **8)** So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. **9)** And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, "Rejoice!" So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. **10)** Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid, Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me." **11)** Now while they were going, behold, some of the guards came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. **12)** When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers. **13)** saying, "Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" **14)** "And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure." **15)** So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. **16)** Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. **17)** When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. **18)** And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. **19)** "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy

Spirit, 20) "teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." **Amen.**

Notes:

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25). The resurrection of Jesus Christ was the doctrine of the disciples, the faith of the true believer, the courage of the martyr, the theme of every sermon, and the power of every evangelist.

Luke tells us that we have "many infallible proofs" of His resurrection (Acts 1:3). Let us look at some of these "infallible proofs".

- 1) **After His resurrection He appeared first to Mary Magdalene** (John 20:11-18)
- 2) **He appeared to the women returning from the tomb** (Matthew 28:5-10)
- 3) **Then He appeared to Peter** (Luke 24:34)
- 4) **To the Emmaus disciples** (Luke 24:13-31)
- 5) **To the apostles, Thomas not present** (Luke 24:36-43)
- 6) **Again to the apostles, Thomas present** (John 20:24-29)
- 7) **To the seven by the Sea of Tiberius** (John 21:1-23)
- 8) **To over five hundred brethren** (1 Corinthians 15:6)
- 9) **He was seen of James** (1 Corinthians 15:7)
- 10) **He was seen again by the eleven apostles** (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:3-12)
- 11) **He was seen of Stephen, the first martyr** (Acts 7:55)
- 12) **He was seen of Paul on his way to Damascus** (Acts 9:3-6; I Corinthians 15:8)

Many of these eye witnesses died martyr's deaths because they preached the resurrection of Jesus Christ. They were glad to die for a living Christ. They had the "infallible proofs."

When Jesus was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane, all of His disciples "forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56). From this time until after His resurrection, the disciples lived in fear. They did not believe that He would rise from the dead (John 20:9). *Without the Resurrection, the cross would have been the end of Christianity.* After the death of Jesus, we see His disciples dejected, discouraged, and defeated. The death of Jesus meant the end. How do we account for the great change that came into their lives three days and three nights later? The only logical explanation is that they had the "infallible proofs" that He had risen from the dead, and was alive forevermore. They saw Him, talked with Him touched Him, and ate with Him.

Now look at some “infallible proofs” according to circumstantial evidence:

- 1) **The change that came into the lives of the disciples after the Resurrection- from fear to unlimited courage.** They rejoiced in persecution (Acts 5:40-42)
- 2) **The early church began to worship on the first day of the week, the day of the Resurrection.** It was not a law-it was spontaneous (Acts 20:7). For almost two thousand years, the church has worshipped on the first day. For the Christian, every Sunday is Easter
- 3) **The early Christians went everywhere with the word of the Resurrection** (Acts 8:1-4)
- 4) **The empty tomb – for if Jesus is not alive,** what happened to His body? The Roman guards were paid to say, “His disciples came at night, and stole Him away while we slept” (Matthew 28:12-13).

First, if they stole His body, then how do you account for the fact that they all suffered, and most of them died martyrs’ deaths? Would not one of them reveal the hiding place to save his own life?

Second, no one was ever arrested or tried for stealing the body of Jesus. It is evident that the governing officials did not believe the story of the guards.

Third, the guards could have been put to death for sleeping while on watch.

Fourth, if they were asleep, how could they know who “stole” the body?

Fifth, had the enemies of Jesus moved the body, they could have produced it and ended Christianity!!

- 5) **The linen clothes found in the empty tomb are proof of the Resurrection** (John 20:1-10). Had anyone stolen the body, they would not have removed the linen clothes from a three day old dead body. When John saw the linen clothes, he knew that a miracle had taken place. Jesus came out of the clothes, and they collapsed without disturbing the folds. They were left in the empty tomb; and when John saw and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead.

6 The Ascension and Second Coming of Jesus Christ (Acts 1:9-11): 9) Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of sight. **10)** And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, **11)** who also said, “Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go up into Heaven.”

Notes:

After forty days of instructing His disciples, the risen Christ ascended up on high and is seated at the right hand of the Father (Hebrews 10:12). Two men brought the message of His second coming to the apostles (Acts 1:11). The message of the second coming of Jesus is so important, that it is mentioned over 300 times in the New Testament.

- 1) **He is coming to take His church to be with Him** (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17; John 14:1-6)
- 2) **He is coming to judge the nations** (Matthew 25:31-46)
- 3) **He is coming to save Israel** (Romans 11:25, 26)
- 4) **He is coming to sit upon the throne of David** (Luke 1:31-33; Isaiah 9:6, 7)
- 5) **He is coming to bring righteous government to this earth again, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus"** (Revelation 22:20)

Outline Four: The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit is God, and is equal to the Father and the Son. He is God the Holy Spirit, and is distinct from the Father and the Son. In the Genesis account of creation, He is seen actively engaged in the work of creation, along with the Father and the Son. In the Old Testament, He empowered men for service; but, when they were disobedient, He departed from them.

When David sinned, he prayed, "and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me" (Psalm 51:11).

In the New Testament, we see the Holy Spirit indwelling the believer, never leaving, filling and empowering him. A scriptural understanding of God the Holy Spirit will make you a better Christian and servant of God.

1 The Deity of the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:3-4): **3)** But Peter said, "Ananias, why has the Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4) "While it remained was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God."

Notes:

In dealing with Ananias, Peter revealed the Holy Spirit's Deity (Acts 5:3a). In this Scripture it is very clear that the Holy Spirit is God, and He is co-equal, co-eternal, and co-existent with the Father and Son.

1) His deity is also set forth in that He possesses divine attributes:

- a) He is everywhere present in the universe (Psalm 139:7-10)
- b) He has all power (Luke 1:35)
- c) He has all knowledge (I Corinthians 2:10-11)
- d) He is eternal (Hebrews 9:14)

2) His deity is revealed - His name is coupled in equality with the name of the Father and the Son.

- a) In the baptism of the believer (Matthew 28:19)
- b) In the apostolic benediction (II Corinthians 13:14)

3) His deity is seen in relation to the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.

- a) Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit (Luke 1:35)
- b) He was anointed by the Holy Spirit for service (Acts 10:38)
- c) He was led by the Holy Spirit (Matthew 4:1)
- d) He was crucified in the power of the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 9:14)

- e) He was raised from the dead by the power of the Holy Spirit (Romans 8:11)
- f) Jesus gave commandments to the apostles and the church through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:2)

If Jesus needed to depend solely upon the Holy Spirit here on the earth, can we afford to do less?

- 2 The Emblems of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:16):** 16) John answered, saying to all, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming; whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."

Notes:

It is difficult to impart truth by words. Frequently they reveal only a half-truth. The Bible used certain emblems when telling of the Holy Spirit, because they show more about Him. They are:

- 1) Fire as an emblem (Luke 3:16). Fire speaks of His consuming, purifying power (Acts 2:3, Isaiah 6:1-7)
- 2) Wind as an emblem (John 3:8). Wind speaks of His depth in His mighty regenerating power.
- 3) Water as an emblem (John 7:37-39).
- 4) Seal as an emblem (Ephesians 1:13). Seal speaks of His ownership; it is a finished, eternal transaction.
- 5) Oil as an emblem (Acts 10:38). Oil speaks of His power to anoint for service.
- 6) Dove as an emblem (Mark 1:10). The dove speaks of His gentle, tender, peaceful nature. We may know "the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding" (Philippians 4:7) only when fully surrendered to God.

- 3 Sins against the Holy Spirit (Matthew 12:31-32):** 31) "therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. "Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.

Notes:

This is a solemn study, because the Holy Spirit is God and can be sinned against by both the believer and the unbeliever. May He help you search your heart as you consider:

- 1) **The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit.** This sin is committed by unbelievers. It is often called the "unpardonable sin." It has no forgiveness. It was committed by the enemies of Jesus when they accused Him of casting out demons by the power of Satan (Matthew 12:24) when Jesus cast them out by the "Spirit of God" (Matthew 12:28)
- 2) **The sin of resisting the Holy Spirit** (Acts 7:51). This sin is committed by the unbeliever when rejecting Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord.
- 3) **The sin of grieving the Holy Spirit** (Ephesians 4:30-32). This sin is committed by believers. He is grieved by us unless He controls our lives to the glory of Jesus Christ.
- 4) **The sin of quenching the Holy Spirit** (1 Thessalonians 5:19). This sin is committed by Christians when known sin is allowed to go unconfessed (1 John 1:9; Isaiah 59:1-2)
- 5) **The sin of lying to the Holy Spirit** (Acts 5:1-11). The sin of Ananias and Sapphira was deception. They tried to mock God (Galatians 6:7) The Holy Spirit can be sinned against, He is God.

4 The Work of the Holy Spirit (John 16:7-14): 7) "Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. **8)** "And when He has come, He will convict toe world of sin, and of righteousness and of judgment; **9)** "of sin, because they do not believe in Me; 10) "of rightness, because I go to My Father and you see Me no more; 11) "of judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged. 12) "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now. 13) "However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own *authority*, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come. 14) "He will glorify Me, for He will take of what is Mine and declare *it* to you...."

Notes:

In instructing His disciples, regarding the coming of the Holy Spirit, Jesus said, ". . . for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you. And when He has come, He will . . ."

- 1) **Convict men of the sin of unbelief** (John 16:9)
- 2) **Convict men that Jesus is the righteousness of God** (John 16:10; Romans 10:3-4)
- 3) **Convict men that the power of Satan has been broken** (John 16:11)
- 4) **Regenerate the believer** (John 3:5; Titus 3:5)
- 5) **Indwell the believer** (1 Corinthians 6:19-20)
- 6) **Seal the believer** (Ephesians 1:13-14)

- 7) **Baptize the believer** (Acts 1:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13)
- 8) **Infill the believer** (Ephesians 5:18)
- 9) **Empower the believer** (Acts 1:8)
- 10) **Lead the believer** (Galatians 5:16-18)
- 11) **Administer spiritual gifts to the believer** (1 Corinthians 12:1-11)

The Holy Spirit came on the day of Pentecost, to remain with the church until it is complete and presented to the Lord Jesus at His coming. Just as Jesus Christ finished the work He came to do in the flesh, so the Holy Spirit will finish the work He came to do in the church.

5 The Fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23): 22) But the fruit of the Spirit is love, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 22) gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

Notes:

"The Fruit of the Spirit is love." Only as we live in love can we fulfill the will of God in our lives. The believer must become love-inspired, love-mastered, and love-driven (2 Corinthians 5:14). Without the fruit of the Spirit (love), we are just a religious noise (1 Corinthians 13:1).

"The Fruit of the Spirit is love," and it is manifested in joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control:

- 1) **Joy** is love's strength.
- 2) **Peace** is love's security.
- 3) **Longsuffering** is love's patience.
- 4) **Kindness** is love's conduct.
- 5) **Goodness** is love's character.
- 6) **Faithfulness** is love's confidence.
- 7) **Gentleness** is love's humility.
- 8) **Self-control** is love's victory.

"Against such there is no law." A Holy Spirit-controlled man needs no law to cause him to live a righteous life. The secret of a Spirit-controlled life is found in dedication to God (Romans 12:1-2).

Put your all on the altar, and the Holy Spirit will fill your heart with the love of God (Romans 5:5).

Outline Five: Sin

In considering the question of sin, we are faced with two startling facts. The first fact is that man makes so little of sin. To some, it is an illusion-a religious mirage-the invention of some fanatic. It is denied, joked about, and laughed at by man. Many, who believe sin to be a fact, continue in it with little thought of its penalty.

The second fact is that God makes so much of sin. God said, "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). "The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). All sins are an abomination to God (Proverbs 6:16-19), and He hates those who work iniquity (Psalm 5:5). Moses said, "...All who behave unrighteously, are an abomination to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 25:16). Sin is an evil force. Its presence cannot be escaped in this life, but it can be overcome by the power of God.

1 The Origin of Sin (Jude 1:6): 6 And the angels who did not keep their proper domain, but left their one abode, He has reserved in everlasting chains under darkness for the judgment of the great day;

Notes:

The origin of sin is one of the mysteries of the Bible. "The secret things belong to the Lord our God" (Deuteronomy 29:29). Its origin is one of the "secret things" that will remain wrapped in obscurity.

Sin was first noted in the heart of Satan. He was created a perfect being, "...till iniquity was found in you" (Ezekiel 28:11-19). Satan fell from perfection when he exerted his will above the will of God. Five times he said, "I will" (Isaiah 14:12-17). It was his will over God's will – this is sin. It is believed that Satan, when first created, was the ruler of this earth (Genesis 1:1). And that he fell through self-will; and at his fall, the earth "was without form, and void" (Genesis 1:2).

Isaiah tells us that God created the earth "not in vain" (Isaiah 45:18). "He did not create it a chaos." The earth was a perfect creation in Genesis 1:1. Something happened that caused a catastrophe and the earth became "without form and void" (Genesis 1:2), but it was not created thus.

It is believed that some of the angels, along with Satan, sinned by leaving their first estate. This does not prove that Satan was the originator of sin, but it does reveal sin in the heart of Satan before God created man.

2 What is Sin (I John 3:4): 4) Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness.

Notes:

It is impossible to deny the existence of sin, when the whole world is in conflict between good and evil. If sin were not a fact, there would be no crime; we would not need jails or prisons. We would need no locks on our doors, or vaults for our valuables. To some, sin is being indiscreet; or it is a weakness of the flesh. To others, it is the absence from good. To the so-called scholar, sin is ignorance; and to the evolutionist, it is the nature of the beast. The latest theory is that sin is a disease to be treated by science, because man is not a sinner-he is only sick. To others, sin is a form of selfishness, but God declares that;

- 1) **Sin is lawlessness** (I John 3:4)
- 2) **Sin is falling short of the glory of God** (Romans 3:23)
- 3) **Sin is rebellion against God** (Isaiah 1:2).
- 4) **Sin is unbelief**; it makes God a Liar (1 John 5:10)
- 5) **Sin is going your own way, planning your life according to your own will, without seeking the will of God** (Isaiah 53:6)
- 6) **All unrighteousness is sin** (1 John 5:17)

Sin is a folly to deceive you, a force to destroy you, and a fact to condemn you.
Sin is a volitional act of disobedience against the revealed will of God.

3 How Sin Entered into the World (Romans 5:12): 12) Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned -

Notes:

"...by one man sin entered into the world." The fall of man is found in Genesis 3:1-24. When Adam sinned, his seed became corruptible (1 Peter 1:23). Therefore, we are sinners, because we are born in sin (Psalm 51:5). You do not have to teach children to be bad, but you do have to teach them to be good. You do not have to teach them to lie, but you do have to teach them to tell the truth. "Therefore as by one man's offense judgment came to all men resulting in condemnation" (Romans 5:18). According to the Word of God, all men are judged sinners; all are condemned already (John 3:18). "All have sinned" (Romans 3:23). Sin entered the world through our first parents in the Garden of Eden, and "all have sinned" because all are sinners.

Man sins by choice, because he is a sinner by nature. Therefore, the dominion sin has over you is according to the delight you have in it.

4 The Results of Sin (Ephesians 2:1): 1) And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

Notes:

"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23). As a result of man's sin, there are three deaths. *Keep in mind that death does not annihilate; it only separates.* In the Garden of Eden, it separated man from God Spiritually; this is spiritual death. In natural death, it separates the spirit and the soul from the body; this is physical death. In final death, it separates man from the mercy of God forever; this is eternal death.

- 1) **The wages of sin is spiritual death.** Just as sin separated man from God spiritually and drove him from the presence of God out of the Garden, so sin will separate you from God (Isaiah 59:1-2). The only way back to God is to confess your sins to Him (1 John 1:9) and forsake your sins (Isaiah 55:7) that you may be restored to fellowship with God.
- 2) **The wages of sin is physical death.** Physical death is a result of sin. Death had no claim on man until man sinned. Now all die, because all are in sin. Death is universal; and, since we have a universal effect, we must have a universal cause, and that cause is universal sin. All men die - the good and the bad - the young and the old - and man will continue to die until death is destroyed by the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:26) and is swallowed up in victory (1 Corinthians 15:54-57).
- 3) **The wages of sin is eternal death.** "The soul who sins shall die" (Ezekiel 18:20). This is eternal separation from the love of God (Revelation 20:14). **Once the soul passes beyond the portals of Hades, he is lost and lost forever. He will continue to exist, but without hope.** He is damned and damned to all eternity. Eternal death is eternal separation from God (Luke 16:19-31).

5 Gods Remedy for Sin (2 Corinthians 5:21): **21)** For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Notes:

Man, not willing to accept God's remedy for his ruin, strives to bring about his own salvation by human means.

- 1) **He strives for self-righteousness** - when he needs to be made the righteousness of God (vs 21) (Isaiah 64:6).

- 2) **He strives to reform** - when he needs to be regenerated (Titus 3:5).
- 3) **He strives to turn over a new leaf** - when he needs a new life (John 10:10).
- 4) **He strives to be justified by the Law** - when he needs to be justified by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Galatians 2:16).
- 5) **He strives to clean up the old man** - when he needs to be made a new man in Christ (Ephesians 4:24).
- 6) **He strives to be saved by good works** - when he needs salvation by the grace of God (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The only remedy for the ruin of man is the Son of God being made sin for us on the cross. The only way to receive this remedy is by faith in Him as personal Savior (John 20:30-31).

Outline Six: Judgments

In the Scriptures, we are instructed to “rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15). This is most essential when studying the judgments. Do not endeavor to make all the judgments conform to the theory of one “general judgment.” The “general judgment” theory is the invention of religion, and is not taught in the Word of God. There are five separate judgments revealed in the Bible, and they differ as to time, place, and purpose. Yet, they all have one thing in common: the Lord Jesus Christ is the judge (John 5:22).

Everyone – from Adam to the last man to be born on this earth – will stand before the Lord Jesus Christ to be judged.

- 1) **In the first judgment**, the sins of the believers have already been judged in Christ on the cross.
- 2) **In the second judgment**, the believer is to judge self, or be judged and disciplined by the Lord Jesus.
- 3) **In the Third judgment**, all believers must appear at the “judgment seat of Christ” where their works are to be judged.
- 4) **In the fourth judgment**, all nations are to be judged at the Second Coming of Christ.
- 5) **In the fifth judgment**, the wicked dead are to be judged at the great white throne.

1 Judgment of the Believers Sin (John 5:24): 24) “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.

Notes:

In the above verse, our Lord tells us that the believer “shall not come into judgment.” (Matthew 10:15) Our sins were judged in Christ on Calvary and every believer “has passed out of death into life.”

- 1) **This is present salvation.** Christ paid for our sins. He was judged in the believer’s stead. The believer will not come into judgment because:
- 2) **Jesus Christ paid the penalty**, and on the grounds of His substitutional death, the believer is separated from his sins forever (Psalm 103:12).
- 3) **The sins of believer have been “blotted out”** and God has promised that He “will not remember your sins” (Isaiah 43:25).

- 4) **Our Lord suffered for our sins**, "the just for the unjust" that we might be saved and never come into judgment as sinners (1 Peter 3:18).

The believer will never be condemned with the world, because Christ was condemned in his place. "For He has made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us" (2 Corinthians 5:21). Christ was made a curse for us on the cross and "has redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13; Hebrews 9:26). The believer will not come into judgment because his sins have been purged (Hebrews 1:3).

- 2 Judgment of the Believers Self (1 Corinthians 11:31-32):** 31) For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. 32) But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.

Notes:

The judgment of the believer's self is more than judging things in the believer's life. When the believer judges self, the good and the bad in his life come to light; and he will confess the bad (1 John 1:9) and forsake it (Isaiah 55:7). However, it is not enough just to judge sin in the believer; he must judge self.

- 1) **To judge self is to practice self-abnegation, for when the believer sees self as God sees him, he will renounce self.** It is replacing the self-life with the Christ life (Colossians 3:4). Christ is the believer's life.
- 2) **To judge self is to deny self.** This is more than self-denial. Self-denial is denying one's self of the gratifications of the flesh. If we practice self-denial only, it is treating the symptom and not the cause. But when we deny self, we are attacking the cause, for in self (that is, in the flesh) "nothing good dwells" (Romans 7:18). To deny self is to take up our cross and follow Christ (Mark 8:34-38).
- 3) **To judge self is to lose the self-life and find the Christ life** (Galatians 2:20)
- 4) **To judge self is to no longer be self-conscious, but become Christ-Conscious** (Matthew 28:20)
- 5) **To judge self is to no longer be self-controlled, but to become Christ controlled** (Acts 9:6)
- 6) **To judge self is to no longer practice self-esteem, but to esteem others better than self** (Philippians 2:3). To judge self is to become selfless.

- 3 Judgment of the Believers Works (2 Corinthians 5:10):** 10) For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things *done* in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad.

Notes:

The believer's works will be judged at the "judgment seat of Christ." The term, "judgment seat of Christ" is found only twice in the Bible; but it is referred to many times. It is found in the above verse; also Romans 14:10. A careful reading of both verses with the context reveals that only believers will appear at the "judgment seat of Christ." Their works will be judged, not their sins, for we have already seen that the sins of the believer were judged in Christ on Calvary, and "There is therefore no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus" (Romans 8:1).

This judgment will take place "in the air," following the first resurrection. "The dead in Christ shall rise first" (1 Thessalonians 4:14-18). There will be a thousand years between the resurrection of the saved and the unsaved (Revelation 20:4-5), and there will be a thousand years between the "judgment seat of Christ" where only saved will appear and the "great white throne judgment" where only the unsaved will appear.

At the judgment seat of Christ, the believer will give an account of himself to God. Therefore we should look to our own works, and not judge the works of others (Romans 14:10-13).

It is a most humbling thought to know that some day the believer will face all of his works – "good or bad." Some will be ashamed (1 John 2:28) and "suffer loss" – not the loss of salvation, but the loss of rewards (1 Corinthians 3:11-15). So whatever you do, do it to the glory of God (Colossians 3:17).

- 4 Judgment of Nations (Matthew 25:31-46): 31)** "When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him then He will sit on the throne of His glory. **32)** "All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them from one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. **33)** "And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. **34)** "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: **35)** "for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; **36)** 'I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' **37)** "Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed you, or thirsty and gave you drink? **38)** "When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? **39)** 'Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' **40)** "And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to Me.' **41)**

Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: **42**) 'for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; **43**) 'I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' **44**) "Then they also will answer Him saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' **45**) "Then He will answer them, saying ;Assuredly, I say to you, in as much as you did not do it to one of these, you did not do it to Me.' **46**) "And these things will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Notes:

This judgment is not the judgment of the great white throne (Revelation 20:11-15). A careful comparison of the two judgments will establish the following facts:

The judgment of the nations will take place "when the Son of Man comes in His glory. Then He will sit on the throne of His glory." The great white throne is never called "the throne of his glory" (Revelation 20:11-15).

- 1) **At this judgment, He will judge the living nations** (Joel 3:11-16). At the white throne judgment, he will judge the wicked dead.
- 2) **At this judgment, there will be no resurrection of the dead.** At the great white throne, the entire wicked are raised: "The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them....." (Revelation 20:13).
- 3) **At this judgment, the judge is God "The King" judging the living nations in His earthly kingdom.** At the great white throne, the judge is God, judging only the wicked dead.
- 4) **At this judgment, there are no books opened.** At the great white throne, the "books were opened."
- 5) **At this judgment, there are three classes judged:** "sheep" – the saved (Revelation 7:9-17); "goats" – the unsaved (2 Thessalonians 1:7-10); "tribes" – the elect of Israel (Revelation 7:1-8, Romans 11:25-28). At the great white throne, there is only one class: "the dead".
- 6) **At this judgment, the King gives the kingdom to those who have eternal life.** At the great white throne, there are no saved and no kingdom; they are all "cast into the lake of fire.

5 Judgment of the Wicked (Revelation 20:11-15): **11**) Then I saw a great white throne and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away. And there was found no place for them. **12**) And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened. And another book was opened,

which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged according to their works, by the things which were written in the books. **13)** The sea gave up the dead who were in it, and Death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them. And they were judged, each one according to his works. **14)** Then Death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. **15)** And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

Notes:

The great white throne judgment will follow the thousand year reign of Christ. This is the final judgment, and only the wicked dead are to be judged. According to (Revelation 20:5), the believers were resurrected a thousand years before this judgment, and their works were judged at the "judgment seat of Christ" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

- 1) **At this judgment, the wicked dead will seek a hiding place from the face of the Lord Jesus Christ, the judge.** But there is no hiding place.
- 2) **At this judgment, the "dead, great and small" will stand before God.** But the greatness of the great will be of no value. "There is none who does good, no, not one" (Romans 3:12).
- 3) **At this judgment, the "book of life" will be opened.** Why the "book of life" if there are no saved at this Judgment? The wicked will be shown that God in His mercy provided space for them in the "book of life," so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20).
- 4) **At this judgment, the dead will be judged "according to their works."** God is a just God; and since there are degrees of punishment in hell, some will be punished more than others (Luke 12:42, 48).
- 5) **At this judgment, there will be no acquittal, no higher court to which the lost may appeal.** It is lost, and lost forever; it is damned to all eternity, and that without hope. There is a Hades (Luke 16:19-31) and in Hades, there is no hope, no sympathy, no love; even the love of God does not extend beyond the portals of Hades.

Outline Seven: Rewards

There is a vast difference in the doctrine of salvation for the lost, and the doctrine of rewards for the saved. Salvation is “the gift of God, not of works” (Eph. 2:8, 9). Salvation is received by faith in the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ (John 3:36). Rewards are according to the works of the believer (Matt. 16:27).

A most revealing Scripture concerning rewards is found in 1 Cor. 3:8 -15.

First, every believer will be rewarded “according to his own labor” (verse 8). We do not labor for salvation.

Second, “we are God’s fellow workers” (verse 9) – not for salvation, but for rewards.

Third, the believer is to build on the Lord Jesus Christ, “for no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ” (verse 11).

Fourth, the believer has a choice of two kinds of building materials: “gold, silver, precious stones” – this is building with eternal materials; or “wood, hay, straw” – this is building with temporal materials (verse 12) (2 Cor. 4:18).

The believer who builds on Christ with eternal materials, “gold, silver, precious stones,” shall receive a reward. Those who build on Christ with temporal materials, “wood, hay, straw,” will receive no reward. The works of “wood, hay, straw” will be destroyed at the “judgment seat of Christ,” and the believer will suffer loss – not the loss of salvation, but the loss of rewards.

In the first year of my ministry, I set at the bedside of a dying friend. As we talked of his home going, tears filled his eyes. Being young in the Lord, I thought he was afraid to die, and attempted to speak words of encouragement to him. He said, “I am not afraid to die; I am ashamed to die.” He went on to say that Christ was his Savior, but he had lived for self, and now had to meet the Lord Jesus Christ empty handed. His life loomed up before him as “wood, hay, straw.” He was “saved so as by fire.”

Rewards are called “crowns” in the New Testament.

- 1 The Crown of **Life** (James 1:12)
- 2 The Crown **Imperishable** (1 Cor. 9:24-27)
- 3 The Crown of **Rejoicing** (1 Thess. 2:19, 20)
- 4 The Crown of **Righteousness** (2 Tim. 4:5-8)
- 5 The Crown of **Glory** (1 Peter 5:2-4)

- 1 The Crown of Life (James 1:12):** 12) Blessed is the man who endures temptation; for when he has been approved, he will receive the crown of life which the Lord has promised to those who love Him.

Notes:

This reward could be called the lover's crown. Upon examination of the above verse, we discover that the believer finds strength to overcome temptation and endure trials, through the love of God. Paul said, "We also glory in tribulations." The question is, do we today glory in tribulations? We can, only if the "love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 5:2-5). Without the love of God in the heart of the believer, trials can cause him to become bitter and critical and lose the "crown of life."

All believers have eternal life (John 3:15, 16), but not all believers will be rewarded with the "crown of life." This crown will be given to those who are "faithful until death" (Rev 2:10). To receive the "crown of life" the believer must love the Lord more than his own life. "For whoever desires to save his life (live for self) will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's (live for Christ at all cost) will save it" (Mark 8:35). This reward will be given to those who live for Christ, and endure temptations, in the power of the love of God (1 Cor. 10:13).

- 2 The Crown Imperishable (1 Cor. 9:24-27):** 24) Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain it. 25) And everyone who competes for the prize is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown. 26) Therefore I run thus: not with certainty. Thus I fight: not as one who beats the air. 27) But I discipline my body and bring it into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified.

Notes:

Paul makes use of the Greek games to illustrate the spiritual race of the believer. They ran to win a "perishable crown, but we for an imperishable crown." No young man could contend in the games unless he was a Greek citizen, born of Greek parents. No unsaved person can participate in the services of the Lord for rewards; only the born of God are eligible (John 3:3).

Just as the athlete must deny himself many gratifications of the body, so the believer must say "I discipline my body and bring it into subjection" or

he will become "disqualified." He will not lose his salvation, but he will lose the "imperishable crown."

The Greek games had hard and fast rules for all participants. The New Testament contains the rules for believers who would enter the spiritual race to win the "imperishable crown."

- (1) The believer must deny self of anything that would weigh him down and hold him back (Heb. 12:1).
- (2) The believer must keep his eyes fixed on Christ, and not look to the right or the left (Heb. 12:2).
- (3) The believer must find strength in the Lord (Eph. 6:10-18).
- (4) The believer must place his all upon the altar of the Lord (Rom. 12:1, 2).
- (5) The believer must, by faith, refuse anything that would impede spiritual progress (Heb. 11:24-29).

Do not be spiritual spectator. Enter the race and run to win the "imperishable crown."

3 The Crown of Rejoicing (1 Thess. 2:19,20): 19) For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Is it not even you in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at His coming?

Notes:

The "crown of rejoicing" is the soul winner's crown. The greatest work you are privileged to do for the Lord is to bring others to knowledge of Christ as personal Savior. The degree of your joy in heaven will be determined by the souls you have had a part in bringing to Christ. Paul tells the Thessalonian believers that they are his "hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing" now and when Jesus comes.

- (1) It is wise to win souls to Christ (Prov. 11:30 OT)
- (2) It is a work against sin to win souls to Christ (James 5:20)
- (3) It is a cause for joy in heaven to win souls to Christ (Luke 15:20)
- (4) Every soul winner will shine as the stars forever (Dan. 12:3 OT)

How can you win souls to Christ:

- **Witness with your life;** live that others may see Christ in you (2 Cor. 3:2 and Gal. 2:20)

- **Witness with your mouth**, trusting the Holy Spirit to give power to the spoken word (2 Cor. 9:6)
- **Witness with tithes and offerings** that others may preach Christ, and you will have "fruit (reward) that abounds to your account" (Phil. 4:15 and 2 Cor. 9:6)

God has promised that your labor will not be in vain in the Lord (1Cor. 15:58). The soul winner will not rejoice alone – all of heaven will rejoice with him when he receives the "crown of rejoicing" (John 4:36)

4 The Crown of Righteousness (2 Tim. 4:5-8): 5) But you be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. 6) For I am already being poured out as a drink offering and my departure is at hand. 7) I have fought the good fight. I have finished the race. I have kept the faith. 8) Finally, there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give to me on that Day, and not to me only but also to all who have loved His appearing.

Notes:

The "crown of righteousness" is a reward, and it is not to be confused with the "righteousness of God" which the believer receives when he becomes a Christian; for at that time, the believer is to "become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21). This saving righteousness is a gift to be accepted by the lost. The "crown of righteousness" is a reward to be earned by the saved. If the believer looks for, and loves the doctrine of the second coming of Christ, it will affect his whole life. Look at the dynamic impact this truth had on the life of the apostle Paul. He could say:

(1) "**I have fought the good fight**" (verse 7, also 1 Cor. 15:32). He fought a spiritual battle throughout his Christian life, and won. He never surrendered to the enemies of righteousness (Eph. 6:12).

(2) "**I have finished the race.**" He had a race to run. And he did not detour the hard places; neither did he look back (Luke 9:61, 62). He finished his race with his eyes fixed on Christ (Phil. 1:6)

(3) "**I have kept the faith.**" He preached the "whole counsel of God" – never betraying any of the great doctrines (Acts 20:24-31). The apostle looked ahead to the "judgment seat of Christ" where the "crown of righteousness" will be given to those "who have loved His appearing." How important it is for the believer to look

with a heart of love for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, that he may receive the "crown righteousness" (verse 8).

5 The Crown of Glory (1 Peter 5:2-4): 4) and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive crown of glory that does not fade away.

Notes:

The "crown of glory" is a special reward for the faithful, obedient, God-called pastor. He will receive this reward when the "Chief Shepherd appears." It is eternal; it "does not fade away." Every believer may share in the pastor's "crown of glory." He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward" (Matt. 10:41). Support your faithful, God-called pastor by praying for him and encouraging him in the work of the Lord. Under gird his ministry with God's tithes and your offerings (Mal. 3:10 OT) giving freely of your time to the service of the Lord. And God will reward you for supporting His chosen servant by allowing you to share in your pastor's reward. The pastor will earn this "crown of glory by:

(1) **Feeding the church.** He is to proclaim the Word of God without fear or favor; and, when necessary, he will "convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" 2 Tim. 4:2-5).

(2) **Taking spiritual oversight of the church.** The pastor is responsible to God for the message preached to his people. No pastor should preach to please the people; he is to please this Lord (Gal. 1:10)

(3) **Being an example to the church.** He is not to serve for the reward of money. Yet, the church is responsible to care for his every material need (1 Tim. 5:18). He is the spiritual leader, and not a dictator. He is to walk with God by faith. "And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away."

Outline Eight: The Church

Jesus said, "I will build My church" (ecclesia) (Matt. 16:18). The word "ecclesia" in the New Testament is used to designate any assembly whether it be political (Acts 19:39), Christian (Eph. 1:22, 23), or national (Acts 7:38). It means a called-out assembly or congregation. God called Israel out of Egypt; they congregated in the wilderness; they were, "the church in the wilderness." Today, God calls the saved out of the world to congregate in worship. This is the church in the world, in it, but not of it.

Unlike the church in the wilderness, the Church that Jesus is building will never cease. He said, "The gates of Hades shall not over power it." His Church is not synonymous with Christendom. It is in Christendom in the same way in which it is in the world, in it, but not of it. Christendom is made up of those who profess to be Christians, but they know not Christ as a personal Savior (Matt. 7:21 - 23, also, 2 Tim 3:5 and Titus 1:16). Only blood-washed, born again, Spirit-baptized believers constitute the church that Jesus is building. It is called a;

Mystery – Eph. 3:3-10

Body – 1 Cor. 12:12-31

Building – Eph. 2:10 - 22

Bride – 2 Cor. 11:2

1 The Church: Its Foundation (Matt. 16:13-18) – Peter's Confession of Christ – 13)

Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He *began* asking His disciples, saying, "**Who do people say the Son of Man is?**" 14) And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, Elijah; but still others, Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." 15) He said to them, "**But who do you say that I am?**" 16) And Simon Peter answered and said "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17) And Jesus answered and said to him, "**Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but My Father who is in heaven.** 18) **"And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and gates of Hades shall not overpower it..."**"

Notes:

"Upon this rock I will build My church." Leading up to this declaration He asked His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is? They answered naming some of the prophets. Then He said to them, "But who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "Thou

art the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matt. 16:16). In verse thirteen Jesus spoke of Himself as the "Son of Man." Now Peter speaks of Him as the "Son of the living God." Jesus blessed Peter and said that this great truth came from God the Father. Again He said to Peter, "You are Peter, (Petros, a little rock) and upon this rock (Petra, a big rock) I will build My church." Jesus did not say that He would build His church upon Peter, but upon Himself, the Rock of Ages.

Simon Peter called Jesus the "living stone," the precious "CORNER STONE," a "STONE OF STUMBLING," and a "ROCK OF OFFENSE." He spoke of all believers, including himself, as "living stones." Christ is the foundation and believers are the building stones (1 Pet. 2:1-10).

Paul speaks of Christ as the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 2:19-22). He also said, "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ." (1 Cor. 3:11) Although the church was a mystery in the Old Testament, yet Isaiah said, "thus says the Lord GOD, 'Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a costly cornerstone *for* the foundation, firmly placed'" (Is. 28:16). Christ is the sure foundation of His church and all believers are little building stones built into a holy temple in the Lord.

- 2 The Church: Its Head (Col. 1:18) 18):** He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything.

Notes:

"He is also head of the body, the church." Christ is the foundation, cornerstone, and head of His Church. He is head of the local church, and He is head of the church in its all-inclusive sense, including all born again, blood-washed Spirit-baptized believers in heaven and earth.

The church is more than a religious organization; it is an organism, with Christ as the living head. It is alive with the life of Christ made living in each member (1 Cor. 12:1-31). Let us examine briefly the church and observe its role as the body of Christ:

- 1) The members of the body are given spiritual gifts according to the will of the Holy Spirit (verses 1-11).
- 2) The unity of the body is seen in its many members with different operations all related and coordinated under one Head (verse 12).

- 3) All are baptized by one Spirit into one body (verse 13).
 - a) There is one Holy Spirit.
 - b) There is one Holy Spirit baptism.
 - c) There is one body (the church).

This is the church in its broadest sense. You cannot join this church. The only way to become a member of His body is to be spiritually born (John 3:1-7) and baptized into it by the Holy Spirit.

- 4) The members differ one from the other, yet they function as one in the will of God (verses 14-18)
- 5) The least or weakest member is necessary for the proper function of the whole body (verses 22, 23).
- 6) If one member suffers, the whole body suffers; if one is honored, all are honored (verse 26).
- 7) The members are to desire the greater spiritual gifts and minister in love (verse 31).

The Lord Jesus Christ has never delegated His authority to anyone, whether he be pope, pastor, deacon, or the majority of the congregation. He is "head over all things to the church" (Eph. 1:22), the only absolute and final authority.

3 The Church: Its Organization (Titus 1:4, 5): 4) ... to Titus, my true child in a common faith: Grace and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior. 5) For this reason I left you in Crete, that you might set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city as I directed you,

Notes:

There is scriptural evidence of some organization in the local church from its inception. It was a definite and permanent organized congregation, but not as we know it today.

Paul left Titus in Crete to organize the believers into local church bodies and to "set in order what remains, and appoint elders in every city" (verse 5).

The local New Testament church is a microcosm of the complete body of Christ in heaven and earth. The word "church" is used over one hundred times in the New Testament, and the great majority of the references refer to the local congregation.

Organization in the local church is seen in:

- 1) **Its Officers:** He gave to the church "apostles" (this refers to the twelve; there are no apostles in the church today), "prophets" (we have no prophets and have not had

since the last book of the New Testament was written), "evangelists" (the evangelist will serve the church until Jesus comes), and "pastors and teachers" (Eph. 4:11:11, 12). Pastors and teachers are local ministers; the apostles, prophets and evangelist are ministers at large.

Another officer is the deacon. His qualifications are set forth in 1 Timothy (Tim. 3:8-13). Deacons are never called a board in the Scriptures. They are not to run the church; they are ordained to assist the pastor by ministering to the saints (Acts 6:1-7).

2) **Its Membership records:** The church must have kept records of its members. The Book of Acts tells us that there were about 120 in the upper room. The account (Acts 1:15-26) reads like the average local church business meeting. Simon Peter is the pastor; he takes the lead and gives direction in choosing one to take the place of Judas. "And they drew lots," and Matthias was chosen to be an apostle. On the day of Pentecost about 3,000 were added to the body of Christ by Holy Spirit baptism (1 Cor. 12:13) and the local church in Jerusalem by water baptism (Acts 2:41). Again the records show another 5,000 added (Acts 4:4). The Scriptures tell us that "the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).

3) **Its Ordinances:**

a) Baptism (baptize means to immerse). The Lord commands the believer to be baptized. This is the believer's first opportunity to obey his Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. In the early church no one ever questioned water baptism; they obeyed (Matt. 28:18-20 and Rom. 6:1-4). Baptism does not save. It is a picture of you faith in His death, burial, and resurrection. It is faith in Christ that saves (John 3:36) and the Ordinance of Baptism that identifies the believer with the risen Savior.

b) The **Lords Supper**. There is no saving power in the Lords Supper. It is a memorial. The bread is symbolical of His broken body and the wine of His shed blood for the remission of our sins. Baptism identifies the believer with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection; and the Lords Supper is a memorial to be observed by the believer to "proclaim the Lord's death until He comes" (1 Cor. 11:23-34)

4 The Church: It's Discipline (Matt. 18:15-17): 15) "And if your brother sins, go and reprove him in private; if he listens to you, you have won your brother. 16) "But if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that BY THE MOUTH OF TWO OR THREE WITNESSES EVERY FACT MAY BE CONFIRMED. 17) "And if he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as Gentile and a tax-gatherer.

Notes:

This is the most difficult and necessary function of the local assembly and its importance cannot be exaggerated. "Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of *dough*? Clean out the old leaven" (1 Cor. 5:6, 7). Leaven in the Scripture is always a type of evil. The church is to clean out any evil in its membership. The motive for disciplining a brother is love (1 John 4:7-11). The goal is to restore him to fellowship with his Lord and the church.

"If your brother sins ..."

- 1) The first step is to be taken by the one sinned against. He is to go to his brother alone, not seeking revenge or self-justification, "if he listens to you, you have won a brother."
- 2) If he does not repent, the second step is to take one or two believers and go to him again.
- 3) If he will not hear the two or three, the third step is taking it to the church.

A good example of church discipline is reported in Paul's letters to the church at Corinth. He used strong words calling upon the church to discipline a member for fornication. He wrote, "REMOVE THE WICKED MAN FROM AMONG YOURSELVES" (1 Cor. 5:1-13). In his second letter to the Corinthian church we learn that the man repented and was restored to the fellowship of God's people. Now Paul writes, "forgive and comfort *him* ... reaffirm *your* love for him" (2 Cor. 2:3-11). The attitude of the church toward a repenting brother should always be that of forgiveness in love.

- 5 The Church: Its Worship and Work (Matt 28:16-20):** 16) But the eleven disciples proceeded to Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had designated. 17) And when they saw Him, they worshiped *Him*; but some were doubtful. 18) And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19) "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20) teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

Notes:

First, the church: its worship. "When they saw Him they worshiped Him" (verse 17). To worship is to bow down in awe; to pay divine honors to God in humble, reverent homage. There are three essentials in worship, they are

- 1) Faith, "the people believed ... then they bowed low and worshiped" (Ex. 4:31).
- 2) Spirit, "those who worship Him **must worship in spirit** (John 4:23, 24) Spiritual worship is worship directed by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Phil. 3:3).

- 3) Truth, "those who worship Him **must worship in spirit and truth**" (John 4:24). Jesus Christ is truth, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Therefore, there can be no pretense or hypocrisy in true worship. The parable of the Pharisee and the publican illustrates true worship (Luke 18:9-14). The publican worshiped in truth and he went home justified. The Pharisee worshiped in religious pride and he went home rejected.

Second, the church: its work. "For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you" (1 Thess. 1:8). The church in Thessalonica did the work of the Lord so well that the apostles did not have to evangelize Macedonia and Achaia. The church shared its faith with the lost and after all that is the main work of the church. This is how that, "this took place for two years ... all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks" (Acts 19:8-10). All of Asia did not journey to Ephesus to hear Paul. It is evident that the believers went everywhere sharing the gospel. The work of the church is to go with the gospel because:

- 1) The church is commissioned to work (verses 18-20).
- 2) The church is to work with Christ (2 Cor. 6:1), and the Holy Spirit (Acts 5:32).
- 3) The church is to work with Christ in His field (the world) (Matt. 13:36-43 and Mark 16:15).
- 4) The need for the church to work is great (John 4:35).
- 5) The time for the church to work is now (2 Cor. 6:2).
- 6) The church is to work until Jesus comes to judge the works of the saints (2 Cor. 5:10).
- 7) The church will be rewarded for its works (1 Cor. 3:9-15). God's program for the local church is, **come and worship, and go and work** (witness) (Acts 8:1-4).

6 The Church: Its Power (Acts 1:8): 8) "...but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Notes:

On the day of Pentecost the church received power to evangelize the world. When the hundred and twenty came down from the upper room, they came in the dynamics of the Holy Spirit. It was a spiritual "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Some were empowered for special service, but all received power to witness.

The real power of the church is not found in:

- 1) Modern buildings or unique methods of preaching and teaching.
- 2) Its great wealth or how that wealth is used.
- 3) The church's prominence or popularity. The Laodicean church was the first bragging congregation, (Rev. 3:14-22) but not the last.
 - They said, "We are rich." **God said they were poor.**
 - They said, "We are wealthy." **God said they were wretched.**
 - They said, "We do not need anything." **God said they need everything.**
 - They said, "We are busy in the church." **God said they were miserable.**
 - They said, "We have a vision." **God said they were blind.**
 - They said, "We are clothed in fine garments." **God said they were naked.**
 - They said, "We are satisfied." **God said they make Him sick.**

You can always recognize a Holy Spirit-powered church. The evidence is obvious; they have power to:

- 1) **Evangelize:** They share their faith with the lost and souls are saved. Evangelism is the only way to make full proof of your ministry (2 Tim. 4:5). When a church is not involved in winning souls, it grieves the Holy Spirit and is void of power...
- 2) **Reproduce:** Souls are born into the family of God by the "imperishable" seed which is the word of God (1 Pet. 1:23). The Spirit-filled believer sows the seed; this is evangelism. The Holy Spirit hovers over the seed, convicting and leading the lost to repentance. This is the spiritual birth.
- 3) **Change:** people (Acts 2:37-41); places (Acts 5:28); and things (Matt. 17:20, 21).
- 4) Turn the world upside down (Acts 17:6).

This is the power that filled the upper room congregation on the day of Pentecost. That power is with the believer today in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is the power of the church.

- 7 The Church: Its Future (1 Thess. 4:16, 17):** 16) for the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with a voice of *the* archangel, and with the trumpet of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17) Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air, and thus we shall always be with the Lord.

Notes:

The true Church of Jesus Christ has a glorious, victorious future in the world, in the air, in the kingdom and in eternity; it cannot fail. "The gates of Hades shall not overpower it" (Matt. 16:18).

- 1) **The future of the church in the world.** At Pentecost the Holy Spirit set the course for the church as it journeys from the upper room to the Rapture. It is to:
 - a) Wage war (Eph. 6:10).
 - b) Run a race (Heb. 12:1, 2)
 - c) Work in love (1 Cor. 3:9)

The Church of Jesus Christ will emerge triumphant for, "we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us" (Rom.8:35-39). The church cannot fail because Christ is its Head, the Holy Spirit is its power, and the Word of God is its guide.

- 2) **The future of the church in the air.** We shall be caught up. Caught up:
 - a) In our imperishable, glorified bodies (1 Cor. 15:42-44)
 - b) To meet the Lord in the heavens and for the great majority of the church we will see Him in His resurrected body for the first time (1 John 3:2)
 - c) That our deeds may be judged at the judgment seat of Christ (2 Cor. 5:10). This is the "bema" (Judge and Bestower of rewards) judgment.
 - d) That we may be rewarded or suffer loss of reward (1 Cor. 3:11-15)
- 3) **The future of the church in the kingdom.**
 - a) The twelve apostles will sit on thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel (Matt. 19:28).
 - b) All who overcome the evils of Christendom (Laodicea) will sit with Christ on His Kingdom Throne (Rev. 3:21)
 - c) We shall reign with Him a thousand years (Rev. 20:4-6).
- 4) **The future of the church in eternity.** After the kingdom reign of one thousand years there will be "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev.21:1). The earth will be restored to its original, created state (Gen 1:1 OT). God's earthly people Israel will inherit the new earth (Ex. 32:13 OT).

The church, His bride will remain in His presence forever. If in His human form He is in the new heaven or the new earth, we will be with Him, to see Him, to serve Him, and to worship Him. He will continue to bestow upon His bride the riches of His eternal grace (Eph. 2:6, 7). Even in our perfect, glorified bodies it will take eternity (time without end) to begin to comprehend the greatness of His grace.

Outline Nine: Prayer

Prayer is as old as man, as universal as religion is, and as instinctive as breathing (Gen. 4:26 OT). All men of all faiths practice it in some form. Prayer springs from the heart with a need – a need greater than man’s ability to encounter. Prayer is man’s acknowledgement of a being higher than he is.

Most men try to pray, yet so few know how. There are two kinds of prayers: the prayer that does not reach God and the prayer that does reach God. This is illustrated by our Lord in the parable of the Pharisee and the publican (Luke 18:9-14). Both men went to the same place, at the same time, for the same purpose – to pray.

The Pharisee prayed in his religious pride, expecting God to answer because he thought himself worthy. He informed God of his own goodness, that he was better than others were. He boasted of his good works. He said, “I fast; I gave.” This is the kind of prayer that does not reach God. It is self-righteous prayer.

Now look at the publican and his prayer. He came to God in great humility, conscious of his unworthiness, confessing himself a sinner, and begging for mercy. This is the kind of prayer that does reach God. This is righteous prayer.

It is a rare privilege to pray; because it brings you into close fellowship with God, admitting your need for Him and your utter dependence upon Him.

1 What is Prayer? Keep Asking, Seeking, Knocking (Matt. 7:7-11): 7) **“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you.** 8) “For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks, finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. 9) “Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? 10) “Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11) “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will you Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!

Notes:

Prayer is asking and receiving; it is talking with God. It is making your request known to Him in faith. The above Scripture is so simple on the surface that we are in danger of failing to recognize its immensity. Our Lord instructs the believer to ask, see, and knock; because these three works cover the whole spectrum of prayer.

- (1) **Prayer is asking and receiving.** When you know the will of God regarding a need, whether it is material or spiritual, you can ask and receive. This is prayer according to the revealed will of God (1 John 5:14, 15)
- (2) **Prayer is seeking and finding.** When you do not know the will of God regarding a need, whether it be material or spiritual, then you are to seek His will in prayer concerning this need until you find it. This is prayer for knowledge of the unrevealed will of God in a specific need (Col. 3:1; also Jer. 29:12, 13 OT)
- (3) **Prayer is knocking and opening.** When you know the will of God, and yet you find a closed door, you are to knock, and keep knocking until God opens the door. This is tenacious prayer – prayer for mountain-moving faith. Knocking prayer perseveres until the impossible becomes the possible this is miracle-working prayer (Matt 17:14-21). All things are possible when you ask, seek, and knock.

2 Why Pray? *The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1):* 1) Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to prayer and not lose heart.

Notes:

Pray:

- (1) **Because Jesus said, "Men always ought to pray" (above verse 1).** Prayer is imperative. You are commanded to pray (Matt. 26:41).
- (2) **Because prayer is the only way to get things from God.** "You do not have because you do not ask" (James 4:2).
- (3) **Because there is joy in prayer** (John 16:24).
- (4) **Because prayer will save you out of all your troubles** (Ps 34 OT).
- (5) **Because prayer can unlock the treasure chest of God's wisdom** (James 1:5).
- (6) **Because prayer is a channel of power** (Jer. 33:3 OT).
- (7) **Because it is a sin not to pray** (1 Sam. 12:33 OT).
- (8) **Because sinners can be saved when they prayer in faith** (Rom. 10:13, 14).
- (9) **Because Jesus, while here in the flesh, prayed often to the Father.** Now if Jesus, the Son of God, needed to pray, then we should "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17)

3 How to Pray (Matt. 6:9-13): 9) "In this manner, therefore, pray; 10) Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. 11) Give us this day or daily bread. 12) And forgive us our debts, As we forgive our debtors. 13) And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one. For Your's is the kingdom and the power and glory forever. Amen.

Notes:

“In this manner, therefore pray.” Our Lord gave this as a model prayer after one of His disciples said unto Him, “Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1).

- (1) **We are to pray to our Father in heaven” (verse 9), because He is all-wise, all-loving, and all-powerful.** We are also instructed to pray in the name of Jesus (John 14:13, 14) depending on the meditative influence of the Holy Spirit.
- (2) **We are to pray for His will to be done in everything.**
- (3) **We are to pray for the coming of the Kingdom** (Matt. 25:31-46).
- (4) **We are to pray for our daily necessities.**
- (5) **We are to pray for forgiveness and are to practice forgiving others.**
- (6) **We are to pray for the leading of the Lord and for deliverance from evil.**
- (7) **We are to pray in faith, for “without faith it is impossible to please Him”** (Heb. 11:5, 5).

This model prayer is brief, to the point, and not repetitious. It is the perfect prayer.

4 Where to Pray *Peter Freed from Prison (Acts 12:5):* 5) **Peter was therefore kept in prison, but constant prayer was offered to God for him by the church.**

Notes:

There was a remarkable change in the prayer life of the disciples after the resurrection of Jesus, and it is noted again after Pentecost. Before the death of Jesus, the disciples slept while Jesus prayed in the Garden (Matt. 26:36-46). But, after His death and resurrection:

- (1) **They assembled in the upper room, waiting for the coming of the Holy Spirit and they prayed.** We should always pray when assembled with believers (Acts 1:13, 14)
- (2) **They prayed as they went from house to house** (Acts 2:42-47)
- (3) **They prayed in the church when Peter was in prison** (verses 5-19)
- (4) **Paul and Silas prayed in prison (Acts 16:25). Here we see Christians praying in the presence of unbelievers, but not to be heard of them.** Never pray to please others present; pray only to please God.
- (5) **The most important place to pray is any place where you can be alone with God** (Matt. 6:6)
- (6) **We are instructed to pray in all places at all times** (1 Tim. 2:8).

It is great joy to be able to talk with God, any time, any place, under any condition, and to know that He will hear and answer.

5 Hindrances to Prayer *A Word to Husbands (1 Peter 3:7): 7) Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Notes:

When prayers are not answered, you should examine yourself in the light of God's Word. If you find anything not pleasing to God, confess it, believing God for forgiveness that your prayers may be answered (1 John 1:9).

- (1) **An unharmonious relationship between husband and wife will hinder prayer** (verses 1-7).
- (2) **Selfishness will hinder prayer** (James 4:3).
- (3) **An unforgiving spirit will hinder prayer** (Matt. 5:22-24). Many Christians go without answers to prayer because they have wronged others, or have been wronged and have failed to humble themselves and seek reconciliation.
- (4) **Unbelief will hinder prayer** (James 1:6, 7 and Heb. 11:6).
- (5) **Known sin in the heart will hinder prayer** (Is. 59:2 OT also Ps 66:18 OT).

When you pray, go to God in all humility. Ask Him to reveal anything in your life that is not pleasing to Him. Then judge it; confess it, calling it by name and forsake it. Pray in all simplicity and earnestness, believing, and God will hear and answer.

6 Does God Answer All Prayers? (John 15:7): 7)"If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

Notes:

The Bible is filled with answered prayers from Genesis to Revelation. You are command to pray, and God has promised to answer (Jer. 33:3 OT). In the above Scripture, there are two requirements for answers to prayer. First you are to abide in Him; that is, to continue in Him. It means to remain in His perfect will at all cost (Rom. 12:1, 2). Second, His words are to abide in you; they are to become a vital part of your life. You are to be filled with and guided by His words (Col. 3:16, 17). Meet these two requirements, and your prayers will be answered.

- (1) **The answer is sometimes immediate.** Peter walked on the water to go to Jesus, and as he began to sink, he prayed, "Lord, save me!" The answer was immediate (Matt. 14:22-31)

- (2) **The answer is sometimes delayed.** The delay is according to His will (Rom. 8:28). The resurrection of Lazarus is a good example of delayed answer to prayer. Lazarus was sick. Mary and Martha sent for Jesus to come and heal him. But Jesus delayed coming until Lazarus was dead and in the tomb for four days. Then He came and raised Lazarus for the dead. The answer was delayed – but not denied (John 11:1-44).
- (3) **The answer is sometimes “no.”** When God answers with a “no,” He always accompanies the answer with peace (Phil. 4:6, 7) and grace (2 Cor. 12:7-10).
- (4) **The answer is sometimes different from what you expect.** You pray for perseverance and God sends tribulation – because “tribulation produces perseverance” (Rom. 5:3). God answers all your prayers – not according to your wishes, but according to His perfect will.

Outline Ten: Faith

“The just shall live by faith.” This declaration of the Christian’s principle of life is found four times in the Bible: Hab. 2:1-5 (OT); Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:10, 11; and Heb. 10:38. In Habakkuk, we see the difference between the lives of the unjust and the just. The unjust are puffed up and live by their own self-sufficiency. But the just live by faith – their confidence is in God. To them, faith is more than a philosophy of life; it is the very principle of life (Hab. 2:4 OT). The just shall live his whole life by faith. He saved by faith (Acts 16:31); he is kept by faith (1 Pet. 1:7); and he lives by faith (Gal. 2:20). His faith shall be tried many times and in many ways (1 Pet. 1:7), but faith will always be vindicated, because it is more than equal to any occasion. Faith knows how to wait on the Lord (Is. 40:31 OT), and it is always victorious (1 John 5:4).

Faith defies reason; it moves mountains (Matt. 17:14-21). Faith does not always face facts; it never gives up (Heb. 11:32-39). Faith says, “God is working out His perfect will in my life, and I can wait, endure, and suffer.” Faith does not make anything easy, but it does make all things possible.

1 What is Faith? *By Faith We Understand (Heb. 11:1-3): 1) Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2) For by it the elders obtained a good testimony. 3) By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible.*

Notes:

“Now faith is the substance [title deed] of things hoped for ...” Your faith is your title deed to eternal life. Just as a title deed is evidence of real estate, so your faith is evidence of your eternal estate in God (2 Cor. 4:18).

(1) Faith is taking God at His word and asking no questions (Heb. 11:8).

(2) **Faith is knowing that “all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose”** (Rom.8:28). Faith does not believe that all things are good, or that all things work well. It does believe that all things (good or bad) work together for good to them that love God.

(3) **Faith has two sides.** One side has to do with the intellect. It is an intellectual conviction that Jesus Christ is God. The other side has to do with the will. It is a volitional surrender of the will to Jesus Christ as Master. This is seen when Thomas

believed and confessed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). "My Lord" this was volitional surrender; "My God" this was intellectual conviction. Together you have saving faith (John 20:31). Saving faith is an intellectual conviction that Jesus is God, and a volitional surrender to Him as Lord (Master) of your life. By faith, the mind trusts in God; the heart responds to the love of God; the will submits to the commands of God; and the life obeys in the service of God.

(4) **Faith is paradoxical.** It goes beyond reason. It believes without understanding "why." It sings in prison (Acts 16:25). It glories in tribulations (Rom. 5:3). It chooses to suffer afflictions (Heb. 11:25). It accepts all things as a part of God's will (Phil. 1:12)

You are not born with this faith. It comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17). This is why we are commanded to preach the gospel to every creature, that they may hear and believe (Rom. 10:13, 14).

2 The Importance of Faith (Eph. 6:16): 16) ... above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one

Notes:

The shield of faith is a vital part of the Christian's armor. You are to put on the "whole armor of God" because the Christian life is a warfare, a spiritual conflict. As Paul names the different parts of the Christian's armor, he comes to the shield and emphasizes its importance by saying, "Above all, taking the shield of faith..."

For with the shield of faith, nothing can hurt you; "... in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Rom. 8:37)

The importance of faith is seen in that:

- (1) You cannot be saved without faith (John 3:36)
- (2) You cannot live victoriously over the world without faith (1 John 5:4)
- (3) You cannot please God without faith (Heb. 11:6)
- (4) You cannot pray without faith (James 1:6)
- (5) You cannot have peace with God without faith (Rom. 5:1)
- (6) You cannot have joy without faith (1 Pet. 1:8)
- (7) You are justified by faith and not by works (Gal. 2:16)
- (8) You live by faith (Gal. 2:20)
- (9) You are made righteous by faith (Rom. 14:1-4)
- (10) Christ dwells in your heart by faith (Eph. 3:17)
- (11) The Holy Spirit is received by faith (Gal. 3:2)

(12) "Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Rom. 14:23)

Faith is important because it honors God, and God always honors faith.

3 Little Faith (Matt. 14:28-33): **28) And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water. 29)** And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus So He said, "Come." **30)** But he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord save me!" **31)** And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" **32)** And when they got into the boat the wind ceased. **33)** Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Notes:

At this stage in the spiritual growth of Peter, he was a man of "little faith." However, after Pentecost, he became a spiritual giant. Let us take of good look at his "little faith" and profit from it. Jesus, walking on the water in the midst of a storm, came to His distressed disciples. Peter asked to come to Jesus on the water. He must have thrilled at the thought of doing the impossible. Jesus said, "Come."

(1) **Peter did the impossible thing: He walked on the water, by faith.**

(2) **Next, Peter did the conceivable thing: He saw the storm and had a second thought – he doubted.** For a moment, he lost sight of Jesus. He may have turned and started back to the boat (Luke 9:12).

(3) **Now Peter did the natural thing:** He feared destruction. Doubt always breeds fear.

(4) **Then Peter did the expected thing:** He began to sink – he failed.

(5) **Now Peter did the right thing:** He prayed – "Lord save me!" Immediately Jesus stretched forth His hand and caught him. Once more Peter made contact with Jesus by faith.

(6) **Again Peter did the impossible thing:** He walked on the water with Jesus to the boat. In this lesson, we see the success and failure of "little faith."

Now, let us recap the steps that led to failure. Peter started by faith and walked on water. Then he saw the storm and had second thoughts that lead to doubt, that produced fear which caused him to turn back, that brought about failure.

You need a faith that is bigger than the elements that would drag you down to defeat. You can have big faith "prayer and fasting" (Matt. 17:20-21) and by feeding your faith on the Word of God (Rom 10:17). You can have mountain high faith.

- 4 Three Kinds of Faith (John 11:21-44):** **21)** Now Martha said to Jesus "Lord if you had been here my brother would not have died. **22)** "But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You." **23)** Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." **24)** Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." **25)** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. **26)** "And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" **27)** She said to Him, "Yes, Lord, I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who is to come into the world." **28)** And when she had said these things, she went her way and secretly called Mary her sister, saying, "The Teacher has come and is calling for you." **29)** As soon as she heard that she arose quickly and came to Him. **30)** Now Jesus had not yet come into the town, but was in the place where Martha met Him. **31)** Then Jews who were with her in the house, and comforting her, when they saw that Mary rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there." **32)** Then, when Mary came where Jesus was, and saw Him, she fell down at His feet, saying to Him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." **33)** When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her, also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit, and was troubled, **34)** and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to Him, "Lord, come and see." **35)** Jesus wept. **36)** And so the Jews were saying, "Behold how He loved him!" **37)** But some said, "Could not this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have kept this man also from dying?" **38)** Jesus therefore again being deeply moved within, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39)** Jesus said, "Remove the stone." Martha, the sister of the deceased, said to Him, "Lord, by this time there will be stench, for he has been dead four days." **40)** Jesus said to her, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" **41)** And so they removed the stone. And Jesus raised His eyes, and said, "Father, I thank Thee that Thou heard Me. **42)** And I knew that Thou hears Me always; but because of the people standing around I said it, that they may believe that "Thou didst send Me."**43)** And when He said these things, He cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth." **44)** He who had died came forth, bound hand and foot with wrappings; and his face was wrapped around with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

Notes:

In this chapter, we see the faith of Martha in connection with the resurrection of her brother Lazarus. Now Lazarus fell ill, and Martha and her sister Mary sent for Jesus to come and heal him. Jesus delayed His coming until Lazarus was dead and in the tomb for four days. Then He came to raise him from the dead, and found the limited, fundamental faith of Martha His only obstacle.

(1) **Martha's faith was limited.** She said, "Lord if You had been here, my brother would not have died." The death of Lazarus meant the end of Martha's faith. She believed that Jesus had the power raise her brother up from the sick bed, but not from the dead. Her limited faith restricted the power of Christ. Limited faith is controlled by circumstances, and motivated by fear of failure.

(2) **Martha's faith was fundamental.** Jesus said, "Your brother shall rise again." These words were spoken to kindle hope and faith in Martha; but, she said, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." Martha declared here fundamental faith in a great truth, but that is not enough. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life." Jesus was saying that He had all power over life and death. Then He asked, "Do you believe this?" Martha evaded the question by stating her fundamental faith in here creed, to the living, all powerful Christ. Her faith limited the power of Christ, and "Jesus wept." Jesus wept when He came to raise Lazarus from the dead and found limited, fundamental only.

(3) **At last, unlimited faith came to Martha when she consented to have the stone moved from the grave.** When Jesus first ordered the stone taken from the grave, Martha objected in unbelief. Then Jesus, challenging her to believe, said, "Did I not say to you, if you believe, you will see the glory of God?" Martha believed and waited to see the glory of God, and she was not disappointed. We often here that "seeing is believing," but this is not so. You believe and then see. Faith comes before sight. Now Martha's faith no longer limited the power of Christ. She consented to have the stone moved from the tomb and Jesus "cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come forth,"" and Lazarus was raised up. Don't be satisfied with limited, fundamental faith only, when you can have unlimited faith that pleases God and reveals his glory.

5 The Hall of Faith (Heb. 11:32-39): 32) And what more shall I say? For time will fail me if I tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, **33)** who by faith conquered kingdoms, performed acts of righteousness,

obtained promises, shut the mouths of lions, **34**) quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. **35**) Women received back their dead by resurrection; and others were tortured, not accepting their release, in order that they might obtain a better resurrection, **36**) and others experienced mocking's and scourging's, yes, also chains and imprisonment. **37**) They were stoned, they sawn in two, they were tempted, they were put to death with the sword; they went about in sheepskins, in goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, ill-treated **38**) (men of whom the world was not worthy), wandering in deserts and mountains and caves and holes in the ground. **39**) And all these, having gained approval through their faith, did not receive what was promised, [40) because God had provided something better for us, so that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

Notes:

This chapter is called the "Hall of Faith." You need to come here often and linger long, that your faith may become strong in the Lord; for in this Scripture we get a view of the history of Israel and the church, as it is written by faith, in the blood of the saints.

They worshiped by faith as Abel. They walked by faith as Enoch. They worked by faith as Noah. They lived by faith as Abraham. They governed by faith Israel. They fought by faith Joshua. They conquered by faith as Gideon. They subdued kingdoms by faith as David. They closed the mouths of lions by faith as Daniel. They walked through the fire by faith as the three Hebrew children. They suffered by faith as Paul. They died by faith as Stephen, the first Christian martyr.

By faith they were patient in suffering, courageous in battle, made strong out of weakness and were victorious in defeat. They were more than conquerors by faith. It is only by faith in the all-powerful Christ that you can be superior to circumstances and victorious over all the evil forces that would destroy you. "Fixing our eyes on Jesus the author and perfecter of faith." The faith of the saints inspires us, but we look to Jesus as our example of faith.

Outline Eleven: Life

THE ABUNDANT LIFE

"... I came that they might have life, and might have it abundantly" (John 10:10). The only way into eternal life is through faith in Jesus Christ as personal Savior (John 3:15). But do not stop here; to have eternal life is great - but there is more. Christ came that you might have life abundantly. All believers have life, but not all have abundant life. You are living beneath your privilege if you are a believer and not enjoying the abundant life.

For life to be abundant, it must have abundant resources, and the only unlimited source of life is in the person Jesus Christ, the son of God (John 14:6). To possess this fuller life, the believer must abide in Him (John 15:1-5). Dynamic, abundant living is not for just a few. It is God's norm for all believers. It is spiritual life in depth, and without it, the Christian life becomes inane and meaningless.

If you do not have abundant life within you, you will soon yield to the carnal (fleshly) life around you (1 Cor. 3:1-4). The carnal life is circumstance controlled; the abundant life is Holy Spirit controlled. The carnal Christian life leads to defeat; the abundant life leads to victory in Christ. Man seems to know everything about life except how to live it abundantly. From this moment on, determine not to be satisfied with anything less than God's best: living life abundantly.

1 The Abundant Life is a Yielded Life (Rom. 6:10-13): (10) **For *the death* that He died, He died to sin once for all; but *the life* that He lives, He lives to God.** (11) Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (12) Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. (13) And do not present your members *as* instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God.

Notes:

How to live the abundant life is no secret; it is revealed in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. "For the death that He died, He died to sin, once for all; but the life He lives, He lives to God" (above verse 10). Faith that saves identifies you with Christ in His death - this is eternal life. Faith that yields identifies you with Christ in His resurrection - this is abundant life (Col. 3:1-4).

(1) **It is one thing to have eternal life by faith.** It is quite another thing to have abundant life by faith.

- (2) **It is one thing for you to "... become the righteousness of God in Him"** (2 Cor. 5:21); it is another thing for you to realize His righteous life is in you (1 John 3:7).
- (3) **It is one thing for you to live in Christ** (2 Cor. 5:17); It is another thing for Christ to live His life through you (Col. 1:27).

In the above verse (verse 13), the believer has a choice. He may yield to God by faith and enjoy abundant life or he may yield to sin and endure a defeated life (Rev. 3:1). God would have you know the power of a yielded life; it will lift you above circumstances that circumvent abundant living. The abundant life begins when you yield to Him as Master, allowing Him to live His life through you by faith.

- 2 The Abundant Life is a Service Life (Rom. 12:1, 2):** 1) **I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** 2) And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

Notes:

To live abundantly, you must serve the Lord Jesus Christ, who Himself became our example. He served all the way to Calvary, and there He was the obedient servant," ...obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Phil. 2:7, 8).

In the verses 1 and 2 the believer is urged to take the necessary steps for abundant living.

- (1) **You are to "present"**. This is volitional surrender to the perfect will of God, even though you may not know God's perfect will for your life; it is, on your part, an act of faith (John 7:17).
- (2) **You are to "present your bodies"**. God must control and use the whole man. "And may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord, Jesus Christ." Your whole man was redeemed on the cross and sanctified (set apart for service) (1 Thess. 5:23).
- (3) **You are to "... present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God which is your reasonable service."** This is exemplified in the life of the Apostle Paul; he was a "living sacrifice". In life, he was "a servant of Christ Jesus" (Rom. 1:1). In battle, he was a warrior (Eph. 6:10-18). In the will of God, he was a "prisoner of Christ Jesus" (Eph. 3:1). These words were spoken from a Roman prison; he never referred to himself as a prisoner of Rome. To the Apostle, prison

was a part of the perfect will of God. With this conviction, he lived abundantly (Phil. 1:12). In death, he was victorious (2 Tim. 4:7, 8).

You have been "transformed", changed by the power of God, and no longer "conformed to this world" but now you can be conformed to the "good and acceptable and perfect" will of God, and live abundantly!

3 The Abundant Life is a Separated Life (Romans 1:1): (1) Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called *to be* an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.

Notes:

Separation is both positive and negative. You are to be "... set apart for the gospel of God", this is positive (Rom. 1:1). You are to come out from anything that is contrary to the perfect will of God (2 Cor. 6:17), this is negative.

To be separated means to be sanctified (set apart) for salvation and service.

- (1) **The word of God has the power to separate the believer from sin** (John 17:17) and (Ps. 119:11 OT).
- (2) **God the Father has the power to separate the believer to the "... coming of our Lord Jesus Christ"** (1 Thess. 5:23).
- (3) **God the Son has the power to separate the believer to righteousness, "... having no spot or wrinkle** (Eph. 5:24-27).
- (4) **God the Holy Spirit has the power to separate the believer unto salvation and service** (2 Thess. 2:13).

Without being separated, you can have identity with God; but, you cannot have fellowship with Him. You may be united to Him in Calvary, but separated from Him in sin (Is. 59:1, 2 OT). Without separation, you can have influence without power, movement without achievement; you may try, but not trust; serve, but not succeed; war, but not win. Without separation to God from sin, your whole Christian life will be "wood, hay, straw". The abundant life is made possible by death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, and made a reality by being separated to Him.

4 The Abundant Life is a Spirit Filled Life (Eph. 5:18-20): 18) **And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,** 19) speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, 20) giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Notes:

The Holy Spirit indwells every believer. You may be immature, weak and imperfect; but, if you have been "born again" of the Spirit (John 3:3-7). He dwells in you (1 Cor. 6:19 and Rom. 8:9). It is one thing for you to have the Holy Spirit dwelling in you, but does the Holy Spirit have you, that He may fill you with abundant life? The abundant life is not found in environment or circumstances, or in the things you may possess. It is found in the infilling of the Holy Spirit. "But filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18) is a command. You may be filled many, many times (Acts 2:4 and Acts 4:31). The apostles that were filled in Acts chapter 2, were filled again in Acts chapter 4. To be filled with the Holy Spirit is to be: Spirit-possessed, Spirit-empowered, Spirit-led and Spirit-controlled (Acts 8:26-40).

- (1) **You are filled with the Spirit that you might have joy** (Eph. 5:19, 20).
- (2) **You are filled with the Spirit for service** (Acts 6:3 and Acts 11:22-24).
- (3) **You are filled with the Spirit for power to be a witness** (Acts 1:8 and Acts 2:4-7).
- (4) **You are filled with the Spirit for the hour of persecution** (Acts 7:54-60).
- (5) **You are filled with the Spirit that you may "walk by the Spirit** (Gal. 5:16-26).
- (6) **You are filled with the Spirit that you may be led by the Spirit** (Rom. 8:14).

How can you be filled with the Holy Spirit? First, you must desire Him to fill you. Second, you must ask Him to fill you. Third, you must believe that He does fill you (John 4:14 and John 7:37, 38).

5 The Abundant Life is a Mature Life (2 Pet. 3:18): 18) but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Notes:

"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 3:18). The scriptures reveal four stages of spiritual growth in the Christian life:

- (1) **The baby stage** (1 Cor. 3:1-4) A baby thinks only of self; and, if denied the things desired, it will raise a rumpus. It seeks its own; its feelings are easily hurt and it is often jealous. A baby lives to be served - it never serves. It drinks milk, and cannot eat strong meat. It cries, but never sings. It tries to talk, but never makes sense. These infant characteristics are so prominent in the lives of many church members. They have been born into the family of God, but have failed to develop spiritually. They are spiritual babies - carnal Christians.
- (2) **The little child stage** (1 John 2:12). Some Christians grow to be little children spiritually, but stop there. Here are some of the characteristics of children: they are

often untruthful, envious, and cruel. If rebuked, they become martyrs; if crossed, they are resentful and often make a scene. They are talebearers, repeating everything they hear (in adults, it is called gossip). They are given to emotional outbursts, and are easily puffed up. They love praise, and will accept it from any source. They seek only the things that appeal to self. Are you a spiritual child?

(3) **The young man stage** (1 John 2:13). Spiritual growth to that of a young man is not reached by many. He is strong and virile and is well able to overcome his enemy. He has a vision for the future and the faith and courage to tackle it. He is preparing for his productive years. You, too, can become a young man spiritually by doing "away with childish things" (1 Cor. 13:11).

(4) **The father stage** (1 John 2:13). This stage of spiritual development can be reached by all, but so few ever attain it. The spiritual father has peace with God (Rom. 5:1). He knows the peace of God (Phil. 4:7). He rejoices in his spiritual children (1 Thess. 2:19 and 1 Tim. 1:2). He has learned contentment under all circumstances (Phil. 4:11). He knows the only source of true strength (Phil. 4:13). He does not brood over the past, but looks to the future (Phil. 3:13, 14). He knows that all things work together in his life for his eternal good (Rom. 8:28). He enjoys abundant life now and will enjoy it in the life to come (Eph. 2:7).

Outline Twelve: Repentance

"He who conceals his transgressions will not prosper. But, he who confesses and forsakes them will find compassion" (Prov. 28:13 OT).

God desires "truth in the innermost being" (Ps. 51:6 OT). And commands all men everywhere to repent (Acts 17:30). The sinner must repent before he can become the recipient of salvation by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). The saved must practice repentance if he is to enjoy unbroken fellowship with God (Job 42:1-6 OT). Someone said, "I repented before I understood the meaning of the word, but since then, as a Christian, I have repented many times."

Repentance is granted by God (Acts 5:31 and Acts 11:18). "The kindness of God leads you to repentance" (Rom. 2:4). The kindness of God is not merited; therefore, the result of His kindness which is repentance is a gift. *This gift of repentance is an inward change produced by the convicting power of the Holy Spirit as the Word of God is proclaimed* (Acts 2:37, 38; and John 16:7,11). The results, "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21); faith that Christ died for our sins; and that He was buried and that He rose from the dead (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Repentance qualifies a man for salvation, but it takes a faith in Christ to acquire it. True repentance is always coupled with faith. It is impossible to have saving faith and not repent. "Repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21) are essential and inseparable in salvation.

Faith without repentance is the ultimate of hypocrisy and repentance without faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ is sheer folly.

1 Repentance Defined (2 Pet. 3:9): 9) The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.

Notes:

First, let us see that repentance is not:

(1) Sorrow. "Sorrow that is according to the will of God produces repentance without regret, leading to salvation" (2 Cor. 7:9, 10). Godly sorrow is a guilty feeling that leads to repentance, but it is not repentance.

(2) Penance. Penance is an act on the part of the guilty to render payment for sin. It is to make an effort, in some way, to atone for wrongs done against God of man. God calls all men to repentance, not to do penance.

(a) Jesus did not say, do penance and believe the gospel. He said, "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:15).

(b) Peter did not say, do penance and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ. He said, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of you sins" (Acts 2:38).

(c) Paul did not say, God is declaring all men everywhere to do penance. He said, "God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent" (Acts 17:30). If penance is repentance, then salvation is not the gift of God, and we are not saved by grace through faith (Eph. 2:8, 9).

(3) Reformation. Reformation is a change brought about by the efforts of man for self-glory (Matt. 12:43-45). It is a turning away from known sin, or giving up bad habit, or trying to overhaul the old nature, or turning over a new leaf, or making restitution. Judas reformed but it did not save him and neither can it save you (Matt. 27:3-5).

Second, let us see what repentance is:

(1) A change. The change is always evidenced in three elements.

- (a) The intellectual element, a change of mind.
- (b) The emotional element, a change of heart.
- (c) The volitional element, a change of will.

(2) The parable of the prodigal is a perfect illustration of repentance. He had a change of mind, a change of heart, and a change of will (Luke 15:11-32).

- (a) The intellectual element, "He came to his senses."
- (b) The emotional element, "I have sinned."
- (c) The volitional element, "I will get up and go to my father."

Repentance is a change. The prodigal had a change of mind; and his change of mind effected a change of heart; and his change of heart effected a change of will. No one is ever saved until he wills to be (Rev. 22:17). Repentance is change of mind, of heart, and of will.

2 Repentance Preached (Mark 1:1-4): 1) the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. **2)** As it is written in *the Prophets: "*Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.*" **3)** "*The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord; Make His paths straight.'*" **4)** John came baptizing in the wilderness and preaching a baptism of repentance for the remission of sins.

Notes:

Repentance was preached in the Old Testament before the birth of Christ, and during the life and during the life and ministry of Christ. It was preached on the day of Pentecost, and in the Book of Acts after Pentecost. It is taught in the Epistles and the Book of Revelation. It is a doctrine to be preached and practiced in all dispensations.

(1) John the Baptist preached repentance.

(a) He preached the baptism of repentance (Luke 3:3).

(b) He preached. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:2). He was "THE VOICE CRYING IN THE WILDERNESS, 'MAKE READY THE WAY OF THE LORD'" (Matt. 3:3). John's preaching of repentance exalted Christ, denounced sin, warned of judgment, and it cost him his head.

(2) Jesus preached repentance.

(a) He preached, "Repent and believe in the gospel" (Mark 1:14, 15). He went about doing mighty works and calling sinners to repent and to have faith in the good news of God.

(b) His preaching of repentance was an ultimatum, repent or perish (Luke 13:1-5). Salvation by grace is for the repentant soul, and judgment, without mercy, for those who resist!

(3) Peter preached repentance.

(a) At Pentecost he preached, "Repent, and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins" (Acts 2:38).

(b) In his second Epistle he preached that, the Lord "... is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9). *Every soul that goes to hell goes against the will of God.*

(4) Paul preached repentance.

(a) He preached that God "is now declaring to men that all should repent" (Acts 17:30). This message was given on Mars' Hill to the intelligentsia of Athens. The results were three-fold: First, some mocked; second, some procrastinated; third, some believed (Acts 17:32-34).

3 Repentance From Dead Works (Heb. 6:1): 1) Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God.

Notes:

What does the writer of Hebrews mean by, "repentance from dead works"? First, we need to see the other two categories of works. They are:

(1) Good works (Matt. 5:16). Only saved souls can do good works and please God. Of the lost, He said, "There is no one who does good, not even one" (Ps. 14:1-3 OT). The believer is not to hide his good works, but let them be seen to the glory of the heavenly Father. Mary of Bethany anointed the head and feet of Jesus with precious perfume while He sat at the table of Simon the leper. Some of the disciples called her deed an extravagant waste, But Jesus said, "She has done a good deed to Me... She has done what she could" (Mark 14:3-9). Like Mary, we are to do all we can to the glory of God, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved, having no other motive. This is the way to do good works.

(2) Evil deeds (Col. 1:20, 21). Evil deeds are deeds done by the unregenerate, natural man (1 Cor. 2:14). He walks according to this world system. He is motivated by the "prince of the power of the air (Satan)". His talk is filled with the lust of the flesh and he lives to gratify the desires of the flesh and the natural mind, He is a child of wrath and his works are wicked because he is dead in sin (Eph. 2:1-3).

(3) Dead works (Heb. 6:1). Dead works could be called religious works. They are done by the religious for the purpose of meriting eternal life. It is legalistic effort to keep the moral and ceremonial laws of God for the purpose of winning God's favor and be saved by works (Eph. 2:8, 9). Paul said, "because by works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20).

Dead works are performed by the religious, "For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God" (Rom. 10:1-4).

Paul is a good illustration of repentance from dead works. He clearly stated the he had "no confidence in the flesh"; then he lists his dead works of which he had to repent (Phil. 3:1-9). When he compared this righteousness which is by dead works of the law, with the righteousness of Christ which is by faith, he counted the former but rubbish. He knew the meaning of "repentance from dead works".

4 Repentance and God (Heb. 7:21): 21) for they have become priests without an oath, but He with an oath by Him who said to Him: *"The Lord has sworn and will not relent, 'You are a priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek'"*

Notes:

"God is not a man, that He should lie, nor a son of man, that He should repent" (Num. 23:19 OT). Yet the Bible tells us that He does repent (Gen. 6:5-7 OT). This is not a contradiction. It is paradoxical, but not contradictory.

God makes two covenants with man.

- 1) The first is unconditional. When He makes an unconditional covenant, He never repents (change His mind [Ps. 110:4 OT]). He made such a covenant with Israel (Rom. 11:25-36).
- 2) The second is conditional. The Lord said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever because he also is flesh; nevertheless, his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3 OT). In the days of Noah, God gave the human race 120 years to repent. Only Noah and his family repented and "found favor in the eyes of the Lord: (Gen. 6:8 OT). They met God's condition and were not judged with the rest of the human race who refused to repent. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is patient toward you, NOT WISHING FOR ANY TO PERISH BUT FOR ALL TO COME TO REPENTANCE" (2 Pet. 3:9). It is clear that God wills to save all lost souls. He is "not wishing for any to perish". To be saved the lost must meet His condition, "repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 20:21). Now if a man does not repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God will repent. He will change and judge that man. In love He bestows grace; but, if salvation by grace is rejected, in justice He terminates it. In this way God repents.

5 Repentance, Impossible to Renew (Heb. 6:4-6): 4) For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have become partakers of the Holy Spirit, **5**) and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, **6**) if they fall away, to renew them again to repentance, since they crucify again for themselves the Son of God, and put Him to an open shame.

Notes:

The key that unlocks the mystery to this difficult portion of Scripture is the word, "impossible" in verse 4. The writer is saying, that the person who so sins will find it impossible to repent again.

First, let us see what the writer does not mean. He does not mean a backslidden Christian. Simon Peter backslid (Matt. 26:69-75), repented (John 21:3-17), and was restored to fellowship with the Lord. King David sinned (2 Sam. 11:1-27 OT), repented (Ps. 51:1-19 OT), and was restored to fellowship with the Lord (2 Sam. 12:13 OT). Any backslidden Christian can repent and be restored to fellowship with God.

Second, let us see what the writer does mean. Hebrews 6:4-6 is proof that *being religious is not enough to save you*. They professed, but did not possess eternal life. In outward appearance they would be called Christians. But Jesus said, "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', will enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 7:21-23).

Esau so sinned against the Lord when he sold his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew (Gen. 25:27-34 OT). Later he tried to repent, but found it impossible to do so. The Scripture says, "He found no place for repentance, though he sought for it with tears" (Heb. 12:16, 17).

At the great white throne judgment where only the wicked dead are judged (Rev. 20:11-15), they too, will try to repent but will find it impossible.

6 Repentance, The Importance of (Acts 17:30): 30) "Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent."

Notes:

Repentance is so important that God commands that "all everywhere should repent" (Acts 17:30).

(1) The lost are to repent. Jesus said, "I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:13). Again, He said, "Unless you repent, you will all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3-5).

(2) Backsliders are to repent. Paul said, "I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance" (2 Cor. 7:9). There were fleshly Christians in the church at Corinth. In Paul's first letter to them he called upon the church to discipline the guilty. In his second letter he rejoices because the guilty repented.

(3) Local churches are to repent. In the Book of Revelation (Rev. 2-3), our Lord sent seven letters to seven local churches. He called upon five of the seven to repent.

The church at Ephesus was to repent because she had left her first love.

The church at Pergamos was to repent because she permitted the doctrine of Balaam to be taught, and to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit acts of immorality.

The church at Thyatira was to repent because she tolerated Jezebel to teach and lead God's servants to commit acts of immorality.

The church at Sardis was to repent because she was a dying congregation.

The church at Laodicea was to repent because she thought she was rich and did not need anything. In her opinion, she had arrived. She did not know that she was neither hot nor cold, but lukewarm and God was ready to spit her out of His mouth.

The Lord called upon these five churches to repent or else He would remove their candlestick and they would cease to be a light in darkness.

The lost are to repent or perish.

The backslider is to repent or be disciplined.

The local church is to repent or lose its effectiveness in a world lost in sin.

7 Repentance, The Evidence of (Read: Acts 26:19, 20): 19) Therefore, King Agrippa, I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, 20) but, declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance.

Notes:

The evidence of repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ is seen in:

(1) The repentance of unbelieving Thomas (John 20:24-29). Thomas would not believe that Christ had been raised from the dead until he saw the risen Savior and was given the opportunity to touch His nail-pierced hands and put his hand into His wounded side. Thomas repented, believed, and made his great confession of faith, "My Lord and My God!"

(2) Three thousand changed their minds, hearts, and wills on the day of Pentecost and immediately gave evidence of repentance (Acts 2:41-47).

(3) Saul of Tarsus experienced repentance when he met Jesus on the Damascus road and gave evidence of repentance (Acts 9:1-22).

(4) Cornelius, his family, and friends repented when they heard the gospel preached by Simon Peter, and evidence of repentance followed (Acts 10:24-48).

(5) The Philippian jailer and his house repented when witnessed to by Paul and Silas; the evidence of repentance followed (Acts 16:26-34).

Repentance is a change of the mind, the heart, and the will. The proof of repentance is:

- (a) Turning from "transgressions" (Exek. 18:30 OT).
- (b) Turning to God (Acts 26:19, 20).
- (c) Followed by good deeds (Acts 26:19, 20).

Outline Thirteen: New Birth

It is of the utmost importance that we have a clear understanding of what Jesus meant when, speaking with Nicodemus, He said, "You must be born again". The new birth is a spiritual birth. It is as much a birth as the natural birth; it is not just a figure of speech. The first birth is of the seed of man. The second birth is of the seed of God (1 Pet. 1:23).

Therefore, you cannot become a child of God by joining the church, any more than a monkey could become a man by joining the human race. He may act like a man, dress like a man, and try to live like a man... but he would still be a monkey. Now, if by some miracle, the monkey could be born again of the seed of man, then... and only then, could he become a man.

The only way to become a child of God is to be "born again" (John 3:3); not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and abiding word of God". What is the new birth?

- The new birth is a new creation (2 Cor. 5:17).
- The new birth is a spiritual resurrection (Eph. 2:1-9).
- The new birth is regeneration (Titus 3:5).
- The new birth is partaking of the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4).
- The new birth is receiving Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, by faith (John 1:12)
- The new birth is being made the "righteousness of God" (2 Cor. 5:21).
- The new birth is compulsory if you are to become a child of God: "You must be born again".

1 Jesus and The Two Births (John 3:1-8): **1)** There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. **2)** This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, "Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him." **3)** Jesus answered and said to him, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." **4)** Nicodemus said to Him, "How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born?" **5)** Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. **6)** That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. **7)** Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' **8)** The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

Notes:

In John 3:1-8, we see Jesus and Nicodemus face to face—Jesus the Son of God, and Nicodemus the son of natural man. Nicodemus was a very religious man, but he was not a child of God. What a shock it must have been to learn that his religion was not enough! It never is. He came to Jesus, addressing Him saying, “You have come from God as a teacher”.

Jesus knew Nicodemus, as He knows all men (John 2:24, 25), and Jesus knew that he needed more than a teacher - he needed a Savior. He needed more than religion - he needed regeneration. He needed more than Law - he needed life.

Jesus began by going right to the point when He said, “You must be born again.” Nicodemus asked, “How can a man be born when he is old?” Then Jesus pointed out the dissimilarity in the two births: “That which is born of the flesh is flesh” [the flesh will never change]; and “That which is born of the Spirit is spirit” [the Spirit will never change] (John 3:6).

First, let us take a brief look at the flesh birth:

- (1) It produces an old sinful nature (Ps. 51:5 OT).
- (2) It produces a perishable nature (1 Pet. 1:23).
- (3) It produces an old nature under the sentence of death (Rom 6:23).
- (4) It produces an old nature that makes every unsaved person a child of the devil (1 John 3:10).

Second, let us say a word about the new birth:

- (1) It produces a sinless nature (1 John 3:9).
- (2) It produces a nature that cannot sin (1 John 3:9).
- (3) It produces a righteous nature (2 Cor. 5:21).
- (4) It produces a divine nature (2 Pet. 1:4).

Every born again person has two natures: The old from the old birth, and the new from the new birth. By the old birth, we are children of the flesh; by the new the new birth, we are children of God. This is why, “You must be born again.”

- 2 The New Birth Issues a New Sinless Nature (1 John 3:9): 9** Whoever has been born of God does not sin, for His seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

Notes:

This is one of the most misunderstood verses in the Bible. Do not try to understand it in the light of personal experience. Keep in mind that the above verse is speaking of the

new nature - not the old nature - because the old nature is not born from God. The old nature is born of fallen man and is depraved. The new nature is born of God and is holy.

First, let us see what the verse says about the new nature:

- (1) The new nature does not commit sin, because it is the product of the seed (sperm) of God.
- (2) The new nature cannot sin, because it is the divine nature of God (2 Pet. 1:4) and since God cannot sin, the new nature that issues from His holy seed cannot sin. We need to yield to the new nature, the Spirit of God (Romans 6:13) to experience a victorious Christian life.

Second, let us see what the Bible says about the old nature:

- (1) The old nature does sin any time you let it sin (Rom. 6:12). As a child of God, you will keep the old nature in check (1 Cor. 9:27) by not *yielding* to the desire of the flesh; otherwise the old nature will cause you to live a defeated Christian life (Rom 6:13).
- (2) There is nothing good in the old nature (Rom. 7:18). The power to live a righteous life cannot be found in the old nature; it can be found only in the new (Gal. 2:20).

If you have been "born again", you have two natures - the old and the new - and you are walking according to one of the two. Examine your Christian walk in the light of God's Word (Rom. 8:5, 6).

3 The New Birth is Imperishable (1 Pet. 1:23): 23 Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever.

Notes:

In the above verse (23) we have two seeds, two births, and two natures.

- (1) The corruptible seed issues a corruptible nature (Rom. 1:23). The seed of man became depraved in the seed of Adam when he sinned in the garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6-10 OT). Corruptible man can produce only corruptible seed (Matt. 7:18). "All have sinned..." (Rom 3:23) because all are born in sin (Ps. 51:5 OT). You are not a sinner because you sin - you sin because you are a sinner.
- (2) The incorruptible seed issues an incorruptible nature (2 Pet. 1:4). You cannot corrupt that which is incorruptible; therefore, the incorruptible seed of God issues a new nature that cannot be corrupted at any time, or in any way. The new birth

produces the life of Christ, and this life is made living in man by the indwelling Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:8-10).

The seed of man is corruptible; the birth of man is natural. Therefore, the nature of man is sinful. The seed of God is incorruptible; the new birth is spiritual. Therefore, the new nature is sinless.

4 The New Birth - Its Means (Read: John 3:14-18): 18) And as "Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; **15)** that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. **16)** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. **17)** For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. **18)** He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Notes:

"Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness" (Num. 21:5-9 OT). He lifted up the serpent for a sinful, disobedient people. When anyone was bitten by a serpent, he had a choice: He could humble himself and by a simple act of faith look and live (Is. 45:22 OT); or he could refuse to look on the serpent of bronze and die.

"Even so must the Son of Man be lifted up." Just as the serpent in the wilderness was the only means for the healing of Israel, so the death of Jesus Christ is the only means for the new birth. And the only way to appropriate the regenerating power of God is by faith in the vicarious death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

The sinner must come to Christ by faith, believing:

- (1) That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures (Is. 53:1-12 OT – and Zech. 13:6 OT).
- (2) And that He was buried. This is the proof of His death. He was in the grave three days and nights.
- (3) And that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures. This is the gospel that saves - but it is powerless to save until the sinner believes it (Rom. 1:16).

The means of the new birth is found in that:

- (1) "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son" - to be the only means of the new birth (John 3:16).

(2) Jesus Christ gladly came into the world to become the only means of the new birth (John 12:27 – and John 17:1-5).

(3) The Holy Spirit came into the world on the day of Pentecost to convince men of their need of the new birth (John 16:7-11). A personal faith in the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ is the only means of the new birth.

5 The New Birth: Its Threefold Proof (1 John 5:1): 1) Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

Notes:

Every “born again” child of God has the threefold proof of the new birth - proof that he is a child of God. This threefold proof is: first, inward proof; second, outgoing proof; and third, outward proof.

(1) “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God” (1 John 5:1). Your faith in Christ - that He is God - is personal evidence that you are a child of God (1 John 5:10-13). This is inward proof of the new birth.

(2) “Everyone who loves is born of God” (1 John 4:7-11). We are to love our fellow man with the love of God. This we are not capable of doing in the flesh; we must let God love man through us (Rom. 5:5). This is outgoing proof of the new birth.

(3) “Everyone also who practices righteousness is born of Him” (1 John 2:29). If you are born of God, you will make a practice of doing right at all times and at all cost (2 Cor. 5:17). This is outward proof of the new birth.

If you do not have the threefold proof of the new birth, now is the time to get on your knees and accept Jesus Christ as your personal Savior - by faith in His Vicarious (substitute; on our behalf) death, burial, and resurrection!

Outline Fourteen: Salvation

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

There are seven facts revealed in God's plan of salvation, and as you study them, keep in mind that this is God's plan - not man's - it is God's. There is no other plan that can save your lost soul and make you a child of God (Acts 4:12).

All roads may lead to Rome, but all religions do not lead to God and salvation. There is only one way, and that is God's way; and God's way is a person, and that person is His Son the Lord Jesus Christ (John 14:6).

God's salvation is threefold: First, Christ appeared on this earth to save you from the penalty of sin, by putting away your sin by the sacrifice of Himself on the Cross (Heb. 9:26). Second, He appeared in heaven, in the presence of God, after His resurrection, to save you from the power of sin (Heb. 9:24 and 1 John 2:1, 2). Third, He will appear again on this earth, the second time, as "Lord of lords and King of kings" to save you from the very presence of sin (Heb. 9:28). Now come to the seven facts of salvation with an open mind and a receptive heart, that God may bring salvation to your soul!

1 It is a fact that God loves you (John 3:16): 16 For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Notes:

It is an eternal fact the God loves you with and everlasting love that cannot be fathomed; it is so boundless that it can only be known by faith.

The little word "so" in John 3:16 is most expressive. It gives you some concept of the magnitude of God's love. God so loved you, that He gave His only begotten Son, to be made sin for you, that you might become the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

Jesus Christ was made that which God hates: sin - that you might become that which God loves: righteousness. Because God so loves you, you can exchange your sins for His righteousness.

Could you ask for greater evidence of love? Calvary is proof that God loves, and longs to save you.

Before going to the next fact, admit to yourself that: "God loves me!"

2 It is a fact that you are a sinner (Rom. 3:23): 23) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Notes: What is sin?

- Sin is lawlessness (1 John 3:4).
- Sin is unbelief; it calls God a liar (1 John 5:10).
- Sin is active rebellion against God (1 Sam. 15:23 OT).
- Sin is passive rebellion against God (Is. 1:2 OT).
- All unrighteousness is sin (1 John 5:17).

God, who cannot lie, said: "All have sinned." "All" includes you! You have sinned against God by thought, word, and deed. You have committed sins of commission and sins of omission. In the sight of God, you are a lost sinner.

Before going to the next fact, admit to yourself that: "I am a lost sinner, because I have sinned."

3 It is a fact that you are now dead in sin (Rom. 6:23): 23) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Notes:

You have already confessed and admitted that you are a sinner. Now God would have you know that "... the wages of sin is death." You are dead in sin until you accept Christ as personal Savior. The Apostle Paul said, "And you were dead in your trespasses and sins" (Eph. 2:1). To be saved is to be made spiritually alive in Christ.

What is death?

- (1) Death is spiritual separation. Your sins have separated you from God; you are dead in your sins.
- (2) Death is physical separation. It separates the spirit and soul from the body.
- (3) Death is eternal separation. If you remain lost in your sins, you will stand before God at the great white throne judgment. And there your sins will separate you from the mercy of God forever; this is Hades (Rev. 20:11-15).

You know that God loves you, and that you are a sinner - dead in sins. Before going to the next fact, admit to yourself: "I am dead in sins."

4 It is a fact that Christ died for you (Rom. 5:6-8): 6) For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. **7)** For scarcely for a righteous man will

one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **8**) But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Notes:

He died for those who are unlike God; this includes you! "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8).

"He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Cor. 5:21).

Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold ...but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

"For Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that He might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit" (1 Cor. 15:3).

"Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures" (1 Cor. 15:3).

In light of these wonderful Scriptures, will you now thank God for His great love in sending His Son to bear your sins in His own body on the cross, and admit to yourself that: "Christ died on Calvary for me!"

5 It is a fact that you can be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ (Acts 16:30, 31): 30 And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" **31**) So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

Notes:

The Philippian jailor asked Paul and Silas: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The answer was quick in response, and positive in content: "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you shall be saved, you and your household." Paul and Silas preached the gospel to the jailer and those in his house; they believed and were saved.

What is this gospel that saves when believed?

First, it is: "that Christ died for your sins."

Second, it is: "that He was buried."

Third, it is: "that He was raised on the third day" (1 Cor. 15:3, 4).

Jesus Christ the God-man died for you, was buried for you, and rose from the dead for you; and is now at the right hand of the Father interceding for you (1 John 2:1). "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes" (Rom. 1:16). The gospel is the power of God for salvation *only* when you believe. *Your faith in Jesus Christ releases the power of God that saves your soul.*

The man born blind received physical sight by a miracle; but, spiritual sight came when Jesus asked, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" He answered, "Lord, I believe" (John 9:35-38). Salvation came to Thomas when he believed and confessed, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:24-29).

When you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved (Rom. 10:9, 10).

Accept Him now by faith, and pray this prayer: "Lord Jesus, I know You love me, because You died on the cross bearing my sins. Thank You, Lord, for *revealing* to me my lost, sinful condition. I confess that I am a sinner, dead in sin, and cannot save myself. I do now by faith, gladly accept You as my personal Savior, and thank You, Lord, for eternal salvation. Help me to live for You. Amen!"

6 It is a fact that you can be saved and know it (1 John 5:10-13): 10) He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son. **11)** And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. **12)** He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. **13)** These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.

Notes:

"... that you may know that you have eternal life..." (1 John 5:13). Upon the authority of God's Word, you can be saved and know it. Your faith in God's infallible Word is your assurance of salvation. "He who believes in the Son has (present tense) eternal life" (John 3:36).

The Bible is a book of certainties. It strengthens convictions, and establishes beliefs. God would have you know:

(1) That you are now a child of God (1 John 3:2).

- (2) That you have been made the righteousness of God in Christ (2 Cor. 5:21 and Rom. 10:1-4).
- (3) That you are now a new creature in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17).
- (4) That you are now a son and heir of God (Gal. 4:7). Could you have greater assurance than is found in God's infallible Word? "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt. 24:35).

7 It is a fact that you are now a child of God and you are to obey Him (Acts 5:29):

29) But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: "We ought to obey God rather than men.

Notes:

"We must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29). You now belong to Jesus Christ. He is your Lord and Master, and "no one can serve two masters" (Matt. 6:24). Determine now to obey your Lord and Master, Jesus Christ, in all things:

- (1) Unite with a New Testament church. "And the Lord was adding to their number day by day those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47).
- (2) Follow Him in the ordinance of baptism (Acts 2:41).
- (3) Join a Sunday school class (Bible Study), and study the Word with God's children (2 Tim. 2:25).
- (4) Attend the worship services of your church (Heb. 10:25). You need the preaching of God's Word and Christian fellowship.
- (5) Be a faithful steward (1 Cor. 4:2). All that you are and have belong to God. "... you are not your own. For you are bought with a price..." (1 Cor. 6:19, 20). As a faithful steward, you pay God His tithe (Mal. 3:10 OT). The tithe is one-tenth of your income, and it is the Lord's (Lev. 27:30 OT).
- (6) Make time in your daily life to pray and read God's word that you may grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Outline Fifteen: Witnessing

How to Witness Effectively

One day as Jesus walked by the sea of Galilee He saw two men, Simon, called Peter and Andrew, his brother. They were fisherman. "And He said to them, 'Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men'" (Matt. 4:19). Soul winners are made, not born. Therefore, to be an effective witness, you must be taught, trained, and motivated by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus took three years to teach and train His disciples in the art of soul winning. After His resurrection He instructed them to stay in Jerusalem and, "wait for what the Father had promised" (Acts 1:4-8). When the disciples asked Jesus if the time had come for Him to restore the kingdom of Israel, He answered, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses..."

On the day of Pentecost, the hundred and twenty received power to witness; and any believer who will acquire the know-how can be an effective soul winner.

He can know that he and the Holy Spirit are a witnessing team. Peter said, "And we are witnesses of these things; and so is the Holy Spirit, **whom God has given to those who obey Him**" (Acts 5:32-33). Therefore, when you witness remember that "your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you (1 Cor. 6:19).

When you witness, trust the Holy Spirit to do three things:

- (1) **Illuminate** the mind of the unbeliever. All lost souls are in spiritual darkness (2 Cor. 4:3, 4).
- (2) **Stir** the heart of the unbeliever. As Peter preached Christ the listeners, "were pierced to the heart" (Acts 2:37).
- (3) **Move** the will of the unbeliever.

The prodigal returned home when he came to his senses and said, "I will get up and go to my father" (Luke 15:18).

You may be up-to-date in all modern techniques and technologies of soul winning and able to quote the necessary Scriptures without a flaw; but if you do not evangelize in the power of the Holy Spirit, your soul winning efforts will be

ineffective. Approach this last Master Outline Study with an open heart and receptive mind, willing to be made fishers of men.

1 The Importance of Witnessing (Rom. 10:13-17): **13)** For “whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.” **14)** How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? **15)** And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” **16)** But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, “Lord, who has believed our report?” **17)** So then faith *comes* by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.

Notes:

... for “Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved” (Rom. 10:13). Do not lift this text out of context. There are three questions in verse 14 that must be considered along with verse 13, they are:

First question, “How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed?” The answer is, the lost cannot call on the Lord to be saved until they believe:

- (1) “That Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,
- (2) And that He was buried,
- (3) And that He was raised on the third day according to Scriptures” (1 Cor. 15:1-4).

Second question, “And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard?” The answer is, the lost cannot believe in Him until they hear the good news of salvation.

- (1) The eunuch had to hear to believe (Acts 8:26-39).
- (2) Paul had to hear to believe (Acts 9:1-18).
- (3) Cornelius had to hear to believe (Acts 10:1-48).
- (4) The Philippian jailer had to hear to believe (Acts 16:25-40).

Third question, “And how shall they hear without a preacher (witness)?” The answer is, they cannot hear the good news of salvation without a witness.

- (1) Three thousand were saved at Pentecost because the 120 witnessed.
- (2) The eunuch was saved because Philip witnessed.
- (3) Paul was saved because Stephen witnessed (Acts 7:54-60) and Jesus the God-man witnessed, and Ananias witnessed (Acts 9:1-18).

- (4) Cornelius and his household were saved because Peter witnessed.
- (5) The Philippian jailer and his household were saved because Paul and Silas witnessed.
- (6) You were saved because someone witnessed to you!

According to the word of God, the lost cannot be saved without a witness. They must have a witness to hear, they must hear to believe, they must believe to call, and they must call to be saved. But they cannot call until they believe and they cannot believe until they hear and they cannot hear without a witness. "So faith (saving faith) comes from hearing" (Rom. 10:17). We are not born with saving faith; it comes only when we hear the gospel. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that every born again child of God obey the great commission to evangelize, to **go with the gospel**.

2 The Qualifications of a Witness (Col. 2:6, 7): 6) As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, **7)** rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Notes:

A qualified witness is one who is:

- (1) Established in the faith. To be established in the faith is to be rooted and grounded in God's Word. Peter said, "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pet. 3:15).

The fifteen Master Outline studies in this Bible study were prepared to help establish you in the faith. Study them, carry your Bible with you and take advantage of every opportunity to ponder a portion of one of the great doctrines. They will give you a foundation on which to build a strong faith (2 Tim. 3:16, 17).

- (2) Saved and knows it. I know that I am saved because God tells me so in His Word and God cannot lie.

We have the:

- (a) Witness of the Spirit (Rom. 8:16).
- (b) The witness of the Word (1 John 5:13).

(c) The witness of faith "The one who **believes** in the Son of God has the witness in himself" (1 John 5:9, 10).

- (3) Separated. Paul said that he was "set apart for the gospel of God" (Rom. 1:1-16).
- (a) A holy desire to share spiritual gifts (verse 11).
 - (b) A holy purpose to bear fruit (verse 13).
 - (c) A holy obligation to pay a spiritual debt (verse 14).
 - (d) A holy eagerness to share the gospel (verse 15).
 - (e) A holy boldness to exalt the cross (verse 16).

To be separated unto the gospel is to share the Good News with the lost (see Master Outline #11, Section #3).

- (4) Filled with the Holy Spirit. "Be filled with the Spirit" (Eph. 5:18). We are commanded to be filled with the Holy Spirit (see Master Outline #11, Section #4). Evidence of the Spirit-filled life as seen in the early Christians:
- (a) They spoke the word of God with boldness (Acts 4:31).
 - (b) They witnessed with great power (Acts 4:33).
 - (c) They witnessed with great grace (Acts 4:33)
 - (d) They shared their wealth (Acts 4:34-37).
 - (e) They worshiped in unity (Acts 2:42-47).
 - (f) They suffered persecution (Acts 8:1-4).
 - (g) They glorified in tribulations (Rom. 5:3).
 - (h) They sang in prison (Acts 16:25).
 - (i) They loved and prayed for their executioners (Acts 7:54-60).
 - (j) They rejoiced to suffer shame for His name (Acts 5:41).

They were accused of:

- (1) Filling Jerusalem with the gospel (Acts 5:28).
- (2) Upsetting the world (Acts 17:6).

The 120 Spirit-filled Christians witnessed on the day of Pentecost and the people were:

- (1) Bewildered, that is, they were mentally arrested (Acts 2:6).
- (2) Amazed, that is, they were mentally frustrated (Acts 2:7).
- (3) Marveling, that is, they stood in mental awe (Acts 2:7).
- (4) Mocking, that is, some mentally reacted (Acts 2:13).

(5) Inquiring, that is, some mentally acted (Acts 2:37).

The gospel proclaimed in the power of the Holy Spirit will motivate the hearer to act or react.

On the day to Pentecost three thousand acted as evidenced by repentance and baptism, while others reacted mocking. No one, but no one, ignored the witness of those Spirit-filled believers!

3 The Approach (John 1:40-42): 40) One of the two who heard John *speak*, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. **41)** He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which is translated, the Christ). **42)** And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, "You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas" (which is translated, A Stone).

Notes:

There are two ways to approach the prospect.

The first is:

(1) The direct approach. This approach can be used when witnessing to:

- (a) A relative. Andrew used the direct approach to bring his brother Simon Peter to Christ (John 1:40-42).
- (b) A friend. Phillip the apostle used the direct approach to bring Nathanael to Jesus (John 1:45, 46).
- (c) The concerned. Jesus used the direct approach to win Nicodemus (John 3:1-21).
- (d) The seeker. Paul and Silas used the direct approach to lead the Philippian jailer to Jesus (Acts 16:19-34).

The second is:

(2) The indirect approach. This can be used when witnessing to:

- (a) A stranger. Jesus used the indirect approach to witness to the Samaritan woman (John 4:7-26).
- (b) The religious. Phillip the evangelist used the indirect approach to lead the Ethiopian eunuch to Christ (Acts 8:26-39).

The method in either case will vary according to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Whether you use the direct or the indirect approach, be sure to follow through until you have presented God's plan of salvation and invited them to accept Christ as their personal Savior.

4 The Follow-Through (Matt. 13:3-8 and 18-23): **3)** Then He spoke many things to them in parables, saying: "Behold, a sower went out to sow. **4)** "And as he sowed, some *seed* fell by the wayside; and the birds came and devoured them. **5)** "Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth. **6)** "But when the sun was up they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. **7)** "And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up and choked them. **8)** "But others fell on good ground and yielded a crop: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. **18)** "Therefore hear the parable of the sower: **19)** "When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand *it*, then the wicked *one* comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. **20)** "But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; **21)** "yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. **22)** "Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. **23)** "But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands *it*, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."

Notes:

The parable of the sower illustrates the importance of the follow-through. Only one fourth of the soil was ready for the seed, so only one fourth of the seed brought forth fruit. Jesus explains the parable in (Matt. 13:18-23), and we learn that:

- (1) The sower is the witness.
- (2) The seed is the word of God.
- (3) The soil is the heart.

We also learn that there are four types of hearts. They are:

- 1) The hard heart; this is the wayside soil, fertile but hard.
- 2) The shallow heart; this is the stony soil, fertile but depthless.
- 3) The worldly heart; this is the thorny soil, fertile but possessed.
- 4) The understanding heart: this is good soil, fertile and prepared.

The lesson here is a simple one if we expect the seed, the word of God, to bear fruit, the heart must be made ready. The hard heart must be broken; the shallow heart must be given depth; the worldly heart must be taught that the things of this world are temporal (Mark 8:36, 37). This requires time, work, and patience.

5 How to Share God's Plan of Salvation (Acts 4:12): 12 Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.

Notes:

There are seven simple steps to take in sharing God's plan of salvation:

- (1) Share your personal experience of salvation. Don't give your life story. It should not take more than a few minutes to tell how the Lord saved you. As you come to the close of your testimony, bring out your Bible and say, "May I share with you God's plan of salvation that changed my life?"
- (2) Now share fact number one, "It is a fact that God loves you." Read (John 3:16-17 "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. 17 "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.") and the study notes with them. When you come to the close of the study notes, say something like this: "Will you now admit that God loves you?" Lead them to admit it, if you can. This will get them involved in the plan of salvation.
- (3) Now share fact number two, "It is a fact that you are a sinner." Read (Rom. 3:23 "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,") and the study notes with them. When you come to the close of the study notes, ask them to admit that they are a lost sinner. When they admit that they are a lost sinner, say something like, "Isn't it wonderful? God loves you even though you are a sinner!"
- (4) Now share fact number three, "It is a fact that you are now dead in sin." Read (Rom. 7:23 "But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.") and the study notes with them. When you come to the close of the study notes, ask them to admit that they are dead in sin. When they admit that they are dead in sin, say something like, "Isn't it great? Even though you are a lost sinner, dead in sin, God loves you!"
- (5) Now share fact number four, "It is a fact that Christ died for you." Read (Rom. 5:6 "For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.") and the study notes with them. When you come to the close of the study notes, ask them to admit that Christ died on Calvary for them. When they admit that Christ died for them, say something like, "Isn't it wonderful? Isn't it great that God loves you so much that He died on Calvary bearing your sins?"

- (6) Now share fact number five, "It is a fact that you can be saved by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." Read (Acts 16:30, 31 "And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household.") and the study notes with them.
- (7) Now share fact number six. Lead them to call upon the name of the Lord in prayer: for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved!" Read (Rom. 10:13 For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.").

When you come to the close of the study notes, be ready to ask them to accept, by faith, Christ as their personal Savior!

- 6 How to Give the Invitation (Rev. 22:17):** 17) And the Spirit and the bride say, "Come!" And let him who hears say, "Come!" And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires let him take the water of life freely.

Notes:

To give the invitation is to invite the person witnessed to, to, by faith, accept the Lord Jesus Christ as their personal Savior. After reading the above verse (Rev. 22:17) you can simply say something like this:

"Will you kneel with me in prayer as I ask the Lord to save you, right here and now?" (Don't wait for them to get on their knees; you lead the way. If they will not kneel with you, don't force it. Pray a short prayer that the Lord will convict them of sin and bring them to repentance. Get up and make an appointment to return for another witness session).

If they kneel with you, ask them to accept Him now, by faith, by praying with you (repeating after you) the following prayer: "Lord Jesus, I know You love me, because You died on the cross bearing my sins. Thank You, Lord, for revealing to me my lost, sinful condition. I confess that I am a sinner, dead in sin, and cannot save myself. I do now, by faith, gladly accept You as my personal Savior, and thank You, Lord, for eternal salvation. Amen!"

When you have finished leading them in the prayer, stand up, shake their hand, or preferably give them a hug (Christians are big on hugging!) and say something like this, "Welcome aboard! Upon the authority of God's Word you are now a child of God!"

7 How to Follow Up (Read: Acts 2:41-47): 41) Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added *to them*. **42)** And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. **43)** Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. **44)** Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, **45)** and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. **46)** So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, **47)** praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.

Notes:

When you have led a soul to Christ your responsibility does not end. You have a spiritual baby, and that baby needs help if it is to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are some things that you can do to help the new Christian to grow spiritually.

- (1) If they don't already have one, give them an "Open Bible" (we prefer the New American Standard "Open" Bible) which is simply a Bible that contains a good study guide (like the one that this entire study has come out of), a Biblical Encyclopedia, a Concordance and a lot of other very useful and fascinating study aids. Thomas Nelson also publishes "The Christian Life New Testament" which contains this bible study. This is a small new testament that you can carry in your pocket.
- (2) Lead them to a New Testament church. (Invite them to yours!)
 - a. Take them to church and sit with them.
 - b. When the invitation is given by your Pastor, ask them to go with you to make their public profession of faith in Christ (Matt. 10:32 "Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven.).
 - c. Arrange with your Pastor to get them baptized as soon as possible.
 - i. Start them out right:
 - ii. Point out that we have a "Now Salvation".
 - iii. Stress the fact that they need to obey the Lord in all things.
 - iv. Teach them how to pray effectively on a daily basis.
 - v. Teach them to read and study their Bible on a daily basis.
- (3) Explain the Master Outline system of study that we have been using.
 - a. Show them how the Outlines work.

- b. Be sure to show them how to look up each Scripture reference when they are studying.
- c. Help them through the Master Study Outlines. By the time that they have reached Outline #15, they should be in a church, and have a solid doctrinal foundation on which to continue to grow spiritually.

(4) Encourage them to evangelize and to witness. "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so" (Ps. 107:2 OT).

At this juncture, the new Christian should be fully prepared to "go with the gospel!" You have accomplished a great thing! Now, don't rest on your laurels, go find another lost soul!