

WRITINGS OF MARK COPELAND - VOLUME 1

by Mark Copeland

A collection of theological writings, sermons, and essays by Mark Copeland (Volume 1), compiled for study and devotional reading.

99 Chapters

Table of Contents

1. 01.00. A Harmony of the Life of Paul
2. 01.01. Paul's Life Prior To Conversion
3. 01.02. The Conversion of Paul
4. 01.03. Paul's Early Years Of Service
5. 01.04. First Missionary Journey
6. 01.05. Conference in Jerusalem
7. 01.06. Second Missionary Journey
8. 01.07. Third Missionary Journey
9. 01.08. Arrest in Jerusalem
10. 01.09. Imprisonment In Caesarea
11. 01.10. The Voyage to Rome
12. 01.11. First Roman Captivity
13. 01.12. Between The First And Second Captivity
14. 01.13. Second Roman Captivity And Death (68 AD)
15. 02.00. Baptism, A Special Study
16. 02.01. Baptism In The Preaching Of The Apostles
17. 02.02. Baptism In The Teaching Of Paul
18. 02.03. Baptism In The Teaching Of Peter
19. 02.04. Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?
20. 02.05. What About Infant Baptism?
21. 02.06. What About "Re-Baptism?"
22. 02.07. For Your Further Study
23. 02.08. Arguements Against Baptism Answered. . .
24. 02.08a. What About Cornelius And His Household?
25. 02.08b. Wasn't Paul Sent To Preach, Not Baptize?
26. 02.08c. Baptism Is A Work, We Are Not Saved By Works!
27. 02.08d. Spirit Baptism Saves Us, Not Water Baptism!
28. 02.08e. "Baptism" Conclusion To This Section
29. 03.00. Give Me The Bible
30. 03.01. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy
31. 03.02. Why I Read The Bible
32. 03.03. Why I Believe The Bible
33. 03.04. Why I Love The Bible
34. 03.05. Why I Obey The Bible
35. 03.06. Why I Study The Old Testament
36. 03.07. How I Read The Bible
37. 03.08. How I Study The Bible
38. 04.00. God's Will For You
39. 04.01. Rejoice Always

40. 04.02. Pray Without Ceasing
41. 04.03. In Everything Give Thanks
42. 04.04. Your Sanctification
43. 04.05. Do Good
44. 04.06. Discerning The Will Of God
45. 04.07. Motivation To Do God's Will
46. 04.08. Making God's Will Priority One
47. 04.09. Seeking God's Providential Will
48. 04A.00. Life After Death
49. 04A.01. What is the Value of Such a Study?
50. 04A.02. What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?
51. 04A.03. What Is the Nature of Man?
52. 04A.04. Where Do the Spirits of Believers Go After Death?
53. 04A.05. Are the Souls of the Redeemed Conscious?
54. 04A.06. Shall We Know Each Other There?
55. 04A.07. What is the Condition of the Wicked?
56. 04A.08. What Do We Know About the Lord's Second Coming?
57. 04A.09. What Do We Know About the Resurrection
58. 04A.10. What Do We Know About the Judgment?
59. 04A.11. The Eternal Destiny of the Redeemed
60. 04A.12. The Eternal Destiny of the Wicked
61. 04A.13. For Your Further Study
62. 05.00. Ministering Spirits
63. 05.01. Terms And Description of Angels
64. 05.02. Angels In The Old Testament
65. 05.03. The Angel Of The Lord
66. 05.04. The Cherubim And Seraphim
67. 05.05. The Ministry Of Angels To Christ
68. 05.06. The Ministry Of Angels To Christians
69. 06.00. Sermons on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ
70. 06.01. The Significance of the Resurrection of Christ
71. 06.02. The Celebration of Easter
72. 06.03. Why Did Jesus Suffer?
73. 06.04. Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?
74. 06.05. The Problem of Suffering
75. 06.05.01. Why Does God Allow It?
76. 06.05.02. Who or What Causes It?
77. 06.05.03. How Can We Prepare For It?
78. 06.06. Life After Death
79. 06.06.01. What Is The Value of Such A Study?
80. 06.06.02. What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?
81. 06.06.03. What Is The Nature of Man?

82. 06.06.04. Where Do The Spirits of Believers Go At Death?
83. 06.06.05. Are The Souls of the Redeemed Conscious?
84. 06.06.06. Shall We Know Each Other There?
85. 06.06.07. What Is The Condition of the Wicked?
86. 06.06.08. What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?
87. 06.06.09. What Do We Know About the Resurrection?
88. 06.06.10. What Do We Know Concerning the Judgment?
89. 06.06.11. What Is The Eternal Destiny of the Redeemed?
90. 06.06.12. What Is The Eternal Destiny of the Wicked?
91. 06.06.13. For Your Further Study
92. 07.00. Shepherds Of The Flock
93. 07.01. Introduction To The Office
94. 07.02. Their Work And Responsibility
95. 07.03. Their Qualifications - Preliminary Considerations
96. 07.04. Their Qualifications - Familial Qualities
97. 07.05. Their Qualifications - Positive Qualities
98. 07.06. Their Qualifications - Negative Qualities
99. 07.07. Our Duties Toward Them

01.00. A Harmony of the Life of Paul

A Harmony of the Life of Paul A chronological study, harmonizing the book of Acts with Paul's epistles Mark A. Copeland Converted to Topic Note for e-Sword: Stephen Jovanovic, Christchurch - New Zealand. <mailto:Stephen8601@gmail.com> Copyright © Mark A. Copeland, 1992 - 2009. All rights reserved <mailto:MarkACopeland@gmail.com> <http://executableoutlines.com>

Contents

- 01 Paul's Life Prior To Conversion
- 08 Arrest in Jerusalem (58 AD)
- 02 The Conversion Of Paul (36 AD)
- 09 Imprisonment In Caesarea (58-60 AD)
- 03 Paul's Early Years Of Service (36-45 AD)
- 10 The Voyage to Rome (60-61 AD)
- 04 First Missionary Journey (45-49 AD)
- 11 First Roman Captivity (61-63 AD)
- 05 Conference in Jerusalem (50 AD)
- 12 Between The First And Second Captivity (63-67 AD)
- 06 Second Missionary Journey (51-54 AD)
- 13 Second Roman Captivity And Death (68 AD)
- 07 Third Missionary Journey (54-58 AD)

01.01. Paul's Life Prior To Conversion

Study 1: Paul's Life Prior To Conversion

Introduction 1. One cannot deny the powerful impact the apostle Paul had on the growth and development of the early church... a. His conversion provided powerful testimony to the resurrection of Christ b. His missionary journeys led to the establishment of churches throughout the Mediterranean world -- As "the apostle to the Gentiles", he helped widen the door to the church first opened by the apostle Peter 2. He left a large imprint on the scriptures of the early church... a. Authoring thirteen (fourteen, counting Hebrews) books of the New Testament b. In the only available history of the early church, Luke devotes the majority of his book to the life and journeys of Paul

-- Evidently the Holy Spirit saw fit to emphasize the life and teachings of Paul as an example and source for learning about true discipleship to Jesus Christ 3. In this study, we shall harmonize Paul's writings with Luke's record of his life and travels... a. Examining Paul's life in chronological order b. Collating various scriptural references relating to each period of Paul's life c. Noting at which points in his life Paul wrote his different epistles d. Briefly outlining and noticing the theme or highlights of each epistle in its historical setting e. Putting together a possible itinerary and events leading up to his final years and martyrdom 4. The objective of this study will be to... a. Gain a better understanding of the growth and nature of the early church b. Note the influence of Paul's life and journeys on his epistles c. Acquire insight into Paul as a servant of the Lord, that his life and work might inspire our own service to Jesus Christ

[In this lesson, we begin by noting "Paul's Life Prior To His Conversion", when he was better known as "Saul of Tarsus"...] I. Early Life and Training A. His Ancestry and Youth. . .

1. Born in Tarsus of Cilicia - Acts 21:39; Acts 22:3; Acts 23:34 a. Cilicia was a Roman province in SE Asia Minor (modern Turkey) b. Tarsus was the capital ("no mean city"), known for its school of literature and philosophy (said to exceed even those of Athens and Alexandria) 2. Born of Jewish ancestry a. A Hebrew, or Israelite, of the seed of Abraham - 2 Corinthians 11:22 b. Of the tribe of Benjamin - Romans 11:1 c. A Hebrew of the Hebrews (both parents Hebrews?) - Php 3:3-4 3. Born a Roman citizen - Acts 22:25-29 a. Some think because Tarsus was a free city, but such a designation did not automatically impart citizenship b. Evidently one of Paul's ancestors either purchased or was rewarded citizenship -- We do not know the date of his birth, some place it around the time of Jesus' birth B. His Education. . .

1. Taught in Jerusalem by Gamaliel, a Pharisee and respected teacher of the Law - Acts 22:3; cf. Acts 5:34-40 2. A son of a Pharisee, he became a strict Pharisee - Acts 23:6; Acts 26:4-5; Php 3:5 3. He excelled above his contemporaries in Judaism - Galatians 1:13-14 4. Was also trained as tent-maker - Acts 18:1-3 C. His Character. . .

1. He was zealous in persecuting the church, concerning the Law blameless - Php 3:6 2. He served God with a pure conscience - 2 Timothy 1:3; Acts 23:1 3. Thus he was ignorant of his

blasphemy and persecution - 1 Timothy 1:12-13

[His early life and training certainly put Saul of Tarsus on the "fast track" when it came to his religious faith. It was zeal in defending his faith that led to his brief but fervent career as...] II. Persecutor of the Church A. At the Death of Stephen. . .

1. Saul was present at the death of the first Christian martyr - Acts 7:57-58 2. He consented to the death of Stephen - Acts 8:1; Acts 22:20 B. Making Havoc of the Church. . .

1. Entering homes, dragging men and women to prison - Acts 8:3; Acts 22:4 2. Entering synagogues, imprisoning and beating those who believed in Jesus - Acts 22:19 3. He believed it necessary to do things contrary to the name of Jesus - Acts 26:9-11 a. Imprisoning believers by the authority of the chief priests b. Casting his vote against them as they were put to death c. Compelling them to blaspheme d. Pursuing them to foreign cities (such as Damascus) - cf. Acts 9:1-2 C. His Later Confession. . .

1. Admits he persecuted the church "beyond measure" in an attempt to destroy it - Galatians 1:13 2. It was due to his great zeal - Php 3:6 3. Though ignorant, he was a blasphemer, persecutor, and insolent man - 1 Timothy 1:13

4. For such reasons, he considered himself the least of the apostles, not worthy to be called an apostle - 1 Corinthians 15:9

Conclusion 1. From being the worst foe of the church, he was about to become one of its best friends... a. Saul the persecutor would soon become Paul the preacher - Galatians 1:22-24 b. Paul attributed it to the grace and mercy of God - 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-14 2. Every aspect of Paul's life prior to his conversion prepared him for the task the Lord would give him... a. His Jewish heritage and Roman citizenship suited him for preaching to both Jews and Gentiles b. His training by Gamaliel would serve him well in his writings on the Law c. His skill as a tent-maker would assist him in his travels And of course, his conversion would serve as a wonderful example of God's mercy:

"This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life." (1 Timothy 1:15-16) In our next study we shall focus our attention on the conversion of Paul. In the meantime, have you obtained the mercy offered in Jesus Christ (cf. Titus 3:4-7)? No matter how you have lived in the past, you can be justified by His grace! - Acts 22:16

01.02. The Conversion of Paul

Study 2: The Conversion Of Paul (36 AD)

Introduction 1. Paul began his life known as Saul of Tarsus... a. Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin b. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, a Pharisee and a son of a Pharisee - Php 3:5; Acts 23:6 2. He was on the "fast track" as far as his Jewish faith was concerned... a. Living according to the strict sect of His religion - Acts 26:5 b. Advancing in Judaism beyond many of his contemporaries - Galatians 1:14 3. His zeal for Judaism led to his persecution of the church... a. He tried to destroy it - Galatians 1:13 b. By seeking to imprison and put Christians to death - Acts 22:3-5 c. This he did because he believed it to be God's will - Acts 26:9-12 4. Yet Paul became converted to Christ... a. Which amazed those who first heard him preach - Acts 9:20-21 b. Whose conversion continues to provide powerful testimony to the resurrection of Christ

[As we continue this harmony of the life of Paul, we shall now focus our attention on "The Conversion Of Paul", collating what is found in the scriptures about this remarkable event. We begin with what happened...] I. On the Road to Damascus A. The Mission of Paul. . .

1. Paul received permission to bring disciples back from Damascus - Acts 9:1-2; Acts 22:4-5 2. Which Paul thought was proper to do - Acts 26:9-11

B. The Appearance of Jesus. . .

1. Prefaced by a light shining from heaven a. Occurring around noon - Acts 9:3; Acts 22:6 b. Brighter than the sun, shining around him and those with him - Acts 26:13 c. Causing them all to fall - Acts 26:14 2. Accompanied by a voice speaking to him a. Saying in Hebrew, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" - Acts 9:4; Acts 22:7; Acts 26:14 b. A voice heard, but not understood by those with him - Acts 9:7; Acts 22:9 3. Jesus identifies Himself to Paul a. Paul asks, "Who are You, Lord?" - Acts 9:5; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:15 1) At this point, Paul does not know Who he is talking to 2) But he obviously recognizes His authority! b. The reply, "I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting" - Acts 9:5; Acts 22:8; Acts 26:15

1) As the Head of the church, Paul was persecuting Him when he persecuted the church which is His body - Ephesians 1:22-23 2) Note well: what we do or don't do for the church, we do or don't do for Jesus! c. Jesus continues, "It is hard for you to kick against the goads" - Acts 9:5; Acts 26:14 1) In his misdirected zeal, Paul had been resisting the will of God 2) E.g., resisting the preaching of such men as Stephen - cf. Acts 7:51-53 C. The Submission of Paul. . .

1. Still fallen to the earth, he was trembling and astonished - Acts 9:6 2. He asked, "Lord, what do You want me to do?" - Acts 9:6; Acts 22:10 -- At this point, Paul acknowledges both the authority as well as the identity of Jesus!

D. The Commission of Jesus. . .

1. Paul is told to go into the city a. There he will be told what he must do - Acts 9:6 b. There he will be told what things are appointed for him to do - Acts 22:10 2. Jesus gives him an idea of what to expect - Acts 26:16-18 a. To become a minister and a witness of things seen, and would be revealed b. To be sent to both Jews and Greeks...

1) To open their eyes, to turn them from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God 2) That they might receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance with those sanctified by faith in Jesus 3. Paul proceeds to obey his new Lord - Acts 9:8; Acts 22:11 a. He arose from the ground, but was blinded by the light b. He is led by the hand to Damascus

II. In the City of Damascus A. His Three Day Wait. . .

1. For three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank - Acts 9:9 2. He was also praying during this time - cf. Acts 9:11 B. His Visit by Ananias . . .

1. The Lord appears to Ananias in a vision - Acts 9:10-16 a. A disciple who lived in Damascus, well respected among the Jews - Acts 22:12 b. Told to go to the house of Judas, where Paul was praying and had seen a vision of Ananias restoring his sight c. Ananias is reluctant at first, but is reassured by the Lord 2. Ananias visits Paul a. Laying hands on Paul, Ananias relates how he was sent to him - Acts 9:17 b. Paul's sight is restored - Acts 9:18; Acts 22:13 c. Ananias relates Paul's mission - Acts 22:14-15 d. Ananias admonishes Paul to be baptized, and Paul responds - Acts 22:16; Acts 9:18 1) Note well: Paul was still in his sins!

2) The vision, his acceptance of Jesus as Lord, his fasting and praying, etc., had not saved him 3) He needed to be baptized in order for his sins to be washed away - cf. Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:21 e. Paul resumes eating - Acts 9:19 C. His Initia; Preaching in Damascus 1. He spends some days in Damascus - Acts 9:19 2. He immediately begins to preach Jesus - Acts 9:20-22; Acts 26:19-20 a. As the Christ, the Son of God, and their need to repent b. To the amazement of all who knew him c. Confounding the Jews who were in Damascus

[The conversion of Paul was a remarkable event, not only for him personally, but also for the church (cf. Galatians 1:22-24). It is not surprising, then, that Paul would often refer to this event...]

III. Reflections on his Conversion A. Writing to the Church in Corinth. . .

1. He was called to be an apostle - 1 Corinthians 1:1 2. He had seen Jesus Christ - 1 Corinthians 9:1 3. His testimony joined that of the others who had seen Him - 1 Corinthians 15:7-8 B. Writing to the Churches in Galatia. . .

1. He was an apostle by Jesus Christ, not men - Galatians 1:1 2. His conversion was the result of a special calling - Galatians 1:15-16 a. Part of God's plan for him even before his birth b. When called, it was by the grace of God - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:10 c. To reveal His Son to him, that he might preach Him among the nations C. Writing to the Church in Rome. . .

1. Called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God - Romans 1:1 2. Having received both grace and his apostleship - Romans 1:5 3. Delivered from the bondage of sin to freedom in Christ - Romans 7:7-25; Romans 8:1-2 D. Writing to the Church in Ephesus. . .

1. By grace and special revelation he came to know the mystery of Christ - Ephesians 3:1-6 2. By grace he received his ministry to preach the riches of Christ - Ephesians 3:7-8 E. Writing to the

Church in Philippi. . .

1. He spoke of being "apprehended (laid hold) of Jesus Christ" - Phil 3:10-12 2. A possible reference to his conversion on the road to Damascus F. Writing to Timothy. . .

1. Thankful that Christ put him into the ministry - 1 Timothy 1:12 2. Acknowledged that it was due to mercy and grace, for he was the chief of sinners - 1 Timothy 1:13-16

Conclusion 1. Paul's conversion certainly had a great impact on the early church... a. It prompted them to glorify God in him - Galatians 1:22-24 b. His conversion proved a powerful testimony to the resurrection of Jesus 2. Paul's conversion also had a great impact on his own life... a. He certainly did not consider himself worthy to be an apostle - 1 Corinthians 15:9 b. But receiving God's grace motivated him to serve God diligently - 1 Corinthians 15:10 In our next study we shall notice the early years of Paul's service to God as a disciple of Jesus Christ. But as we conclude this lesson, consider how the grace of God affected your life, and whether or not it has had the effect it should...

"We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain." (2 Corinthians 6:1)

01.03. Paul's Early Years Of Service

Study 3: Paul's Early Years Of Service (36-45 AD)

Introduction 1. When people think of the life of Paul, they are likely mindful of... a. His persecution of the church prior to his conversion b. His vision of the Lord on the road to Damascus c. His three missionary journeys recorded in the book of Acts

2. A period of his life that may not be as well-known is the ten years immediately following his conversion... a. His conversion likely took place around 36 A.D. b. His first missionary journey began 45 A.D.

-- What was Paul doing between his conversion and the time when the Spirit called him to begin his missionary journeys?

3. Knowing the zeal of Paul, it was not an idle time of his life... a. It was a time of preparation b. Combined with activity that would later serve him well

[In this study we shall survey the first ten years of Paul's life as a new Christian...] I. Three Years in Damascus and Arabia (36 -39 A.D.) A. Initial Preaching in Damascus. . .

1. Immediately after his conversion, Paul begins preaching - Acts 9:17-20 2. To the amazement of those who heard him - Acts 9:21-22 B. Time In Arabia. . .

1. Paul did not stay in Damascus long after his conversion - cf. Galatians 1:15-17 2. He went to Arabia, the desert area east and south of Damascus a. How long he stayed is uncertain, though it is thought to have been the greater part of three years - cf. Galatians 1:18 b. What he did is unknown, though some think it was a time of personal reflection, and revelations from the Lord - cf. Galatians 1:11-12

C. Return and Escape From Damascus. . .

1. He returned from Arabia to Damascus - Galatians 1:17 2. Some time later an attempt was made to kill him, which he escaped - Acts 9:23-25 3. Years later he recounted his narrow escape -2 Corinthians 11:32-33

[Damascus was the first place Paul preached (Acts 26:19-20), and the first place he experienced persecution. It would not be the last place for either experience! Leaving Damascus, Paul makes his...] II. First Visit to Jerusalem (39 A.D.) A. Skeptical Reception by the Church. . .

1. At first, the church is afraid to receive him - Acts 9:26 2. Barnabas (cf. Acts 4:36-37) introduces him to the apostles - Acts 9:27; Galatians 1:18-19 a. He saw Peter, and stayed with him fifteen days b. He also saw James the Lord's brother

B. Preaching in Jerusalem. . .

1. He was given free access to the church - Acts 9:28 2. He proclaimed boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus - Acts 9:29 3. He disputed with the Hellenists (Grecian Jews) - Acts 9:29

C. Attempt on his Life. . .

1. The Hellenists attempt to kill him - Acts 9:29 2. Paul is warned by the Lord in a vision - cf. Acts 22:17-21 3. The brethren send him to Tarsus by way of Caesarea - Acts 9:30

[It is evident that Paul has now become a dangerous enemy to his former friends. His testimony concerning the Lord and his own conversion is difficult to answer, and the opposition is willing to do anything to silence him! At this point Paul returns home (Tarsus) and spends...]

III. Five Years in Syria and Cilicia (39-43 A.D.) A. Return to Tarsus. . .

1. The place of his birth - Acts 22:3 2. Now the center of preaching in the surrounding regions of Syria and Cilicia - Galatians 1:21 3. Elsewhere, brethren hear of his preaching - Galatians 1:22-24 4. Little else is known of this period of Paul's life, though it may have been a time when: a. Churches in the area were established - Acts 15:23; Acts 15:41 b. Paul suffered persecution not recorded in Acts - 2 Corinthians 11:24-26 c. He had the vision of Paradise - 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 -- This period lasted about four to five years

B. Departure From Tarsus. . .

1. Occasioned by the arrival of Barnabas - Acts 11:25 a. Who introduced him to the Jerusalem church earlier b. Who traveled with him on his first missionary journey later 2. Who had come from Antioch of Syria, the site of a new and growing church - Acts 11:19-24

[As far as we can tell, Paul had worked alone up to this time. But with Barnabas Paul begins a series of labors in which he was always accompanied by fellow-workers. Barnabas and Paul shared their first work during...] IV. A year in Antioch (44 A.D.) A. Work in Antioch. . .

1. It had already grown due to the labors of others, including Barnabas - Acts 11:19-24 2. Barnabas and Paul taught a great many people that year - Acts 11:26 3. It was where disciples of Christ were first called Christians - Acts 11:26

B. News From Jerusalem. . .

1. Prophets from Jerusalem came to Antioch - Acts 11:27 2. A prophet named Agabus foretold of a great famine - Acts 11:28 3. The disciples in Antioch determine to send relief to their brethren in Judea - Acts 11:29 4. They send it by the hands of Barnabas and Paul - Acts 11:30

[This benevolent mission of Paul added a new dimension to his work, one that would accompany him later on his missionary journeys. It must have also been a time of anticipation for Paul, for after six years this was now his...]

V. Second Visit to Jerusalem (45 A.D.) A. Delivery of Relief. . .

1. For the brethren of Judea - Acts 11:29 2. To the elders by Barnabas and Paul - Acts 11:30

B. Return With John Mark. . .

1. Having fulfilled their ministry of benevolence - Acts 12:25 2. Joined now by John Mark - Acts 12:25 a. Son of Mary, in whose home many had prayed for Peter - Acts 12:12 b. Cousin (nephew?) of Barnabas - Colossians 4:10 c. Traveling companion on Paul's first missionary journey - Acts 13:5 d. His earlier departure on that journey would become a sore point between Paul and Barnabas - Acts 13:13; Acts 15:37-39 e. He later became useful to Paul - 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24 f. He was later with Peter (1 Peter 5:13), and authored the gospel of Mark

Conclusion 1. At this point Paul returns to Antioch of Syria... a. From which the Spirit will send him on his first missionary journey - Acts 13:1-4 b. From which Paul will begin all three of his journeys

2. In "Paul's Early Years Of Service" (36-45 A.D.), a pattern is established... a. Preaching the gospel, followed by persecution b. Establishing churches, followed by edification c. All the while, concerned about needy Christians in other places The value of these early years of Paul's service is seen in how they prepared him for the work the Holy Spirit later had in mind for him. In our zeal to be of great service to the Lord, don't discount the need for time spent in preparation and preliminary acts of service. How we serve in small things will determine our usefulness in greater things:

He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. - Luke 16:10

01.04. First Missionary Journey

Study 4: First Missionary Journey And Residence in Antioch (45-49 AD)

Introduction 1. Up to this point, much of Paul's life might be considered preparatory in nature... a. Even before his conversion, his heritage, education, and progress in the Jewish faith b. After his conversion, his relative obscurity and work in Damascus, Arabia, and Tarsus -- All of which would serve useful in the tasks the Lord had in mind for him 2. At this point in his life, Paul begins a series of missionary journeys... a. That would take the gospel to regions where it had not been heard - cf. Romans 15:20-21 b. That would leave his mark on many regions in the Mediterranean world

[In this study we shall survey Paul's first missionary journey, that began and ended with a two year residence in...] I. The City of Antioch in Syria (45 A.D.) A. The Church In Antioch. . .

1. Started by men from Cyprus and Cyrene, by way of Jerusalem - Acts 11:19-21 2. Strengthened by Barnabas, then later together with Paul - Acts 11:22-26 3. A benevolent congregation, concerned with Christians elsewhere - Acts 11:27-30 4. Blessed with a number of prophets and teachers - Acts 13:1 B. The Call of Barnabas and Paul. . .

1. While ministering to the Lord and fasting, the Spirit told the prophets and teachers to separate Barnabas and Paul for the work He had for them - Acts 13:2 2. With fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, they sent Barnabas and Paul on their way - Acts 13:3

[Thus sent out by the Holy Spirit (Acts 13:4), these two men begin their journey by going to the coastal town of Seleucia, and sailing to...] II. The Island of Cyprus (45 A.D.) A. Cyprus was not Unfamiliar Territory. . .

1. The gospel had previously been preached in Cyprus - Acts 11:19 2. The church in Antioch of Syria had been started by men from Cyprus - Acts 11:20 3. Barnabas himself was from Cyprus - Acts 4:36

-- It is interesting that the Spirit would have Barnabas and Paul start here; perhaps a principle to be learned regarding missionary efforts?

B. In the Synagogues at Salamis. . .

1. Barnabas and Paul preached the word of God - Acts 13:5 2. They also had John Mark to assist them - Acts 13:5

-- It would become Paul's custom to first go to the synagogues of the Jews whenever he entered a new city - Acts 17:1-3 C. At Paphos. . .

1. They encounter a false prophet - Acts 13:6-11 a. A Jew whose surname was Bar-Jesus 1) Who was also called Elymas the sorcerer 2) Who was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus 3) Who sought to prevent Sergius Paulus from hearing the gospel b. Whom Paul miraculously blinded 1)

Being filled with the Holy Spirit

2) Having seen Elymas for what he was: full of deceit and fraud, a son of the devil and enemy of righteousness, seeking to pervert the ways of the Lord 3) Blinding him by a mist and a darkness 2. They convert Sergius Paulus - Acts 13:12 a. Who saw what was done to Elymas b. Who was astonished at the teaching of the Lord 3. The name of Paul is now used instead of Saul a. Up to this point, he was called by his Hebrew name, Saul b. From this point, he will be called by his Roman name, Paul 4. Paul begins to have precedence over Barnabas a. Up to this point, the two men were called Barnabas and Saul b. From this point, the two men will be called Paul and Barnabas

[The precedence of Paul is seen as Luke describes their departure from Paphos ("when Paul and his party"). Leaving the island of Cyprus, they sail on to...] III. The Regions of Pamphilia, Pisidia, and Lycaonia (46-47 A.D.) A. At Perga. . .

1. Paul and his company arrive at Perga, a city of Pamphylia - Acts 13:13 2. At this point, John Mark left them and returned to Jerusalem - Acts 13:13 a. This later became a sore point with Barnabas and Paul - Acts 15:36-40 b. Paul felt this departure rendered John Mark unsuitable for the next journey B. At Antioch of Pisidia. . .

1. Paul's sermon in the synagogue - Acts 13:14-41 a. Following his custom to visit the local synagogues (Acts 17:1-3), Paul accepts an invitation to speak - Acts 13:14-16 b. His sermon can be divided into the following points:

1) A review of God's dealings with Israel - Acts 13:17-22 2) A proclamation that Jesus is the promised Savior - Acts 13:23-26 3) A review of Jesus' death and evidence for His resurrection - Acts 13:27-37 4) A proclamation that salvation is now offered through Jesus - Acts 13:38-39 5) A warning not to fulfill prophecy by rejecting God's work in Christ - Acts 13:40-41 2. Rejection by the Jews and reception by the Gentiles - Acts 13:42-49 a. The Gentiles beg for more, even many of the Jews continue to listen to Paul - Acts 13:42-43 b. But the next Sabbath, some of the Jews are envious of the large crowds and begin resisting Paul - Acts 13:44-45 c. Paul directs his attention to the Gentiles, who are more receptive - Acts 13:46-49 3. Expulsion by the Jews - Acts 13:50-52 a. Persecution is brought against Paul and Barnabas - Acts 13:50 b. Forcing them to leave and go to Iconium - Acts 13:51 c. Yet the disciples were filled with joy and the Holy Spirit - Acts 13:52 C. At Iconium. . .

1. Again the procedure was to start with the local synagogue - Acts 14:1 2. Unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles against the brethren - Acts 14:2

3. Paul and his companions stayed "a long time", speaking boldly in the Lord with signs and wonders - Acts 14:3

4. It may have been during this time to which Paul had reference when he later wrote to the Galatians of their reception of him - Galatians 4:13-15

5. The city eventually became divided between the Jews and the apostles, and an attempt to stone them forced Paul and his companions to flee to Lystra and Derbe - Acts 14:4-7 D. At Lystra and Derbe. . .

1. While at Lystra... a. Paul heals a lame man - Acts 14:8-18 b. Jews from Antioch and Iconium persuade the multitude to stone Paul - Acts 14:19-20; 2 Corinthians 11:25
2. While at Derbe... a. They preached the gospel - Acts 14:21 a b. They made many disciples - Acts 14:21 a E. Retracing Their Steps. . .

1. From Derbe they return to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch - Acts 14:21-23 a. Strengthening the souls of the disciples b. Exhorting to the continue in the faith despite tribulations c. Appointing elders in every church with prayer and fasting d. Commending them to the Lord in whom they had believed
2. Passing through Pisidia, they come to Pamphylia - Acts 14:24-26 a. Preaching the word in Perga b. Sailing from Attalia to Antioch from where they started

[Upon arriving in Antioch, Paul's first missionary journey was completed. It had taken approximately two years (45-47 A.D.). For about the next two years, we find Paul...] IV. Residing in Antioch of Syria (48-49 A.D.) A. Reporting to the Church. . .

1. All that God had done with them on their journey - Acts 14:27 a 2. How God had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles - Acts 14:27 b -- Paul would later provide a similar report at the conference in Jerusalem - Acts 15:12 B. Staying "A Long Time". . .

1. How long we don't know, but estimate it was about two years 2. This is based upon dating the Jerusalem conference in Acts 15 to be about 50 A.D.

Conclusion 1. The pattern established in his early years of service is certainly seen in this first missionary journey of Paul... a. Preaching the gospel, followed by persecution b. Establishing churches, followed by edification
2. On this first journey, another pattern becomes evident... a. Preaching the gospel to the Jews first, by going to their synagogues b. Preaching the gospel to the Gentiles also, especially after rejection by the Jews -- Of this pattern Paul would write later to the brethren in Rome - Romans 1:16 The Lord had certainly opened a door of faith to the Gentiles (Acts 14:27) through the work of the apostle Paul. As we shall see in our next lesson, there were some who wished to close that door with whom Paul would have to contend. But what about us? Has the Lord opened a door of faith for us today? Are we making use of that open door...?

01.05. Conference in Jerusalem

Study 5: Conference in Jerusalem, And Return to Antioch (50 AD)

Introducton

1. During his first missionary journey, Paul saw that God "opened a door of faith to the Gentiles" - Acts 14:27 a. The conversion of Sergius Paulus - Acts 13:6-12 b. The conversion of many Gentiles in Antioch of Pisidia - Acts 13:42-49 c. The conversion of Greeks in Iconium - Acts 14:1 2. It wasn't long before the question of Gentiles in the church became an issue... a. Should the Gentiles be accepted without first converting to Judaism? b. Should they be required to be circumcised, and keep the Law of Moses?

[At the end of a two year residence in Antioch of Syria, Paul and the church were faced with a crisis regarding the issue of the Gentiles...] I. The Problem in Antioch of Syria A. Some Came From Judea. . .

1. Teaching that Gentiles could not be saved without circumcision - Acts 15:1 2. With whom Paul and Barnabas strongly disagreed - Acts 15:2 a B. Paul and Barnabas Sent to Jerusalem. . .

1. Accompanied by "certain others" (such as Titus) - Acts 15:2 a; Galatians 2:1 2. To talk to the apostles and elders, which Paul did "by revelation" - Acts 15:2 a; Galatians 2:2 3. On the way, they passed through Phoenicia and Samaria - Acts 15:3 a. Describing the conversion of the Gentiles b. Causing great joy among the brethren

[Since the men causing disturbance came from Judea, Paul and his companions went to the source, to locate the actual origin of this problem. This led to...] II. The Conference in Jerusalem A. Preliminary Meetings. . .

1. A formal reception by the church a. Paul's party was received by the church, the apostles, and the elders - Acts 15:4 b. To whom Paul reported all that God had done with them - Acts 15:4; cf. Acts 14:27 2. A private meeting with some who were "of reputation" a. In which Paul explained the gospel which he preached - Galatians 2:1-2 b. Some false brethren tried to compel Titus (a Gentile) to be circumcised, which Paul refused - Galatians 2:3-6; cf. Acts 15:5 c. James, Peter, and John commended Paul for his work among the Gentiles - Galatians 2:7-10 1) Extending to him the right hand of fellowship 2) Asking only that he remember the poor (something he was careful do on his remaining missionary journeys) B. The Public Meetings. . .

1. The speech of Peter - Acts 15:6-11 a. How God selected him to be the first to preach to the Gentiles - cf. Acts 10:1-31; Acts 10:32-43 b. How God bore witness to their acceptability by giving them the Spirit - cf. Acts 10:44-48; Acts 11:15-18 c. That God purified them through faith, just as He did the Jews d. That they should not test God, by placing a burden on the Gentiles which they themselves could not bear e. That God will save the Jews in the same way, through the grace of the Lord Jesus 2. The testimony of Paul and Barnabas - Acts 15:12 a. How God did many miracles and wonders through them among the Gentiles b. Which the multitude listened to quietly 3. The

counsel of James - Acts 15:13-21 a. Reminding them of what Simon (Peter) had just said b. Reminding them of the Old Testament prophecy of Amos - Amos 9:11-12 c. Offering his judgment:

1) Not to trouble the Gentiles who were turning to God 2) But asking them to abstain from: a) Things polluted by idols (i.e., meats offered to idols) b) Sexual immorality c) Things strangled d) Blood -- This would go a long way in keeping peace between Jewish and Gentile converts C. The Letter to be Sent. . .

1. The idea pleased the apostles, elders, and the whole church - Acts 15:22 a 2. Selected to accompany Paul and Barnabas along with the letter to Antioch were Judas and Silas - Acts 15:22 a 3. A copy of this letter is preserved by Luke - Acts 15:23-29

4. In which those who caused the trouble are identified as doing so without any authority from those in Jerusalem - Acts 15:24

[So the conference in Jerusalem ends on a very positive note. But while the issue of Gentiles was solved doctrinally, in practice it would not be as easily resolved. This becomes evident from what happens after...] III. The Return to Antioch of Syria A. A Happy Return. . .

1. Paul and his companions return to Antioch, and deliver the letter - Acts 15:30 2. The multitude rejoice over its encouragement - Acts 15:31 3. Judas and Silas exhort the brethren with many words - Acts 15:32-34 a. Judas eventually returned to the apostles in Jerusalem b. Silas stayed in Antioch, later to join Paul on his travels - cf. Acts 15:40 4. Paul and Barnabas remain in Antioch, teaching and preaching - Acts 15:35 B. An Unhappy Visit. . .

1. Peter comes to Antioch - Galatians 2:11 a 2. Paul had to withstand Peter - Galatians 2:11-21 a. For at first Peter would eat with the Gentiles b. But when some came from James, Peter separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision (i.e., Jewish brethren) c. Even Barnabas was carried away by this hypocrisy d. Requiring Paul to rebuke Peter before them all

3. Peter would not hold this against Paul, later referring to him as "our beloved brother Paul" - 2 Peter 3:15

Conclusion

1. The unpleasant visit and necessary rebuke of Peter simply illustrates the great challenge faced by the church in its infancy... a. The challenge of transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant b. The challenge of accepting into the church those who were considered "unclean" for over a thousand years 2. But it was a challenge that was overcome, in large part due to the apostle Paul... a. A Hebrew of the Hebrews, but also an apostle to the Gentiles b. Whom God used to help bridge Jew and Gentile together 1) To fulfill what Jesus died to accomplish on the cross 2) To bring peace between Jew and Gentile, making one new body - cf. Ephesians 2:11-16

After some time in Antioch, Paul began to wonder about the brethren who were converted on the first missionary journey (Acts 15:36). In our next study, we shall survey the second missionary of Paul. In the meantime, I hope this study reminds those who are Gentiles how blessed we are to be able to come into the fellowship with God and His people. Have we let Jesus add us to His one new body, the church? - cf. Acts 2:41; Acts 2:47

01.06. Second Missionary Journey

Study 6: Second Missionary Journey (51-54 AD)

Introduction 1. While Paul undoubtedly enjoyed his work at Antioch, it was not long before he was ready to take another journey... a. He was concerned about the churches established on the first journey - Acts 15:36 b. He also had the goal of preaching Christ in places where the gospel had not yet been proclaimed - cf. Romans 15:20-21 2. And so begins Paul's second missionary journey... a. That will allow him to visit churches established on the first b. With new traveling companions c. Taking him to a new continent d. In which he will establish new churches, experience more persecution, and begin writing letters that will become part of the New Testament [As with the first missionary journey, the second journey begins in...] I. The city of Antioch in Syria (51 A.D.) A. Paul and Barnabas Separate. . .

1. They disagree over whether to take John Mark - Acts 15:37-38 a. Barnabas was determined to take John Mark (his cousin) - cf. Colossians 4:10 b. Paul insisted that he was not reliable - cf. Acts 13:13 2. Their contention required them to separate - Acts 15:39 a. Barnabas took John Mark and went to Cyprus b. Where Barnabas was from, and which was visited on the first journey - cf. Acts 4:36; Acts 13:4-12 B. Paul and Begin Their Journey. . .

1. Paul selected Silas to accompany him - Acts 15:40 a. One of the two men sent by Jerusalem with the letter regarding circumcision - Acts 15:22-23; Acts 15:27 b. Who himself was a prophet - Acts 15:32 c. Who had stayed in Antioch - Acts 15:34 2. They pass through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches -Acts 15:41 a. From which Paul was from - Ac 22:3 b. Where he had spent time preaching before - Galatians 1:21 c. To whom Paul and Silas likely delivered the letter addressed to them - Acts 15:23

[While the separation of Paul and Barnabas was unpleasant, it did not keep both men from their service to God. Paul eventually was reconciled with both men (cf. 1 Corinthians 9:6; Colossians 4:10; 2 Timothy 4:11; Phm 24), and this temporary separation provided the opportunity for others to become involved in the work of spreading the gospel. With Silas at his side, Paul proceeded to travel to...] II. The Regions of Asia Minor (51 A.D.) A. In Derbe and Lystra. . .

1. Where Paul healed a lame man, and was stoned, on his first journey - Acts 14:6-20 2. Paul desires Timothy to go with him - Acts 16:1-3 a. Whose mother was a Jew, his father a Greek - cf. 2 Timothy 1:5; 2 Timothy 3:15-16 b. Who had a good reputation among the brethren c. Whom Paul had circumcised in deference to the Jews 3. The decrees from the conference in Jerusalem were delivered - Acts 16:4-5 B. In Phrygia and Galatia. . .

1. They next went throughout the region of Phrygia and Galatia - Acts 16:6 2. This likely included the churches in Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia 3. They were forbidden by the Spirit to preach the word in Asia, i.e., to head southwest toward Ephesus - Acts 16:7 C. In Mysia and Traos. . .

1. Near Mysia they were not permitted by the Spirit to head north toward Bithynia - Acts 16:8 2. They arrive in Troas - Acts 16:9-10 a. Where Paul has a vision, a man of Macedonia asking him to help them b. Understood as the Lord sending them in that direction c. Note the use of "we"

1) Luke, author of Acts, now joins Paul and his company

2) He was a physician (Colossians 4:14), author also of the gospel which bears his name, and was with Paul in his last days - 2 Timothy 4:11

[From Troas they cross over to Samothrace, and then to Neapolis (Acts 16:11). They have now entered the continent of Europe, and come into...] III. The Regions of Macedonia and Achaia (52-53 A.D.) A. In Philippi. . .

1. A chief city of Macedonia, and Roman colony - Acts 16:12 2. The conversion of Lydia and her household - Acts 16:13-15 3. The healing of the demon-possessed girl - Acts 16:16-18 4. Paul and Silas beaten and imprisoned - Acts 16:19-24 a. Paul refers to this in his letter to the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 2:2 b. Also in his letter to the Philippians - Php 1:30 5. The earthquake, and conversion of the jailer and his family - Acts 16:25-34 6. Paul and Silas released, and depart from Philippi - Acts 16:35-40 a. Not before pointing out the serious mistake made by the magistrates beating Roman citizens (not only Paul, but evidently Silas was a Roman citizen also) b. Not before going to the house of Lydia and encouraging the brethren 7. The church at Philippi... a. Included Lydia and the jailer, along with their families b. Luke, who stayed behind (note the use of "they", Acts 16:40; Acts 17:1 c. Euodia, Syntyche, Syzygus ("true companion"), and Clement - Php 4:2-3 B. In Thessalonica. . .

1. Passing through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they come to Thessalonica - Acts 17:1 2. Paul visits the synagogue and reasons with the Jews for three Sabbaths - Acts 17:2-4 a. Proclaiming Jesus as the Christ b. Some of whom who were persuaded, along with a great multitude of Greeks 3. Unbelieving Jews gather a mob, and attack the house of Jason - Acts 17:5-9 4. Paul and Silas sent away by the brethren - Acts 17:10 5. Elsewhere, we learn the following about Paul's stay in Thessalonica... a. He supported himself, aided by the Philippians - 1 Thessalonians 2:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-10; Php 4:16 b. The dedicated nature of his ministry - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-10 c. The faithfulness and love of the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-8; 1 Thessalonians 2:13-16; 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10 C. In Berra. . .

1. The Jews are more fair-minded than those at Thessalonica - Acts 17:11-12 a. They received the word with all readiness b. They searched the Scriptures daily to see if what Paul said was true c. Many believed, along with prominent Greeks 2. Jews from Thessalonica came and stirred up the crowds - Acts 17:13 3. Paul sent away by the brethren, but Silas and Timothy stay - Acts 17:14

D. In Athens. . .

1. Paul sends for Silas and Timothy - Acts 17:15 2. Moved by the idolatry, Paul disputes with both Jews and Greeks - Acts 17:16-17 a. In the synagogue with Jews and other devout persons b. In the market place daily 3. Invited by the Epicurean and Stoic to speak at the Areopagus - Acts 17:18-21 4. Paul's sermon on "The Unknown God" - Acts 17:22-34 a. Proclaiming the One True God b. Proclaiming the need to repent, the coming Judgment, and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead c. Reaction was varied: some mocked, others agreed to hear more, some believed 5. At

some point, Timothy is sent back to Thessalonica - cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:1-2 a. To encourage the brethren there b. Some believe Timothy may have been sent from Berea E. In Corinth. . .

1. Paul arrives and lives with Aquila and Priscilla - Acts 18:1-4 a. He worked together with them as a tent-maker - cf. 1 Corinthians 9:6-15 b. He also received support from Philippi - cf. 2 Corinthians 11:7-10; Php 4:15 c. He reasoned with the Jews every Sabbath - cf. 1 Corinthians 2:1-5 2. Silas and Timothy arrive from Macedonia - Acts 18:5; 2 Corinthians 1:19 a. With good news regarding the church at Thessalonica - 1 Thessalonians 3:6-7 b. Prompting Paul to write First Thessalonians (52 A.D.) - 1 Thessalonians 1:1

1) Purpose: a) To praise them for their steadfastness under persecution b) To instruct them concerning holy living c) To correct any misunderstanding, especially about the second coming of Christ 2) Theme: Holiness In View Of The Coming Of Christ 3) Brief Outline: a) Personal reflections - 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-20; 1 Thessalonians 3:1-13 b) Apostolic instructions - 1 Thessalonians 4:1-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-28 3. Paul leaves the synagogue, and preaches next door - Acts 18:5-7 4. His success in Corinth - Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 1:14-16 a. Crispus, ruler of the synagogue, believes with his household, and is baptized b. Many of the Corinthians believe and are baptized c. Gaius is baptized, who later becomes host of the church - cf. Romans 16:23 d. The household of Stephanas is baptized - cf. 1 Corinthians 16:15 5. Paul's vision from the Lord - Acts 18:9-11 a. Not to be afraid, nor remain silent b. The Lord has many people in the city c. So Paul remains a year and six months (52-53 A.D.) d. During which he writes Second Thessalonians (53 A.D.) - 2 Thessalonians 1:1

1) Purpose: a) To encourage them in their steadfastness under persecution b) To correct their misunderstanding about the imminence of the Lord's return c) To instruct the congregation on what disciplinary action to take toward those who refused to work 2) Theme: Steadfastness While Waiting For The Coming Of Christ 3) Brief Outline: a) Encouragement In Persecutions - 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12 b) Enlightenment About The Coming Of The Lord - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17 c) Exhortations To Christian Living - 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18 6. Paul before Gallio - Acts 18:12-17 a. The Jews bring Paul up on charges before Gallio, proconsul of Achaia b. Gallio refuses to heed them, the Greeks beat Sosthenes, ruler of the synagogue 7. Paul remains in Corinth a good while - Acts 18:18 a

[After such a long and successful stay (comparatively speaking) in Corinth, Paul begins the backward leg of his journey and his...] IV. Return to Antioch in Syria (54 A.D.) A. From Corinth to Ephesus. . .

1. Joined by Aquila and Priscilla - Acts 18:18 2. Cut his hair in Cenchrea (near Corinth), for Paul had taken a vow - Acts 18:18; cf. Romans 16:1 3. In Ephesus - Acts 18:19-20 a. Left Aquila and Priscilla there b. Reasoned with the Jews for a short time in the synagogue, who wanted him to stay longer B. From Ephesus to Jerusalem. . .

1. Anxious to get to Jerusalem in time for the feast (Pentecost?) - Acts 18:21; cf. Acts 20:16 2. Sailed from Ephesus to Caesarea - Acts 18:21-22 3. Went "up" (elevation-wise) to Jerusalem and visited the church - Acts 18:22 C. From Jerusalem to Antioch. . .

1. He went "down" (elevation-wise) to Antioch - Acts 18:22 2. He spent "some time" in Antioch of Syria - Acts 18:23 a

Conclusion 1. On this second journey, Paul was able to... a. Encourage churches like those in Syria, Cilicia, Derbe, Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch b. Establish churches like those in Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, and Corinth 2. It was a journey that saw the beginning of long-lasting relationships... a. Silas and Timothy b. The physician Luke, the brethren at Philippi (Clement, Euodia, Syntyche) c. Aquila and Priscilla, the brethren at Corinth (Gaius, Crispus, the household of Stephanas)

3. This was a journey that provides much historical background to the New Testament... a. Describing churches to whom letters were later written (Galatians, Philippians, 1st and 2nd Thessalonians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians) b. Introducing key persons whose impact is felt in the New Testament (Luke, who wrote the gospel and the book of Acts; Timothy, to whom Paul wrote two epistles)

It was also a journey with several notable examples of conversion (Lydia, the Philippian jailer, the Corinthians). We also saw the worthy example of the Bereans in how they listened to Paul, and searched the Scriptures daily. May such examples encourage us in our devotion to the Lord!

01.07. Third Missionary Journey

Study 7: Third Missionary Journey (54-58 AD)

Introduction 1. Between the first and second journeys of Paul, there was an interval of about two years... a. In which Paul spent "a long time" in Antioch - Acts 14:28 b. During which a visit to Jerusalem became necessary - Acts 15:1-2 2. Between the second and third journeys, Paul did not remain long in Antioch... a. He did spend "some time" there - Acts 18:22-23 b. But he soon departed, perhaps anxious to fulfill a promise made to the Ephesians on his second journey - cf. Acts 18:19-21 [As with his second journey, he starts with...] I. The Regions of Asia Minor (54-57 A.D.) A. In Galatia and Phrygia. . .

1. Strengthening the disciples - Acts 18:23 2. This would be Paul's third time in the region a. He visited this area on his first journey - Acts 14:6-20 b. He returned on his second journey - Acts 16:6 B. In Ephesus. . .

1. Where Paul had briefly stopped on his second journey - Acts 18:19-21 2. Where Aquila and Priscilla had stayed, and converted Apollos - Acts 18:24-28 3. Where Paul converted twelve disciples of John the Baptist - Acts 19:1-7 4. Where Paul stayed for about three years (54-57 A.D.) a. Teaching for three months in the synagogue - Acts 19:8 b. Teaching daily for two years in the school of Tyrannus - Acts 19:9-10 c. Working unusual miracles - Acts 19:11-20 d. Note the great success Paul had - Acts 19:10; Acts 19:20 5. During this period of time, several things may have happened a. Paul made a short visit to Corinth, his second - cf. 2 Corinthians 12:14; 2 Corinthians 13:1 1) His first visit was during the second journey - Acts 18:1 2) His third visit was later on the third journey - Acts 20:1-3 3) The book of Acts is silent about his second visit, but most place it sometime during his extended stay at Ephesus b. Paul wrote a letter to the Corinthians (now lost), alluded to in 1 Corinthians 5:9 c. Paul wrote Galatians (55 A.D.) - Galatians 1:1-2 1) Purpose: To verify his apostleship and the gospel of justification by faith in Christ 2) Theme: Stand fast in the liberty of the gospel 3) Brief Outline: a) Defense of his apostleship - Galatians 1:1-24; Galatians 2:1-21 b) Defense of the gospel of justification by faith - Galatians 3:1-29; Galatians 4:1-31 c) The call to stand fast in the liberty of the gospel - Galatians 5:1-26; Galatians 6:1-18 6. Paul makes plans to leave Ephesus - Acts 19:21-22 a. Sending Timothy and Erastus into Macedonia, with Timothy to eventually go to Corinth - 1 Corinthians 4:17; 1 Corinthians 16:10-11 b. Though he himself stayed "for a time", during which he writes First Corinthians (spring of 57 A.D.) - 1 Corinthians 16:5-8 1) Purpose: To correct sinful practices and refute false doctrine 2) Theme: Walk together in unity, love, and truth 3) Brief Outline: a) Factions in the church - (See first four chapters of 1Corinthians) b) Sexual immorality in the church - 1 Corinthians 5:1-13 c) Lawsuits among brethren - 1 Corinthians 6:1-11 d) Moral defilements - 1 Corinthians 6:12-20 e) Marriage and celibacy - 1 Corinthians 7:1-40 f) Meats sacrificed to idols - 1 Corinthians 8:1-11:1 g) Women praying and prophesying unveiled - 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 h) The Lord's supper - 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 i) Spiritual gifts - 1 Corinthians 12:1-31; 1 Corinthians 13:1-13; 1 Corinthians 14:1-27; 1 Corinthians 14:28-40 j) Resurrection from the dead - 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 k) Collection for the

saints - 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 l) Concluding remarks, instructions, benediction - 1 Corinthians 16:5-24 7. Paul sends Titus and "a brother" to Corinth - cf. 2 Corinthians 12:17-18 a. To bring Paul word as to how the Corinthians received the first letter? b. To encourage the Corinthians concerning the collection? - 2 Corinthians 8:6 a c. Whose delayed return would later give Paul concern - 2 Corinthians 2:12-13 d. But who would eventually bring Paul good news - 2 Corinthians 7:5-7; 2 Corinthians 7:13-16 8. The Diana incident - Acts 19:23-41 a. A great commotion brought on by Demetrius and the other silversmiths b. In which a mob takes two of Paul's travel companions, Gaius and Aristarchus c. Barely controlled by the city's town clerk 9. Additional details about Paul's stay in Ephesus a. Sosthenes was there, joining Paul in writing to the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 1:1 b. Paul had been visited by Stephanas, Fortunatus, and Achaicus - 1 Corinthians 16:17 c. Aquila and Priscilla hosted the church in their house, and sent greetings to those in Corinth - Acts 18:2; Acts 18:19; Acts 18:26; 1 Corinthians 16:19 d. Paul's sufferings while at Ephesus 1) As related to the Ephesian elders in Miletus - Acts 20:17-19 2) As mentioned in letters to the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 15:30-32; 2 Corinthians 1:8-11 e. Paul's preaching while at Ephesus - Acts 20:21-23; Acts 20:25-27; Acts 20:31 f. Paul's manual labor while at Ephesus - Acts 20:33-35; 1 Corinthians 4:11-12 C. In Traos. . .

1. The turmoil over Paul provides an opportune time to leave Ephesus - Acts 20:1 2. With plans already made (Acts 19:21), Paul heads toward Macedonia - Acts 20:1 3. At Troas, he finds an open door to preach the gospel - 2 Corinthians 2:12 4. But not finding Titus, he continues on toward Macedonia - 2 Corinthians 2:13 [With anxiety over the condition of the church at Corinth, Paul once again travels to...] II. The Regions of Macedonia and Greece (57-58 A.D.) A.In Macedonia. . .

1. Paul finds Titus, who brings comforting news from Corinth - 2 Corinthians 7:5-7; 2 Corinthians 7:13-16 2. Paul preaches throughout Macedonia - Acts 20:1-2 a. He had preached in Macedonia on his second journey - Acts 16:11-40; Acts 17:1-15 b. Establishing churches in Philippi, Thessalonica, and Berea c. On this trip he appears to have ventured to Illyricum - cf. Romans 15:19 3. The brethren give generously for the relief of the church in Jerusalem - 2 Corinthians 8:1-5 4. Timothy rejoins Paul, and joins Paul in writing Second Corinthians (fall of 57 A.D.) - 2 Corinthians 1:1 a. Purpose: To vindicate Paul's apostleship and manner of life b. Theme: Open your heart to us, we have wronged no one c. Brief Outline:

1) Paul explains his ministry of reconciliation - 2 Corinthians 1:1-7:16 2) The collection for the saints in Jerusalem - 2 Corinthians 8:1-9:15 3) Paul defends his apostolic authority - 2 Corinthians 10:1-13:14 5. Titus and "two brethren" are sent to Corinth - 2 Corinthians 8:16-24 a. Likely taking Second Corinthians b. To assist the Corinthians concerning the collection - 2 Corinthians 8:6-8; 2 Corinthians 9:1-5 B.In Achaia (Greece). . .

1. Paul spent three months - Acts 20:2-3 2. It included his third visit to Corinth - 2 Corinthians 12:14 a. A visit he hoped would not be sorrowful - 2 Corinthians 2:1 b. A visit he hoped would not be embarrassing for them - 2 Corinthians 9:3-4 c. A visit he hoped would not require stern judgment - 2 Corinthians 12:20-21; 2 Corinthians 13:1-3 3. Paul wrote Romans (spring of 58 A.D.) - Romans 16:23; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14; 2 Timothy 4:20 a. Purpose: To set straight the design and nature of the gospel b. Theme: The gospel is God's power of salvation c. Brief Outline:

1) Justification by faith in Christ - Ro 1:1-11:36 2) The transformed life - Ro 12:1 - 16:27 4. Paul's companions while in Corinth a. Phoebe, servant of the church in nearby Cenchrea - Romans 16:1-2 b. Timothy, Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, Paul's countrymen - Romans 16:21 c. Tertius, writer for Paul - Romans 16:22 d. Gaius, host of Paul and the church - Romans 16:23 e. Erastus, treasurer of the city, and Quartus, a brother - Romans 16:23 5. Paul's plans for when he leaves Corinth a. To visit Rome and eventually Spain - Romans 1:8-13; Romans 15:22-24 b. But first he must go to Jerusalem with the contribution for the needy saints - Romans 15:25-29

[After just three months, then, Paul prepares to leave Corinth and head straight toward Syria on his way to Jerusalem. But circumstances demand a change in itinerary...] III. From Corinth to Jerusalem (58 A.D.) A. By Way of Macedonia. . .

1. Paul's plan to sail straight to Syria spoiled by a plot against him - Acts 20:3 2. Paul decides to go through Macedonia, joined by seven companions - Acts 20:4 a. Sopater of Berea - Romans 16:21 b. Aristarchus (Acts 19:29; Acts 27:2; Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24) and Secundus of Thessalonica c. Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy - cf. Acts 16:1 d. Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12) and Trophimus (Acts 21:29; 2 Timothy 4:20) of Asia

3. These seven go on to wait for Paul at Troas, while Luke evidently joins Paul at Philippi and sails with him to Troas - Acts 20:5-6 (note the use of "we"...) B. By Way of Trayos and Miletus. . .

1. Paul and his companions assemble with the disciples at Troas - Acts 20:6-12 a. After waiting seven days - Acts 20:6 b. On the first day of the week - Acts 20:7; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 c. For the purpose of breaking bread - Acts 20:7; cf. 1 Corinthians 10:16-17; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33 d. Paul speaks until midnight - Acts 20:7 e. Eutychus falls from the third story, and presumed dead; Paul reassures them otherwise - Acts 20:8-10 f. Paul breaks bread, talks until dawn, and then departs - Acts 20:11-12 2. Paul goes to Miletus, where he meets with the Ephesian elders - Acts 20:13-38 a. On the way to Miletus...

1) Paul walks to Assos, the others take the ship - Acts 20:13 2) Paul joins them at Assos, and sails to Mitylene - Acts 20:14 3) They sail pass Chios, on to Samos, Trogyllium, finally Miletus - Acts 20:15 4) Paul's plan is to bypass Ephesus to reach Jerusalem in time for Pentecost - Acts 20:16 b. At Miletus Paul talks to the Ephesian elders...

1) Reviewing his work with them - Acts 20:17-27 2) Warning them of dangers within and without - Acts 20:28-31 3) Commending them to God and His Word, reminding them of his own example - Acts 20:32-35 4) Parting with prayer and great sorrow - Acts 20:36-38 C. By Way of Tyre, Ptolemais, and Ceasarea. . .

1. Sailing to Cos, Rhodes, Patara, catching a ship on the way to Phoenicia - Acts 21:1-2 2. Passing by Cyprus, sailing to Syria, landing at Tyre - Acts 21:3-6 a. Staying with disciples for seven days b. Paul warned not to go to Jerusalem c. Parting with prayer on the shore, sailing on to Ptolemais 3. Staying at Ptolemais one day with the brethren - Acts 21:7 4. Arriving at Caesarea, where they stayed "many days" - Acts 21:8-15 a. Staying at the house of Philip the evangelist - Acts 21:8-9; cf. Acts 6:5; Acts 8:5-13; Acts 8:26-40 b. Agabus prophesies of Paul's impending imprisonment - Acts 21:10-11 c. Over their objections, Paul is determined to go to Jerusalem - Acts 21:12-14 d. They leave Caesarea, along with some of the disciples including Mnason, with whom they would stay in Jerusalem - Acts 21:15-16 e. They arrive in Jerusalem, warmly received

by the brethren - Acts 21:17

Conclusion 1. Paul's arrival in Jerusalem must have been with mixed emotions... a. He was accompanying the contribution for needy Christians in Jerusalem - Romans 15:25-27 b. He had intentions of going to Rome, and then Spain - Romans 15:28; cf. Acts 19:21 c. He knew that chains awaited him in Jerusalem - Acts 20:22-23; Acts 21:11-14 2. Yet Paul could consider his third missionary journey a success... a. Strengthening churches in Galatia, Phrygia, Asia, Macedonia, Achaia (Greece), Syria b. Three years in Ephesus, from where all Asia heard the Word c. Encouraging the churches in Macedonia, with likely excursions into Illyricum d. Dealing with the problems at Corinth, with evident success e. Writing letters, including Galatians, 1st and 2nd Corinthians, Romans f. Motivating Gentile Christians to assist their needy Jewish brethren in Jerusalem

3. A study of Paul's life reveals more than just the life of one man, it reveals much about the life of the early church; we learn of... a. Its worship, its dedication to evangelism, edification, and benevolence b. The love and hospitality of the early disciples which made such things possible May the example of Paul and the disciples in the early church inspire us in our service to the Lord today!

01.08. Arrest in Jerusalem

Study 8: Arrest in Jerusalem (58 AD)

Introduction 1. Paul's arrival in Jerusalem must have been with some joyful anticipation... a. He had been in a hurry to get there for the Day of Pentecost - Acts 20:16 b. He had been delayed right at the last moment, having to wait in Tyre and then Caesarea - Acts 21:3-4; Acts 21:7-10 ...for he was accompanying a contribution for needy Christians in Jerusalem - Romans 15:25-27 2. His arrival must have also been with anxious expectations... a. He knew that chains awaited him in Jerusalem - Acts 20:22-23 b. He knew that he would be delivered into the hands of the Gentiles - Acts 21:10-11 ...yet he was willing not only to be bound, but die for the name of Jesus - Acts 20:24; Acts 21:12-14 [With such mixed emotions in his heart, then, we read of...] I. Paul's Arrival in Jerusalem A. His Reception By The Church. . .

1. The brethren receive him and his companions gladly - Acts 21:17 2. On the next day, he and his companions visit James and the elders - Acts 21:18-21 a. He details what God had done among the Gentiles through his ministry b. They glorify the Lord when they heard this news c. They tell Paul what thousands of Jewish Christians have heard about him 1) That he teaches the Jews among the Gentiles to forsake Moses 2) That he teaches them not to circumcise their children, nor to keep the customs 3. They counsel Paul in view of these things - Acts 21:22-25 a. To be purified along with four men who have taken a vow (likely the Nazarite vow, cf. Numbers 6:1-12) b. To pay their expenses at the completion of the vow c. To thereby reassure Jewish Christians...

1) That what they have heard is false 2) That Paul himself was willing to keep the Law

3) That Gentiles were not required to do so, but to keep the ordinances from the conference in Jerusalem - cf. Acts 15:20; Acts 15:29 B. His Involvement With the Vow. . .

1. Paul agrees and the next day enters the temple with the four men - Acts 21:26 a. Having been purified with them b. To announce the date in which the days of purification would end and offerings would be made for each of them - cf. Numbers 6:13-20 2. There are three views concerning Paul's involvement with this vow a. Paul acted ignorantly, not aware that the Law of Moses was no longer binding 1) Unlikely, since Paul preached "the whole counsel of God" - Acts 20:27

2) Unlikely, since Paul had already penned Romans, 1st & 2nd Corinthians, and Galatians, which clearly reveal Paul was not ignorant b. Paul acted hypocritically, like Peter did at Antioch - cf. Galatians 2:11-13 1) Unlikely, since Paul had endured so much mistreatment already 2) Unlikely, since Paul was willing to be bound and to die for Christ c. Paul acted consistently, with what he actually taught (which is my view) elsewhere:

1) The Law was no longer in force - cf. Romans 7:1-6; Galatians 3:24-25 2) Anyone seeking to be justified by the Law was fallen from grace - Galatians 5:4 3) Yet a Jewish Christian (like Paul) could observe the customs of the Law - cf. Acts 18:18; 1 Corinthians 9:20 4) A Jewish Christian

could observe elements of the Law provided: a) He did not do so seeking justification, for that comes only through the sacrifice of Christ b) He did not bind it upon others, especially Gentiles who were never under the Law of Moses [It was this effort to reassure misinformed brethren that led to...] II. Paul's Arrest in Jerusalem A. His Arrest in the Temple. . .

1. Prompted by Jews from Asia - Acts 21:27-30 a. Who stirred up a mob to seize Paul, accusing him:

1) Of the same things the brethren had heard - cf. Acts 21:21 2) Of bringing a Gentile into the temple (a false presumption) b. Who dragged Paul out of the temple 2. Rescued from death by the Roman commander - Acts 21:31-36 a. News came to the commander as they were seeking to kill Paul b. The crowd stops beating Paul when they see the commander along with soldiers and centurions c. After binding Paul with chains, the commander is unable to determine why people were so upset with Paul d. Paul is commanded to be sent to the barracks B. His Address to the Jerusalem Mob. . .

1. Permission obtained from the Roman commander - Acts 21:37-40 a. Paul seeks to speak with the commander, who is surprised Paul speaks Greek b. Paul identifies himself as a Jew from Tarsus c. With permission, Paul begins to speak to the mob in Hebrew 2. Paul's defense to the Jerusalem mob - Acts 22:1-21 a. He reviews his early life - Acts 22:1-5 1) His birth in Tarsus, and religious training in Jerusalem 2) His persecution of the church b. He relates the circumstances of his conversion - Acts 22:6-16 1) Recorded by Luke in Acts 9:1-19 2) Recounted again by Paul in Acts 26:12-18 c. He refers to a vision on an earlier visit to Jerusalem - Acts 22:17-21 1) In which the Lord told to him to flee Jerusalem 2) In which the Lord told him to go to the Gentiles C. His Appeal to his Roman Citizenship. . .

1. The enraged mob call for Paul's death - Acts 22:22-23 a. Angry at his mention of the Gentiles b. Tearing their clothes and casting dust into the air 2. The Roman commander prepares to scourge Paul - Acts 22:24 a. Paul is ordered back into the barracks b. To learn why the people are so angry 3. Paul is spared because of his Roman citizenship - Acts 22:25-30 a. As he is about to be scourged, Paul tells the centurion he is a Roman b. The commander, learning Paul was born a Roman citizen, is afraid for having put him in bonds c. The next day, Paul is brought to appear before the council, that the commander might learn why Paul was being accused by the Jews D. His Address to the Sanhedrin Council. . .

1. Paul claims a clear conscience - Acts 23:1 2. This angers Ananias the High Priest, who has Paul struck - Acts 23:2-5

3. Seeing the council is divided between Sadducees and Pharisees, Paul identifies himself as a Pharisee - Acts 23:6; cf. Php 3:5 4. A dispute arises between the Sadducees and the Pharisees, with the latter defending Paul - Acts 23:7-9 5. Fearing for Paul's life, the commander returns him to the barracks - Acts 23:10 E. His Escape From a Plot to Kill Him. . .

1. The Lord reassures Paul that he will bear witness in Rome - Acts 23:11

2. Forty Jews bind themselves under an oath to kill Paul, and a plot is formed with the chief priests and elders - Acts 23:12-15 3. Paul's nephew hears of the plot, and is sent by Paul to the commander - Acts 23:16-22

4. The Roman commander, Claudius Lysias, prepares an armed guard and a letter to accompany Paul to Felix the governor - Acts 23:23-30 5. Paul safely arrives in Caesarea, and is presented to the governor - Acts 23:31-33

Conclusion 1. Paul's abrupt departure must have been disappointing... a. He had been in Jerusalem hardly a week b. He was likely sent away before the Day of Pentecost - cf. Acts 20:16
2. But the Lord had given him reason to rejoice, for he was going to Rome! - cf. Acts 23:11 a. Something he had wanted to do - cf. Acts 19:21; Romans 1:9-11; Romans 1:15; Romans 15:23-29 b. Something he had asked brethren to pray for - cf. Romans 15:30-32 The Lord had answered the first part of his request (deliverance from those in Judea who did not believe, Romans 15:31), and would answer the second part (to go to Rome, Romans 15:32).

Yet as we shall see, not as soon or in quite the manner Paul might have expected!

01.09. Imprisonment In Caesarea

Study 9: Imprisonment In Caesarea (58-60 AD)

Introduction 1. Following his arrest in Jerusalem, Paul was given an armed escort to Caesarea... a. In response to a plot by some Jews to kill him - Acts 23:12-24 b. Accompanied by a letter from the Roman commander (Claudius Lysias) in Jerusalem, to the Roman governor Felix - Acts 23:25-33
2. Upon reading the letter, and learning that Paul was from Cilicia, Felix... a. Promised to grant Paul an audience when his accusers had come - Acts 23:34-35 b. Commanded Paul to be kept in Herod's Praetorium - Acts 23:35

[Thus begins the next phase of Paul's life, in which he spent two years of imprisonment in Caesarea. It would prove to be a time of prophetic fulfillment (cf. Acts 9:15), for Paul would have the opportunity to preach Jesus to two Roman governors and a Jewish king...] I. Paul Before Felix
A. Accusations Against Paul. . .

1. Made by Ananias the high priest, elders, and an orator named Tertullus - Acts 24:1 2. Tertullus' speech a. Opening statements, complimenting Felix - Acts 24:2-4 b. Charges against Paul - Acts 24:5-6

1) A plague 2) A creator of dissension among Jews throughout the world 3) A ring leader of the sect of Nazarenes 4) Tried to profane the temple - cf. Acts 21:27-29 c. They wanted to judge him by Jewish law, but Lysias prevented them - Acts 24:6-8 d. Closing statement, calling upon Felix to examine Paul himself - Acts 24:8 3. Supporting testimony by the Jews present - Acts 24:9 B. Paul's Defence. . .

1. Permitted to speak, Paul gladly responds - Acts 24:10 2. Paul's defending arguments, part one - Acts 24:11-13 a. It has only been twelve days since Paul arrived in Jerusalem to worship b. He had not disputed with anyone, nor incited crowds, either in the temple, synagogues, or in the city c. His accusers cannot prove their charges against him (see part two) 3. Paul's affirmation of his faith and hope - Acts 24:14-16 a. He worships God according to the Way they call a sect b. He believes all things written in the Law and the Prophets c. He has hope in God regarding the resurrection of the dead - cf. Acts 23:6 d. He always strove to have a good conscience before God and men - cf. Acts 23:1 4. Paul's defending arguments, part two - Acts 24:17-21 a. He came to Jerusalem to bring alms and offerings for his nation - cf. Romans 15:25-27 b. He was found purified in the temple by Jews from Asia, but neither with a multitude nor with tumult - cf. Acts 21:26-27 c. The Jews from Asia should be the ones making accusation against him d. The Jews from Jerusalem who could find only one thing wrong with him:

1) His statement before the Sanhedrin council - cf. Acts 23:6-9 2) I.e., his belief in the resurrection of the dead, which divided the council C. Felix's Procrastination. . .

1. He suspends judgment until Lysias can come - Acts 24:22 2. Paul is allowed limited freedom, along with visitors - Acts 24:23 3. Paul before Felix and Drusilla - Acts 24:24-25 a. Drusilla, his wife

who was Jewish 1) Youngest daughter of Herod Agrippa I, and sister of Bernice - Acts 25:13 2) Married to King Azia of Emesa, who had agreed to be circumcised 3) Atomos, a magician from Cyprus, helped Felix win Drusilla away from her husband b. Paul reasoned about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come (because of their adulterous marriage?) c. Felix, fearful, sends Paul away for a more convenient time 4. Felix, hoping Paul would pay for his release, talks with him often - Acts 24:26

[After two years (58-60 A.D.), Felix is replaced by Porcius Festus. Wanting to please the Jews, Felix leaves Paul bound (Ac 24:27). This sets the stage for...] II. Paul Before Festus A. Paul's Trial Arranged. . .

1. Three days after arriving in Caesarea, Festus goes to Jerusalem - Acts 25:1 2. He is petitioned by the high priest and other chief men - Acts 25:2-3 a. To send Paul to Jerusalem b. Whom they hope to kill on the way 3. Festus arranges for the trial at Caesarea - Acts 25:4-6 a. Determining that Paul should be kept there b. Festus himself would be going there, which he does after ten days c. Paul's accusers invited to come and present their charges d. Paul is brought before Festus and the judgment seat B. The Trial and Paul's Appeal. . .

1. The Jews from Jerusalem make charges they cannot prove - Acts 25:7 2. Paul denies any offense against the Law, the temple, or Caesar - Acts 25:8; cf. Acts 21:28 3. Trying to please the Jews, Festus asks if Paul is willing to go to Jerusalem and be judged there - Acts 25:9 4. Paul appeals to Caesar, which Festus grants - Acts 25:10-12

[As a Roman citizen, Paul exercises his right to appeal his case before Caesar. Before Festus sends Paul to Rome, the governor takes advantage of an opportunity to have Paul examined by one known for his knowledge of Jewish law, King Agrippa II...] III. Paul Before Agrippa A. Festus' Conference With Agrippa. . .

1. King Agrippa II and Bernice visit Festus - Acts 25:13 a. Agrippa II was son of Herod Agrippa I, who beheaded James - Acts 12:1-2; Acts 12:20-23 b. Bernice was sister to Drusilla, but also to Agrippa II 1) She was first married to a person named Marcus 2) She then married her uncle Herod, king of Chalis 3) Upon his death she married Polemon, king of Pontus and Cilicia, who had to agree to be circumcised 4) She soon left him, and began an incestuous relationship with Agrippa II 5) She later became mistress to Titus, Caesar of Rome 2. Festus describes Paul's case to Agrippa - Acts 25:14-21 a. Paul was left a prisoner by Felix b. Jews from Jerusalem wanted a judgment against Paul c. Roman law required that Paul face his accusers d. In the trial, it became apparent that the questions involved Judaism and whether Jesus was alive e. Paul appealed to Caesar rather than be judged in Jerusalem 3. Agrippa desires to hear Paul, to which Festus consents - Acts 25:22 B. Paul's Defence Before Agrippa. . .

1. Paul brought before Agrippa, Bernice, Festus and prominent men of the city - Acts 25:23 2. Festus' introductory remarks - Acts 25:24-27 a. Paul has been accused to be worthy of death b. Festus had not found him worthy of death c. Since Paul has appealed to Caesar, Festus will send him d. But he has nothing certain to write Caesar, and solicits Agrippa's examination 3. Paul's defense - Acts 26:1-23 a. Paul's introductory remarks, grateful to speak before Agrippa - Acts 26:1-3 b. Paul reviews his early life - Acts 26:4-11 1) His youth in Jerusalem, which all knew 2) His religious convictions as a Pharisee, to which they could attest 3) His hope in the resurrection of the

dead, a promise all Jews should hope to attain 4) His persecution against the name of Jesus and His disciples c. Paul recounts his vision on the road to Damascus - Acts 26:12-18 1) The light from heaven, the voice of Jesus 2) The commission given to Paul a) To be a witness of what he has seen and heard b) To turn Gentiles from darkness to light, from the power of Satan to God c) To offer them forgiveness, and an inheritance among those sanctified by faith in Jesus d. Paul's concluding remarks - Acts 26:19-23 1) He was not disobedient to the vision 2) He proclaimed repentance to those in Damascus, Jerusalem, Judea, and then the Gentiles 3) For this, Jews seized him in the temple and sought to kill him 4) Yet with God's help he simply testifies what Moses and the prophets said would happen a) That Christ would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead b) That He proclaim light to both Jews and Gentiles 4. Reaction to Paul's defense - Acts 26:24-29 a. Festus believes Paul to be mad b. Paul claims to speak words of truth and reason, of things Agrippa knows well c. Paul challenges Agrippa 1) To believe the prophets 2) To become a Christian 5. Agrippa's conclusion - Acts 26:30-32 a. The king, governor, Bernice, and others go aside to discuss the matter b. They all conclude Paul has done nothing worthy of death c. Agrippa tells Festus that Paul could have been set free if he had not appealed to Caesar

Conclusion 1. After three trials, and two years of imprisonment in Caesarea, Paul is headed for Rome... a. As the Lord revealed in a vision - Acts 23:11 b. As Paul wanted to do for some time - cf. Acts 19:21; Romans 1:9-11; Romans 1:15; Romans 15:23-29 2. It may not have been as Paul anticipated, but circumstances gave him the opportunity... a. To bear witness to two governors, a king, two immoral women, and many others b. To eventually bear witness before the Caesar of Rome All this happened, in keeping with the will of God, and courtesy of the Roman government, with all expenses paid! As with Joseph in Egypt, Paul's life is a wonderful illustration of God's providence. Indeed, Paul could have easily said to his enemies what Joseph told his brothers:

"But as for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, in order to bring it about as it is this day, to save many people alive." (Genesis 50:20) May Paul's life, along with that of Joseph's, encourage us to trust in the wonderful providence of God!

01.10. The Voyage to Rome

Study 10: The Voyage to Rome (60-61 AD)

Introduction 1. At long last, Paul is headed for Rome... a. As he had wanted to do for some time - cf. Acts 19:21; Romans 1:9-11; Romans 1:15; Romans 15:23-29 b. As the Lord had revealed in a vision - Acts 23:11 2. Paul is not going as a tourist, but as a prisoner... a. Having been arrested in Jerusalem two years earlier - Acts 21:26-36 b. Having defended himself in various trials 1) Before the mob in Jerusalem - Acts 21:37-40; Acts 22:1-29 2) Before the Sanhedrin council in Jerusalem - Acts 22:30; Acts 23:1-10 3) Before Felix the governor in Caesarea - Acts 23:11-35; Acts 24:1-27 4) Before Festus the governor in Caesarea - Acts 25:1-12 5) Before King Herod Agrippa II in Caesarea - Acts 25:13-27; Acts 26:1-20; Acts 26:27-32

-- Going to Rome because he had exercised his right as a Roman citizen to appeal his case before Caesar - Acts 25:11-12; Acts 26:30-32

[The voyage to Rome would not be without trials of it's own. Traveling by sea was extremely very hazardous in those days. Paul had already experience three shipwrecks (cf. 2 Corinthians 11:25-26). He is about to add to his experiences of "perils in the sea". The first leg of the trip was...] I. From Ceasarea to Myra A. The Journey Begins. . .

1. Paul was placed in the care of Julius, a Roman centurion - Acts 27:1 a. Of the Augustan Regiment, a division consisting of 400-600 men (Barnes) b. Perhaps named in honor of the Roman emperor Augustus 2. Along with some other prisoners - Acts 27:1; cf. Acts 27:42 3. Paul was joined by two dear friends - Acts 27:1-2 a. Luke, the author of Acts and "beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14), as evidenced by the use of "we" b. Aristarchus, from Thessalonica of Macedonia 1) Who had faced the mob in Ephesus - Acts 19:29 2) Who had returned with Paul to Asia - Acts 20:4

3) Later described as Paul's "fellow prisoner" and "fellow laborer" - Colossians 4:10; Philemon 1:24 4. Placed on a ship of Adramyttium - Acts 27:2 a. A maritime town of Mysia in Asia Minor (Barnes) b. Located between Troas and Pergamos B. Along the Coast of Phoenicia. . .

1. From Caesarea they sailed to Sidon - Acts 27:3 2. At Sidon, the Roman centurion allowed Paul to visit friends and receive care C. Around the Island of Cyprus. . .

1. From Sidon they sailed "under" Cyprus - Acts 27:4 a. Because of the winds b. Where Paul had gone on his first missionary journey - Acts 13:4-12 2. They continued off the coasts of Cilicia and Pamphylia - Acts 27:5 a. Cilicia, where Paul was born, and spent five years after becoming a disciple of Christ - Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:21 b. Pamphylia, where Perga was located - cf. Acts 13:13; Acts 14:24-25 D. Arriving at Myra. . .

1. A city of Lycia, province west of Pamphylia - Acts 27:5 2. At Myra, the centurion books passage on an Alexandrian (Egypt) ship sailing to Italy - Acts 27:6

[The first leg of the trip appears to have been a pleasant one, despite the rough winds they encountered near Cyprus. But those winds were nothing compared to what they would experience on the next leg of their voyage...] II. From Myra to Malta A. Slow Boat to Crete. . .

1. It was slow sailing for many days - Acts 27:7 a. They arrived with difficulty off Cnidus (on the coast of Asia Minor, northwest of the island of Rhodes) b. The wind forced them to sail westward under Crete off Salmone (on the eastern promontory of the island) 2. With difficulty they arrived at Fair Havens - Acts 27:8 a. Near the city of Lasea b. On the south part of the island of Crete 3. Where they spent "much time" - Acts 27:9 a. Sailing was now dangerous, because the Fast (Day Of Atonement) was over b. This would have been around September or October 4. Paul's advice is ignored - Acts 27:9-12 a. He perceived that the voyage would end in disaster 1) With loss of cargo and ship 2) With loss of their lives b. The centurion is persuaded otherwise 1) By the helmsman and owner of the ship 2) Because the harbor at Fair Havens was not suitable for winter 3) The majority prevailed to try for Phoenix (Phenice), a harbor that faced both southwest and northwest B. Strong Wind Near Clauda. . .

1. Lured by a soft south wind, they sailed along the coast of Crete - Acts 27:13 2. They were soon caught up by a strong wind - Acts 27:14-15 a. Called "Euroclydon" (lit., wind wave), perhaps a hurricane or typhoon b. Forced to let the wind just drive the ship 3. A short reprieve near the island of Clauda - Acts 27:16-17 a. A small island southwest of Crete b. Where they secured the small skiff (boat) onboard c. Where they used cables to under gird the ship d. They struck sail, fearing they would run aground on the Syrtis Sands (quicksands off the coast of Africa) 4. At the mercy of the winds - Acts 27:17-19 a. Driven and tossed by the tempest b. Throwing ship's tackle overboard to lighten the ship 5. Paul's comforting words, prompted by a visit from an angel - Acts 27:20-26 a. After many days without seeing sun nor stars, all hope was lost b. After a long abstinence from food, Paul addresses those on the ship 1) Reminding them they should have listened to him 2) Encouraging them to take heart, for no lives would be lost, only the ship c. An angel had appeared to Paul, telling him:

1) Not to be afraid, for he must appear before Caesar 2) God has granted the lives of all those with him d. Paul encourages them to take heart, though they must run aground on a certain island

C. Shipwrecked on Malta. . .

1. After two weeks in the Adriatic Sea, they run aground - Acts 27:27-44 a. Sensing they were nearing ground around midnight, soundings confirmed their fears b. Sailors attempted to flee using the skiff, but Paul and the Roman soldiers prevented them, letting the skiff fall off the ship c. At dawn, Paul encourages them to eat and offers thanks in their presence d. They then further lightened the ship by throwing the wheat into the sea e. In daylight, they tried to run the ship into a bay with a beach f. The prow of the ship ran aground where two seas met, and the stern began to break up g. The Roman soldiers planned to kill the prisoners, but was prevented by the centurion who wanted to save Paul h. All made it land, some swimming, others on broken pieces of the ship 2. Three months on the island of Malta (Melita, 60 miles S from Sicily) - Acts 28:1-10 a. Where the natives made them welcome b. Where Paul amazed the people when he did not die from a poisonous snake bite - cf. Mark 16:17-18 c. Where Paul healed Publius' father of a fever and dysentery d. Where they were honored in many ways, and provided with whatever was necessary when they departed

[For the fourth time in his life, Paul had experienced shipwreck. Yet God was with him, and would be with him as he and his traveling companions continued their journey...] III. From Malta to Rome
A. On the Ship to Italy. . .

1. After three months on the island, they sail from Malta - Acts 28:11 a. On an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead "The Twin Brothers" b. Which had wintered on the island 2. They sailed to Syracuse (capital of Sicily), where they stayed three days - Acts 28:12 3. From there they circled about to Rhegium (a city of on the SW extremity of Italy) - Acts 28:13 4. With the aid of a south wind, they sailed on to Puteoli (8 miles NW of Naples) - Acts 28:13-14 a. Where they found brethren! b. Where they were invited to stay seven days

B. On the Road to Rome. . .

1. From Puteoli they head to Rome - Acts 28:14 2. Brethren from Rome hear of their coming - Acts 28:15 a. They came to meet Paul and his companions b. When Paul saw them, He thanked God and took courage 3. Finally, they arrive at Rome! - Acts 28:16 a. The centurion delivered the prisoners to the captain of the guard b. Paul was permitted to dwell by himself with the soldier who guarded him

Conclusion 1. Several years earlier, Paul had written of his desire and prayers to meet his brethren in Rome - cf. Romans 1:8-10 2. Paul finally had his desire granted, and for two years remained in Rome... a. Yes, it was as a prisoner awaiting his appeal before Caesar b. But as we shall see in our next study, it was a fruitful time in which he taught, preached and wrote much about the gospel of Jesus Christ!

What helped Paul throughout his voyage and the remaining years of his life was "the God to whom I belong and whom I serve" (cf. Acts 27:23). Later, Paul would write:

"And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!" (2 Timothy 4:18) May the example and faith of the apostle Paul encourage us to serve the same God with the same faith he did!

01.11. First Roman Captivity

Study11: First Roman Captivity (61-63 AD)

Introduction 1. After his fateful voyage, Paul and his companions arrived at Rome... a. Where he was placed under house arrest - Acts 28:16 b. Where he waited two years to make his appeal before Caesar - cf. Acts 25:9-12; Acts 28:30 2. Yet Paul was not idle during this time - cf. Acts 28:30-31 a. He received many visitors b. He was not forbidden to teach those who came to see him c. He likely composed several epistles -- Indeed, it was a fruitful time for Paul

[At the close of the book of Acts, we are given an indication of what it must have been like during those two years, as we read of...] I. His Meeting with Jewish Leaders A. The First Meeting. . .

1. Paul called for the leaders of the Jews in Rome - Acts 28:17 a 2. He explained why he was there, and the reason for his appeal - Acts 28:17-20 a. He had done nothing against the Jews or their customs b. Though Roman officials wanted to let him go, Jews from Jerusalem spoke against it, forcing him to appeal to Caesar c. Yet it was for the hope of Israel he was bound in chains 3. The Jewish leaders desire to learn more - Acts 28:21-22 a. For they neither received letters or heard anything evil of Paul b. But they did want to hear what he had to say about this "sect" spoken against everywhere B. The Second Meeting. . .

1. On an appointed day, they came to his lodging - Acts 28:23 a 2. They heard him explain and solemnly testify - Acts 28:23 b a. Of the kingdom of God and concerning Jesus - cf. Acts 8:12 b. From both the Law of Moses and the Prophets - cf. Luke 24:44-47 c. Lasting from morning until evening 3. Their reaction was mixed; some were persuaded, while others disbelieved - Acts 28:24 4. They departed after Paul gave them solemn warning - Acts 28:25-28 a. Of being hard of hearing and closing their eyes - cf. Isaiah 6:9-10 b. That the message of God's salvation has been sent to Gentiles and they will hear it 5. They departed and disputed among themselves - Acts 28:29

[The closing verses in Acts indicate that similar meetings were repeated time and again during the two years of Paul's first Roman captivity (Ac 28:30-31). When we turn to Paul's epistles, we can glean more things about...] II. His Circumstances in Rome A. Paul's Companions. . .

1. Timothy a. The young disciple Paul had picked up on his second journey - Acts 16:1-3 b. Who joined Paul in several salutations in epistles written from Rome - Philemon 1:1; Colossians 1:1; Php 1:1 c. Who was sent to Philippi in behalf of Paul - Php 2:19-23

2. Epaphras a. Whose visit to Paul prompted the writing of Colossians - Colossians 1:3-8 b. Who sent his greetings to his beloved brethren at Colosse - Colossians 4:12-13 c. Who was described as Paul's "fellow-prisoner" - Philemon 1:23 3. Onesimus and Tychicus a. Onesimus, the runaway slave converted to Jesus Christ, who was sent along with the letter to his master Philemon - Philemon 1:10-21 b. Onesimus also accompanied Tychicus who bore the epistle to the Colossians - Colossians 4:7-9 c. Tychicus, who was from Asia (Ac 20:4) was also the bearer of the epistle to the Ephesians - Ephesians 6:21-22 4. Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Luke, Jesus (Justus) -

Philemon 1:24 a. Marcus, also known as John Mark, Barnabas' cousin - Colossians 4:10; cf. Acts 12:25; Acts 13:5; Acts 13:13; Acts 15:37-40 b. Aristarchus, Paul's "fellow-prisoner" - Colossians 4:10; cf. Acts 19:29; Acts 20:4; Acts 27:2 c. Demas, who later forsook Paul - Colossians 4:14; cf. 2 Timothy 4:10 d. Luke, the beloved physician who traveled off and on again with Paul, and accompanied him on his voyage to Rome - Colossians 4:14; cf. Acts 16:10-12; Acts 20:6; Acts 21:1-17; Acts 27:1-28:16 e. Jesus (also called Justus), a "fellow-worker" with Paul - Colossians 4:11

5. Epaphroditus a. Who brought a gift to Paul from the Philippians - Php 4:18 b. Who became the bearer of the epistle to the Philippians - Php 2:25-30

-- His companions undoubtedly were a great source of comfort for Paul, and enabled him to do much good while imprisoned in Rome B. Paul's Preaching. . .

1. Continued preaching despite his chains - Ephesians 3:1-9; Colossians 1:23-29 2. Requested prayers for wisdom and boldness to continue preaching - Ephesians 6:18-20; Colossians 4:3-4 3. Converted Onesimus, the runaway slave - Philemon 1:10 4. Had opportunities among the palace guard, and apparent success in Caesar's household - Php 1:12-20; Php 4:22 -- Paul's success in preaching reinforce the idea that the gospel cannot be bound C. Paul's Letters. . .

1. The epistle to Philemon (61 or 62 AD.) - Philemon 1:1 a. Purpose: To secure forgiveness for Onesimus b. Theme: Restoration Of A Slave Brother c. Brief Outline:

1) Greetings - Philemon 1:1-3 2) Thanksgiving and prayer for Philemon - Philemon 1:4-7 3) Plea in behalf of Onesimus - Philemon 1:8-21 4) Concluding remarks - Philemon 1:22-25 2. The epistle to the Colossians (61 or 62 A.D.) - Colossians 1:1-2 a. Purpose: To warn against the "Colossian heresy" b. Theme: Christ, The Fullness Of God And Pre-Eminent, All-Sufficient Savior c. Brief Outline:

1) The pre-eminence of Christ - Colossians 1:1-23 2) The apostle of Christ - Colossians 1:24-29; Colossians 2:1-7 3) Warnings against the Colossian heresy - Colossians 2:8-23 4) The Christian solution - Colossians 3:1-4:6 5) Paul's companions - Colossians 4:7-18 3. The epistle to the Ephesians (61 or 62 A.D.) - Ephesians 1:1 a. Purpose: To remind Christians of their spiritual blessings and responsibilities b. Theme: The Believer's Riches In Christ c. Brief Outline:

1) Doctrine: Our riches in Christ - Ep 1:1-3:21 2) Duty: Our responsibilities in Christ - Ep 4:1-6:20 4. The epistle to the Philippians (63 A.D.) - Php 1:1 a. Purpose: To thank the church for their gift, and encourage faithfulness b. Theme: Rejoice In The Lord! c. Brief Outline:

1) The situation in Rome - Php 1:1-26 2) Exhortation to behavior worthy of the gospel - Php 1:27-30; Php 2:1-18 3) Plans involving Timothy and Epaphroditus - Php 2:19-30 4) Warnings against Judaism and antinomianism - Php 3:1-21 5) Exhortations to unity, joy, and peace - Php 4:1-9 6) Thanksgiving for their generous gift - Php 4:10-23 -- The letters of Paul exemplify the power of letter-writing, especially when limited by circumstances D. Paul's Love and Care For The Churches. . .

1. Evidenced in the epistles he wrote during this time a. Such as Colossians, to a church he had not seen - Colossians 2:1-5 b. Such as Ephesians, to a church with whom he had spent much time - Acts 20:17-21 c. Such as Philippians, to a church that was dear to his heart - Php 1:3-5; Php 4:1

2. Evidenced in the prayers he offered for them a. His prayer for the Colossians - Colossians 1:9-11 b. His prayers for the Ephesians - Ephesians 1:15-21; Ephesians 3:14-19 c. His prayer for the Philippians - Php 1:9-11

-- Paul's love and concern for others despite his own circumstances exemplifies the mind of Christ - cf. Php 2:4-8 E. Paul's Faith and Joy in His Suffering. . .

1. He rejoiced in his sufferings - Colossians 1:24; Php 2:16-18 2. He sought to magnify Christ in his sufferings - Php 1:20

-- Paul's imprisonment gave him an opportunity to practice what he had been preaching (and practicing) all along - cf. Romans 5:3-5

Conclusion 1. Paul fully expected to be released from his imprisonment, as expressed... a. By his plans to visit Philemon - Philemon 1:22 b. In his epistle to the Philippians - Php 1:23-27; Php 2:24 2. That he was released and traveled some more is evidenced... a. By references made in such epistles as 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus b. By the testimony of those who came along later: Chrysostom, Jerome, Eusebius, and even Clement of Rome, who lived in the latter part of the first century A.D.

J. W. McGarvey notes in his commentary on Acts: "No two years of Paul's life were better filled with earnest labor than these two spent in his Roman prison." Indeed, we have seen that such was the case, as Paul himself wrote:

"But I want you to know, brethren, that the things which happened to me have actually turned out for the furtherance of the gospel, so that it has become evident to the whole palace guard, and to all the rest, that my chains are in Christ; and most of the brethren in the Lord, having become confident by my chains, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." (Php 1:12-14) May we learn from Paul's example of how "good can come out of ill", and use whatever circumstances in which we find ourselves to be utilized for the glory of God!

01.12. Between The First And Second Captivity

Study 12: Between The First And Second Captivity (63-67 AD)

Introduction 1. During his first Roman imprisonment, Paul expected to be released... a. Expressed in his epistle to the Philippians - Php 1:23-27; Php 2:24 b. Expressed in his plans to visit Philemon - Philemon 1:22 2. That he was released and traveled some more is evidenced... a. By references made in such epistles as 1st and 2nd Timothy, Titus b. By the testimony of those who came along later: Chrysostom, Jerome, Eusebius, and even Clement of Rome, who lived in the latter part of the first century A.D.

[The exact nature and extent of his travels between his two Roman imprisonments is uncertain. In his book, A Harmony Of The Life Of St. Paul, Frank J. Goodwin offers the following information concerning...] I. Paul's Travels A. Conjectural Travels. . .

1. Paul certainly desired to go to Philippi - Php 1:26; Php 2:24 2. He desired to visit Philemon at Colosse - Philemon 1:22

3. If he went to Colosse, he would have probably visited nearby Laodicea and Hierapolis - cf. Colossians 2:1; Colossians 4:12-13; Colossians 4:15-16 4. He had expressed a desire to travel to Spain - Romans 15:24; Romans 15:28 a. Clement implies that he may have done so (1 Clem 5:5) b. He is stated as doing so in the Canon of Muratori (as per ISBE) B. Authentic Travels. . .

1. Paul and Timothy went to Ephesus - 1 Timothy 1:3; 1 Timothy 3:14-15 2. Leaving Timothy at Ephesus, Paul went to Macedonia - 1 Timothy 1:3 3. Paul and Titus made a trip to Crete - Titus 1:5 4. Paul to Miletus, where he left Trophimus sick - 2 Timothy 4:20 5. Paul returned to Ephesus, where he was served by Onesiphorus - 2 Timothy 1:16-18 6. A trip was made to Troas, where Paul left a cloak and books with Carpus - 2 Timothy 4:13 7. He also went to Corinth with Erastus - 2 Timothy 4:20 8. He spent a winter at Nicopolis - Titus 3:12 a. Conybeare supposes that Paul was arrested in Nicopolis b. He was then sent to Rome for his second imprisonment

[During these travels, Paul was assisted by many brethren. He was also opposed by a few. Here is a brief review of Paul's acquaintances during this time...] II. Paul's Acquaintances A. His Friends. . .

1. Timothy, who went with Paul to Ephesus and remained there - 1 Timothy 1:1-3 2. Titus...left in Crete, and then asked to come to Paul in Nicopolis - Titus 1:4-5; Titus 3:14-15 3. Erastus, who stayed in Corinth - 2 Timothy 4:20 4. Trophimus, whom Paul left sick at Miletus - 2 Timothy 4:20 5. Carpus, who was with Paul at Troas - 2 Timothy 4:13 6. Onesiphorus, who saw Paul in Rome and ministered to him at Ephesus - 2 Timothy 1:16-18 7. Artemas and Tychicus, who were sent to Titus in Crete - Titus 3:12 8. Zenas the lawyer, and Apollos, who were asked to come to Nicopolis - Titus 3:13 B. His Opponents. . .

1. Hymenaeus and Alexander a. Both of whom lost their faith, and began to blaspheme - 1 Timothy 1:19-20 b. Hymenaeus declared that the resurrection had already occurred - 2 Timothy

2:17-18 c. Alexander did Paul much harm, and resisted Paul's words - 2 Timothy 4:14-15 2. Philetus, who joined with Hymenaeus in his false teaching - 2 Timothy 2:17-18

[As was the case during his earlier journeys and even while imprisoned in Rome, Paul took advantage of opportunities to write letters...] III. Paul's Letters A. The First Epistle to Timothy. . .

1. Written from Macedonia (63 or 64 A.D.) - 1 Timothy 1:1-3

2. Purpose: To instruct Timothy concerning church matters at Ephesus, and provide counsel for Timothy's own spiritual progress 3. Theme: Sound Doctrine For A Church And Its Preacher 4. Brief Outline: a. Charge concerning sound doctrine - 1 Timothy 1:1-20 b. General instructions concerning the church - 1 Timothy 2:1-15; 1 Timothy 3:1-13 c. Advice to Timothy - 1 Timothy 3:14-16; 1 Timothy 4:1-16 d. Instructions concerning members of the church - 1 Timothy 5:1-14; 1 Timothy 6:1-21 B. The Epistle to Titus. . .

1. Written perhaps from Corinth or Ephesus (63-66 A.D.) - Titus 1:1-4 2. Purpose: To instruct Titus concerning church matters at Crete 3. Theme: Set In Order The Things That Are Lacking 4. Brief Outline: a. Instructions concerning church organization - Titus 1:1-16 b. Instructions concerning Christian conduct - Titus 2:1-15; Titus 3:1-15

Conclusion

1. The time of Paul's life "Between The First And Second Roman Captivity (63-67 A.D.)" is similar to the period we described as "Paul's Early Years Of Service (36-45 A.D.)"... a. The Scriptures reveal little about each of them b. What indication we have is that Paul was active and fruitful during both periods 2. Even less is revealed about the final period of Paul's life... a. The second Roman captivity b. His martyrdom

Yet we will notice that with the help of his faith and friends, Paul was able to finish his sojourn in this life with joyful anticipation of what was to come. May we be blessed to have the same faith, and the same support from good friends in Christ!

01.13. Second Roman Captivity And Death (68 AD)

Study 13: Second Roman Captivity And Death (68 AD)

Introduction 1. We come to the final year of Paul's life, in which... a. He experienced a second Roman imprisonment b. He gave his life as a martyr for Jesus Christ 2. Very little is revealed in the Scriptures about Paul's second Roman imprisonment and death... a. Conybeare supposes that Paul was arrested in Nicopolis, and brought to Rome b. Many believe that Nero sought to implicate Christians in the burning of Rome, and the arrest of key leaders (Paul, Peter) was the result [From Paul's second epistle to Timothy, his last letter on record, we learn a few things about...] I. His Imprisonment at Rome A. Charged As An Evil-Doer. . .

1. He suffered trouble as an evildoer - 2 Timothy 2:8-9 a. It was because of his preaching the gospel of Christ b. No longer was Christianity allowed, it was now an illegal religion 2. Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, nor of Paul as His prisoner - 2 Timothy 1:8 -- Evidently this imprisonment was more severe than the first one - cf. Acts 28:30-31 B. Experienced Lonliness. . .

1. Many of his old friends were no longer present a. Demas had forsaken him - 2 Timothy 4:10 b. Crescens had gone to Galatia - 2 Timothy 4:10 c. Titus had gone to Dalmatia - 2 Timothy 4:10 d. Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus - 2 Timothy 4:12 e. Erastus was at Corinth - 2 Timothy 4:20 f. Trophimus was left sick at Miletus - 2 Timothy 4:20 2. There were some brethren with him, who sent greetings to Timothy - 2 Timothy 4:21

-- But of his old companions, only Luke was with him, and he longed for Timothy and Mark to come quickly - 2 Timothy 4:11 C. Suffered More Than One Trial. . .

1. Apparently Paul had already experienced one trial - 2 Timothy 4:14-16 a. In which Alexander the coppersmith had done Paul much harm b. In which no one else stood with Paul, but forsook him 2. Yet Paul had escaped death, though not imprisonment - 2 Timothy 4:17-18 a. The Lord had stood with Paul, and he was delivered out of the mouth of the lion b. Paul was confident the Lord would deliver him (though he understood deliverance did not preclude death) D. Wrote His Second Epistle to Timothy. . .

1. Purpose: To encourage Timothy to stand strong, preach the Word, endure hardship, commit the Word to others - 2 Timothy 2:1-3; 2 Timothy 2:14; 2 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:5 2. Theme: Fulfill Your Ministry!

3. Brief outline: a. Exhortations to steadfast service - 2 Timothy 1:1-2:26 b. Exhortations to sound doctrine - 2 Timothy 3:1-4:5 c. Exhortations to come quickly - 2 Timothy 4:6-22 [The exhortation to come quickly was likely prompted by...]

II. His Anticipation of Death A. He Expected to Die Soon. . .

1. He was ready to be offered (as a sacrifice) - 2 Timothy 4:6; cf. Php 2:17 2. His departure was at hand - 2 Timothy 4:6; cf. Php 1:23 B. He Was Not Ashamed. . .

1. He encouraged Timothy not to be ashamed - 2 Timothy 1:8-11 2. He himself was not ashamed, having committed all to the Lord - 2 Timothy 1:12 C. He Was Confident. . .

1. That he would live with Christ - 2 Timothy 2:8; cf. Php 1:21-23 2. That he would receive a crown of righteousness - 2 Timothy 4:7-8

[The Bible is silent regarding Paul's death. Based upon tradition outside the Bible, we may be able to glean some...] III. Details of His Death A. The Date of His Death. . .

1. Nero died June, 68 A.D., so Paul was executed before that date 2. Perhaps in the spring of 68, or in 67 A.D.

B. The Location of His Death. . .

1. He was executed on the Ostian Road just outside of Rome by a military escort (near the present day Basilica of St. Paul)

2. Perhaps to avoid sympathy which his influence had excited (for he had friends even in the palace - Php 1:13; Php 4:22), he was executed outside the city C. The Nature of His Death and Burial. . .

1. Paul was beheaded, Roman citizenship exempting him from torture and crucifixion

2. According to universal tradition, "weeping friends took up his corpse and carried it for burial to those subterranean labyrinths" (Clement Romans. 1.5)

Conclusion 1. The legacy Paul left behind is impressive... a. The churches he established throughout the Roman empire b. The letters he wrote, numbering about half of the New Testament

-- Even today, 2000 years later, the influence of Paul's life, labors, and letters continue to be felt around the world 2. Yet, Paul would be the first to give credit to God, as when he wrote:

"For I am the least of the apostles, who am not worthy to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me." - 1 Corinthians 15:9-10 3. Yes, Paul realized that he was not worthy of the opportunities he had to serve God:

"To me, who am less than the least of all the saints, this grace was given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ;" - Ephesians 3:8-9 4. But through Paul, with his life and labors, God demonstrates His wonderful grace and mercy:

"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has enabled me, because He counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry, although I was formerly a blasphemer, a persecutor, and an insolent man; but I obtained mercy because I did it ignorantly in unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceedingly abundant, with faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying and worthy of all

acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show all long-suffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for everlasting life." - 1 Timothy 1:12-16 May the pattern of Paul's life serve to encourage us to always look to the Lord for grace and mercy, so that one day we too can say:

"I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. 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." - 2 Timothy 4:7-8

02.00. Baptism, A Special Study

Baptism, A Special Study A Study on Various Aspects of Baptism Mark A. Copeland Topic Note Version for e-Sword: Stephen Jovanovic, Timaru - New Zealand. <mailto:stephenjovanovic@yahoo.com> Copyright © Mark A. Copeland 1992 - 2006. All rights reserved <mailto:MarkACopeland@gmail.com> <http://executableoutlines.com>

Contents 01 Baptism In The Preaching Of The Apostles 02 Baptism In The Teaching Of Paul 03 Baptism In The Teaching Of Peter 04 Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?

05 What About Infant Baptism?

06 What About "Re-Baptism?"

07 For Your Further Study 08 Arguments Against Baptism Answered. . .

(Included in Chapter 8) What About The Thief On The Cross?) 08a What About Cornelius And His Household?

08b Wasn't Paul Sent To Preach, Not Baptize?

08c Baptism Is A Work, We Are Not Saved By Works!

08d Spirit Baptism Saves Us, Not Water Baptism!

08e "Baptism" Conclusion To This Section

02.01. Baptism In The Preaching Of The Apostles

Study 1: Baptism In The Preaching Of The Apostles

Introduction 1. Shortly before He ascended into heaven, Jesus gave His apostles The Great Commission: And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 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, 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. (Matthew 28:18-20) 2. In the gospel of Mark, The Great Commission is worded in this way: And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16) 3. In both places we notice the mention of baptism... a. In Matthew, it is related to the process of making disciples b. In Mark, it is mentioned in connection with salvation -- Whatever the purpose of baptism, it must be important to Jesus, for He commanded it!

4. But one might ask... a. What is baptism?

1) Is it pouring, sprinkling, or immersion?

2) Is one baptized in water, or in the Spirit? b. What is the purpose of baptism?

1) Is it for the remission of sins, or because our sins have already been forgiven?

2) Is it to be saved, or a public confession of faith having already been saved? c. Who should be baptized?

1) Should infants be baptized?

2) Should just anyone be baptized? d. Is there ever a need to be "re-baptized"?

1) What if I was baptized as an infant?

2) What if I was baptized for the wrong reason?

3) What if I have sinned greatly after being baptized?

-- These and many other questions are often asked when the subject of baptism is raised 5. This series is devoted to answering these and other questions related to baptism... a. Since it was commanded by Christ, it is certainly worthy of careful consideration b. It is my intention to glean from the Bible what is actually taught on this subject c. It is my prayer that you will have the attitude of those in Berea - cf. Acts 17:11.

1) To receive the word with all readiness (i. e., listen carefully with a desire to at least understand, if at first you do not agree) 2) To search the Scriptures (i. e., to read the Bible carefully to see if what I am saying is true)

[In this lesson, we will simply consider how the apostles carried out The Commission Jesus gave them; i. e., to see what they said about baptism in their preaching. We begin with...] I. Baptism In The Preaching Of Peter A. On The Day Of Pentecost. . .

1. In the first gospel sermon, Peter commanded people to be baptized "for the remission of sins" - Acts 2:38.

2. Upon exhorting his audience to be saved, the response was for many to be baptized - Acts 2:41.

3. Does "for" mean "in order to" or "because of"? a. Note: We find the same grammatical construction in Matthew 26:28.

1) Where Jesus said His blood would be shed for many "for the remission sins"

2) Clearly Jesus meant "in order to" provide remission of sins, and not "because" remission of sins had already occurred 3) With rare exception, the Greek word (eis) means "into, to, unto, for, toward" b. Note also: "be baptized" is joined by the conjunction "and" to the command "repent" - Acts 2:38.

1) Both are commanded "for the remission of sins"

2) Just as people were commanded to repent "for" (in order to) the remission of sins...

3) ...so they were commanded to be baptized "for" (in order to) the remission of sins B. At The House Of Cornelius. . .

1. In the first gospel sermon to the Gentiles, Peter followed up by commanding his audience to be baptized - cf. Acts 10:44-48.

2. It is evident that what Peter commanded involved a baptism in water - Acts 10:47-48.

3. A future study will examine whether the people were saved when the Spirit fell upon them, or when they were baptized as commanded by Peter

[At the very least, we can say that Peter's preaching was in harmony with the statements of Jesus in the Great Commission: Preach the gospel, command people to be baptized. So far the indication appears that it was a baptism in water, and done for the remission of sins. Let's consider now one who was not actually an apostle, but certainly filled with the Spirit...] II. Baptism In The Preaching Of Philip A. To The Samaritans. . .

1. Though not an apostle, Philip went to Samaria and "preached Christ" - Acts 8:5.

2. The response to such preaching: "...when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized." - Acts 8:12.

B. To The Ethiopian Eunuch. . .

1. To this very religious man, Philip "preached Jesus" - Acts 8:35.

2. Though we are not told the content of Philip's sermon, from the eunuch's question we can deduce that it included baptism - Acts 8:36-38.

[Like Peter, Philip "preached Jesus" not only by telling people about Jesus, but also what Jesus commanded. Baptism was an immediate result of such preaching. Is this surprising in light of Jesus' statements in Matthew 28:19 and Mark 16:15-16? Let's now consider...] III. Baptism In The Preaching Of Paul A. The Conversion Of Lydia. . .

1. We note that again baptism followed apostolic preaching - Acts 16:13-15.

2. As evidence that she "gave heed" to the things spoken by Paul, she and her household were baptized!

3. Notice also her comment in Acts 16:15. a. How could Paul have judged her to be faithful to the Lord? b. By her response to the command of the Lord concerning baptism!

B. The Conversion of The Philippian Jailor. . .

1. Paul tells the jailor that he must believe on the Lord to be saved - Acts 16:30-31.

2. Paul went on to speak concerning the Word of the Lord to him and his family - Acts 16:32.

3. In response, they were immediately baptized! - Acts 16:33-34. a. Evidently the word of the Lord stressed the need to be baptized quickly b. In fact, in EVERY detailed example of conversion found in the Book of Acts, people were baptized after only one lesson! (see chart below) C. In The Conversion Of Paul Himself. . .

1. Paul recounts his own conversion to the Lord - Acts 22:10-16. a. He describes how he was told to go to Damascus, for there he would be told "all things appointed for you to do" ("what you must do" - cf. Acts 9:6) b. One of the things he was told was to be baptized without delay - Acts 22:16.

2. He was told to be baptized in order to "wash away your sins" a. NOTE WELL: Despite seeing the Lord on the road to Damascus, having spent three days fasting and praying (Acts 9:9-11), he was STILL IN HIS SINS!

1) Seeing the Lord had not saved him 2) Accepting Jesus as Lord (cf. Acts 22:10) had not saved him 3) Praying and fasting for three days had not saved him b. Not until he was baptized were his sins "washed away"! (exactly how we will examine later)

Conclusion

1. That baptism played a prominent role in apostolic preaching becomes evident when we compare what is revealed in the examples of conversion...

Matthew 28:18-20

Examples Of Conversion

Examples Of Conversion

Mark 16:15-16

Believed

Repented

Confessed

Baptized

Pentecost

Acts 2:14-41

Repented

Acts 2:37-38

Baptized

Acts 2:38-41

Samaria

Acts 8:5-13

Believed

Acts 8:12

Baptized

Acts 8:12-13

Ethiopian

Acts 8:35-39

Believed

Acts 8:36-37

Confessed

Acts 8:37

Baptized

Acts 8:38

Saul Acts 9:1-43; Acts 22:1-30, Acts 26:1-32

Baptized

Acts 22:16

Cornelius

Acts 10:34-38

Believed

Acts 10:43

Baptized

Acts 10:48

Lydia

Acts 16:13-15

Heeded

Acts 16:14

Baptized

Acts 16:15

Jailor

Acts 16:30-34

Acts 16:31

Baptized

Acts 16:33

Our next lesson will examine what the apostles taught in their epistles regarding baptism, as we continue to seek Bible answers to such questions...

02.02. Baptism In The Teaching Of Paul

Study 2: Baptism In The Teaching Of Paul

Introduction 1. In our first lesson we saw where baptism played a prominent role in apostolic preaching... a. In every case of conversion described in the book of Acts, baptism is mentioned b. As G. R. Beasley-Murray, a Baptist scholar, observed: "Baptism is...a part of the proclamation of Christ. In an Apostolic sermon it comes as its logical conclusion." - G. R. Beasley-Murray, Baptism In The New Testament, Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1962, p. 393) 2. And what did the apostles proclaim regarding baptism? We noticed that... a. It was commanded "for the remission of sins" - Acts 2:38. b. It was done to "wash away sins" - Acts 22:16. c. It involved "water" - Acts 8:36-38; Acts 10:48. d. It was done "immediately", with no delay even if after midnight - Acts 16:25-33.

3. This would certainly suggest that baptism is necessary for salvation... a. But is this a fair conclusion drawn from the "preaching" of the apostles? b. Is this conclusion consistent with the "teaching" of the apostles, as found in their epistles?

[In this lesson, we will examine what Paul taught in his epistles regarding baptism. Let's start with by noticing what he said about baptism...] I. In His Epistle To The Romans A. Baptism Is A Burial And Resurrection With Christ. . .

1. It is a baptism into the death of Christ - Romans 6:3.
2. It is a burial with Christ into death (His death, we are crucified with Him!) - Romans 6:4.
3. It is done in order that we might walk in newness of life - Romans 6:4-5.
4. It involves crucifying the old man, that the body of sin may be destroyed - Romans 6:6.
6. It thereby frees us from sin as we die to sin, that we might live with Christ - Romans 6:7-11.

B. Note Carefully. . .

1. Paul does not say that baptism "symbolizes things which had already occurred" a. Many say this is the purpose or design of baptism, often quoting this passage b. But read the passage carefully; Paul says no such thing!

2. But rather, Paul describes baptism into Christ as WHEN such things occur a. We were buried with Him "through baptism into death" - Romans 6:4. b. It is in baptism we are buried with Christ into death (His death); we thereby die to sin in baptism c. We were buried with Him, why? "That just as Christ was raised...even so we also should walk in newness of life" - Romans 6:4. d. We are baptized in order to rise to walk in newness of life just as Christ did!

3. Note also Paul's preface to these remarks: "as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were..." a. What blessings he describes pertain only to those who had been baptized! b. What of those not

baptized? The blessings described would not apply!

[In his commentary on Romans, Martin Luther wrote: "Baptism has been instituted that it should lead us to the blessings (of this death) and through such death to eternal life. Therefore IT IS NECESSARY that we should be baptized into Jesus Christ and His death." (Commentary On Romans, Kregel Publications, p. 101).

Though believing that we are justified by grace through faith (and he would say "by faith alone"), Luther understood that salvation by faith did not preclude the necessity of baptism! Why, we shall see shortly; but let's go on to consider what Paul wrote of baptism...] II. In His Epistle To The Galatians A. Baptism Is How We Put On Christ. . .

1. From Galatians 3:26-27 we learn that baptism is involved in the process of becoming sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus 2. The "for" beginning Galatians 3:27 begins an explanation as to HOW we become sons of God through faith 3. Baptism is therefore the means by which we "put on Christ", and become sons of God!

B. Note Carefully. . .

1. Paul wrote: "For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on..." a. "For as many" means no more or no less b. Only those who have been baptized into Christ have really received Christ into their lives!

2. Many teach "receive Jesus Christ by saying the sinner's prayer..." a. But the Bible nowhere teaches that this is how one "receives Christ" b. Rather, one "puts on" (or receives) Christ when they are baptized into Christ!

[In his commentary on this verse, Luther concluded: "Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy." (Commentary On Galatians, Kregel Publications, p. 222). How true, if in baptism we "put on Christ"!

How this is possible without being a form of works-salvation becomes clearer as we consider what Paul taught concerning baptism...] III. In His Epistle To The Colossians A. Baptism Is A Work Of God. . .

1. A "spiritual circumcision" in which sins are "cut away" - Colossians 2:11.

2. A burial with Christ, and also a resurrection with Him - Colossians 2:12.

3. Made effective "through faith in the working of God" - Colossians 2:12.

4. In which GOD makes us "alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses" - Colossians 2:13.

B. Note Carefully. . .

1. Here we learn that baptism is a work of God, not man a. Just as it was God who raised Jesus, so it is He who makes us alive, having forgiven our sins! - Colossians 2:13. b. Our part is "faith in the working of God" as we are buried with Christ in baptism - Col. 2:12.

2. God is the "Great Physician", who is cutting away our sins (through the blood of Christ) a. We are simply the patient, who humbly submits in faith to the surgeon's scalpel b. He is the One who makes us alive, that we might rise to walk in newness of life

[Again, this is something Martin Luther clearly recognized, when he responded to those who would call this a kind of works-salvation:

"Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's." (as quoted by Jack W. Cottrell in *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press 1990, p. 32-34) Finally, let's consider what Paul taught concerning baptism...] IV. In His Epistle To Titus A. Baptism Is "Washing" And Regeneration. . .

1. Is Paul talking about baptism in Titus 3:5? a. The figure "washing" certainly alludes to the baptismal waters b. We have already seen where in baptism we are:

1) Raised to walk in newness of life - Romans 6:4.

2) Made alive by God - Colossians 2:12-13.

-- Does this not suggest a "washing of regeneration..."? c. Martin Luther and many others understood this verse to refer to baptism 2. Thus God saves us in baptism: a. It is a "washing of regeneration" - a washing in we are reborn b. It is a "renewing of the Holy Spirit" - a renewal in which the Spirit is at work

-- Just as Jesus said: "...unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God." - John 3:5.

B. Note Carefully. . .

1. This "washing" and "regeneration" does not occur because we have earned it! a. Baptism is not a work of righteousness by virtue of which we merit salvation! b. We are saved by the kindness, love, and mercy of God! - Titus 3:4-5.

2. It is by God's mercy that HE (not we) saves us! a. Which HE does through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit! b. Which HE does when we are baptized into Christ!

3. Through such mercy in Christ Jesus, we are truly "justified by His grace" - Titus 3:6-7.

Conclusion 1. Paul taught that baptism is... a. A burial into the death of Christ b. How we die to sin as we are crucified with Him c. A resurrection with Christ so we can rise to walk in newness of life d. A putting on Christ, thereby becoming a child of God e. A spiritual circumcision in which sins are cut away f. The working of God, whereby we are buried with Christ, made alive as our sins are forgiven, and then raised with Him g. An act of God's grace and mercy, in which we experience a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit -- If all these things when one is baptized, how can anyone say that it is not necessary?

2. Sadly, many who say it is NOT necessary... a. Misunderstand those who say it is necessary 1) Thinking that they believe in salvation by works 2) When they truly believe in salvation by grace through faith! b. Misunderstand Martin Luther 1) Whose coined phrased "saved by faith only" they themselves use so often 2) When he differs with them on the necessity of baptism c.

Misunderstand the apostle Paul 1) Having him say things about the purpose of baptism he does not say 2) Failing to appreciate what he clearly teaches about baptism -- All this, in their zeal to oppose what they mistakenly view as works-salvation! In his commentary on Galatians 3:27; Luther wrote:

"This is diligently to be noted, because of the fond and fantastical spirits, who go about to deface the majesty of baptism, and speak wickedly of it. Paul, contrariwise, commendeth it, and setteth it forth with honorable titles, calling it, 'the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost'. And here also he saith, that 'all ye that are baptized into Christ, have put on Christ.' Wherefore baptism is a thing of great force and efficacy." (Commentary On Galatians, Kregel Publications, p. 222) Do we deface the majesty of baptism, in our mistaken zeal to oppose what we perceive to be a form of works-salvation? Or do we, like Paul, commend it by noting his own teaching regarding baptism, and like Luther, appreciate how that by the working of God it can be a thing of great force and efficacy?

02.03. Baptism In The Teaching Of Peter

Study 3: Baptism In The Teaching Of Peter

Introduction 1. In our first lesson we saw where Peter included baptism as part of his apostolic preaching... a. He commanded the people at Pentecost to be baptized - Acts 2:36-38. b. He commanded the household of Cornelius to be baptized - Acts 10:47-48.

2. From the accounts in Acts, we saw that for Peter baptism was... a. For the remission of sins - Acts 2:38. b. An act that involved water - Acts 10:47.

3. But one might properly ask: was Peter teaching... a. That baptism was for the forgiveness of sins, and therefore necessary for salvation? b. That one is saved by baptism in water?

4. Fortunately, we do not have wonder, for in his first epistle Peter wrote...

"There is also an antitype which now saves us; baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ," (1Pe. 3:21)

[As stated in the KJV, "...baptism doth also NOW save us"! But while teaching that baptism saves us, Peter is careful to explain in what way. Let's take a closer look at the text to see what Peter is saying about baptism...] I. Baptism Is An Antitype A. Defining "Antitype". . .

1. The Greek word is antitupon {an-teet'-oo-pon}, which means "a thing formed after some pattern; that which corresponds to a type"

2. So you have two things that some how relate or correspond to each other; one is a type, the other is the antitype B. How Baptism Is An Antitype. . .

1. In the text, the waters of the flood are the "type", and the waters of baptism are the "antitype" - 1 Peter 3:20-21.

2. In his commentary, Albert Barnes says... a. "The meaning here is, that baptism corresponded to, or had a resemblance to, the water by which Noah was saved; or that there was a use of water in the one case which corresponded in some respects to the water that was used in the other; to wit, in effecting salvation." (Commentary on 1st Peter) b. "The apostle does not say that it corresponded in all respects; in respect, e. g., to quantity, or to the manner of the application, or to the efficacy; but there is a sense in which water performs an important part in our salvation, as it did in his." (ibid.) 3. Thus Peter was comparing Noah's salvation with our own... a. Remember that Noah was saved by:

1) Grace - Genesis 6:8.

2) Faith - Hebrews 11:7.

3) Water - 1 Peter 3:20.

-- Grace was God's part, faith was Noah's part; water was simply an element by which God carried out His plan to save Noah b. So we are saved by:

1) Grace - Ephesians 2:5.

2) Faith - Ephesians 2:8.

3) Water - 1 Peter 3:21.

-- Grace is God's part, faith is our part; baptism is simply an element by which God carries out His plan to save us through the blood of Christ

[Because baptism in water is somehow related to our salvation, Peter could speak of it as an antitype that saves us, just as Noah and his family were "saved through water"!

How can this be? Aren't we saved by the blood of Jesus? Of course! The answer can be seen as we continue to note what Peter taught concerning baptism...] II. Baptism Saves Through The Resurrection Of Christ A. Salvation In Baptism Is Not Found In The "Water". . .

1. As Peter makes clear when he says "not the removal of the filth of the flesh"

2. For indeed it is only through the blood of Jesus Christ one can be saved a. We are justified through His blood - Romans 5:9. b. We have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins - Ephesians 1:7.

3. To this Peter would definitely agree - 1 Peter 1:18-19.

B. Salvation In Baptism Is Possible Because Of The Resurrection Of Christ. . .

1. If He had not been raised, we would still be in our sins a. As Paul declares in 1 Corinthians 15:17. b. Without His resurrection, His death would have been meaningless 2. But because Jesus was raised from the dead... a. Those baptized into His death can rise to walk in newness of life - Romans 6:4. b. Those united together in the likeness of His death (i. e., baptism) can share in the power of His resurrection - Romans 6:5.

3. In other words, the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead is what saves us in baptism so we can be "made alive" - cf. Colossians 2:12-13.

[By God's saving grace and resurrecting power, then, baptism can indeed save us! Not because of any cleansing power in the water, but because of what GOD is doing at that moment through the blood of Jesus and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit (cf. Titus 3:4-5). But notice finally, how Peter teaches that baptism saves because...] III. Baptism Is An Appeal For A Good Conscience A. "The Answer Of A Good Conscience" (1 Peter 3:21 NKJV) 1. A difficult phrase, but it most likely means "an appeal to God for a clear conscience"

2. This is supported by the following translations: a. "the craving for a conscience right with God" (Goodspeed) b. "the prayer for a clean conscience before God" (Moffat) c. "the request unto God for a good conscience" (Rotherham) d. "an appeal to God for a clear conscience" (RSV) e. "an appeal to God for a good conscience" (NASB) -- Thus one is baptized because they desire a clear conscience (i. e., to have their sins forgiven) B. This Coincides With The Evident Purpose Of Baptism. . .

1. In apostolic preaching, baptized was commanded: a. "For the remission of sins" - Acts 2:38. b. To have one's sins "washed away" - cf. Acts 22:16.

2. In N. T. times people who realized they were sinners were anxious to be baptized as soon as possible - cf. Acts 8:35-38.

3. Therefore one is baptized... a. To have a good conscience before God; indeed, to have their conscience "purged" by the blood of Christ - cf. Hebrews 9:14. b. To have their sins washed away by blood of Jesus and so they can rise to a new life through the same power of God that raised Jesus from the dead!

Conclusion 1. Does baptism save us? a. Many say "Baptism does NOT save us!" b. But Peter clearly taught "...baptism doth also NOW save us" (KJV) 2. How does baptism save us? According to Peter... a. Through the resurrection of Jesus Christ! b. As an appeal for a good conscience!

3. This helps us to understand... a. Why he commanded it for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38. b. Why he commanded it even for those who had in some sense received the Spirit - Acts 10:47-48.

Yes, through the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead, working in conjunction with our faith in the blood of Jesus, baptism does indeed save those who are making an appeal for a clear conscience! Is baptism essential to salvation? Let the preaching and teaching of Christ's apostles provide the answer! I believe that when we do, we can see why one should take Jesus' own words with no equivocation:

"He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." - Mark 16:16.

It is my prayer that if you have not yet properly responded to the Word of the Lord, you will heed the same words given to Paul:

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." - Acts 22:16. Have you made an appeal to God for a good conscience by being baptized into Christ?

02.04. Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?

Study 4: Sprinkling, Pouring, Or Immersion?

Introduction 1. In the preaching and teaching of the apostles, we saw that baptism is essential to:
a. Salvation - Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16. b. Becoming disciples of Christ - Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 3:27.

2. But even when the necessity of baptism has been established, questions often remain: a. Is baptism to be immersion, pouring, or sprinkling? b. Should infants be baptized? c. Is there every any reason to be "re-baptized?"

[This lesson examines the first of these questions: "Is baptism to be sprinkling, pouring or immersion?" Let's begin by examining...] I. The Greek Words For Baptize And Baptism A. The Words Are Baptizo And Baptisma. . .

1. Note that the words "baptize" and "baptism" are not actually TRANSLATIONS of the Greek words 2. They are TRANSLITERATIONS (where Greek letters in a word are simply given their English equivalents) 3. To confirm the actual meaning, we must go to authorities on the Greek language B. The Following Greek Lexicons Define "Baptize" As "To Immerse, To Plunge, To Dip".

. .

1. Greek-English Lexicon Of The N. T. (THAYER) 2. Greek-English Lexicon 7th Edition (LIDDEL & SCOTT) 3. Greek Lexicon Of The Roman And Byzantine Periods (SOPHOCLES) 4. Biblio-Theological Lexicon Of N. T. Words (CREMER)

5. To quote VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF N. T. WORDS: "baptism, consisting of the processes of immersion, submersion and emergence"

C. Not One Standard Greek Lexicon Defines "Baptizo" As "Sprinkle" Or "Pour". . .

1. In fact, there are completely different words in Greek for "pouring" (CHENO) and "sprinkling" (RAINO) 2. It is important to keep in mind concerning "baptize" and "baptism": a. That they are simply "transliterations" b. That they were transliterated instead of translated in our Bibles to avoid offending those who practice pouring or sprinkling c. But when translated into English, they can only mean "to immerse" and "immersion"!

D. What About Modern Dictionaries?

1. It is true that they define baptism as sprinkling, pouring, or immersion 2. But their definitions reflect common usage of words by people TODAY

3. To know exactly what was meant by Jesus and His apostles, we must consult authorities who define how words were used IN BIBLICAL TIMES!

[That of course is where Greek lexicons like those referenced to above are helpful. They define words according to their meaning at the time used by the New Testament writers. Now let's consider...] II. Figures Of Speech Used To Describe Baptism A. By Paul In Romans. . .

1. In baptism, we are "buried with Him...into death" - Romans 6:3-4.
2. Baptism is a "likeness of his death" - Romans 6:5.

B. By Paul In Colossians. . .

1. In baptism, we are "buried with Him"
2. "in which, you were also raised with Him" - Colossians 2:12.

C. Which Action (Immersion, Pouring, Sprinkling) Is:

1. A "burial?"
2. A "likeness of His death?"
3. A "likeness of His resurrection?"

-- Only immersion (followed by an emersion) fits Paul's description of baptism

[Paul's use of such figures of speech would make no sense if baptism were either pouring or sprinkling. It is also interesting to note...] III. The Testimony Of Various Scholars A. Whose Denomination Practice Pouring or Sprinkling. . .

1. EPISCOPALIAN (Anglican, Church of England) a. "This passage (Romans 6:4) cannot be understood unless it be borne in mind that the primitive baptism was by immersion" - CONYBEARE & HOWSON (Life And Epistles Of St. Paul) b. "Baptism means immersion; and it was immersion...Unless it had been so, Paul's analogical argument about our being buried with Christ in baptism would have had no meaning. Nothing could have been simpler than baptism in its first form. When a convert declared his faith in Christ, he was taken at once to the nearest pool or stream of water and plunged into it, and henceforward he was recognized as one of the Christian community." - CUNNINGHAM (The Growth Of The Church) c. "Baptism is the grave of the old man and the birth of the new. As he sinks beneath the baptismal waters, the believer buries there all his corrupt affections and past sins; as he emerges thence he rises regenerate, quickened to new hopes and a new life. This baptism is an image of his participation both in the death and resurrection of Christ." - BISHOP LIGHTFOOT (Commentary)

2. METHODIST a. "Alluding to the 'immersion' practiced in the case of 'adults,' wherein the person appeared to be buried under the water, as Christ was buried in the heart of the earth; His rising again the third day, and their emerging from the water, was an emblem of the resurrection of the body. - ADAM CLARKE (Commentary on Colossians 2:12) b. "'We are buried with him.' Alluding to the ancient manner of baptizing by immersion." - JOHN WESLEY (Notes)

3. LUTHERAN a. "The sacrament of baptism was administered in this century (the first) without the public assemblies, in places appointed and prepared for that purpose, and was performed by an immersion of the whole body in the baptismal font." - MOSHEIM (Mosheim's Church History) b. "For the explanation of this figurative description of the baptismal rite, it is necessary to call

attention to the well-known circumstance that in the early days of the church, persons, when baptized, were first plunged below and then raised above the water." - THOLUCK (Commentary on Romans) 4. CATHOLIC - "For thirteen hundred years was baptism an immersion of the person under water." - BRENNER B. How Do They Reconcile With Their Denominations' Practice?

1. Since these scholars (and many others) admit and affirm that immersion is the only "form" of baptism taught in the Bible, are they to be charged with dishonesty and insincerity because they practiced "sprinkling" or "pouring"?

2. Not necessarily; rather, they fell into the fallacy of assuming: a. Apostolic commands and examples are not binding b. Human wisdom may alter specific Bible teaching in what they call "rites" or "customs"

3. But Jesus condemned the religious leaders of His day for making the same mistake! - Matthew 15:1-9; Mark 7:1-13. a. Laying aside the commandments of God, they were keeping traditions of men b. By keeping certain traditions, they were not keeping the commandments of God!

4. When one practices pouring or sprinkling... a. They are keeping traditions of men, not the commandments of God b. They render the commandment of God to be immersed (baptized) of no effect!

5. Though sincere, one is not necessarily right; we are right only when we do the Father's will! - Matthew 7:21-23. a. Love for Jesus will be manifested by keeping His commandments - John 14:15; John 15:10; John 15:14. b. Love for God is manifested the same way - 1 John 5:3.

Conclusion 1. What have we learned? a. That the Greek words mean "immersion" b. That "sprinkling" or "pouring" is inconsistent with the FIGURES OF SPEECH used in the Bible to describe baptism c. That there is no question "immersion" was the mode of baptism in the Bible and the early church 2. As a final confirmation, consider the account of Philip and the Ethiopian eunuch - Acts 8:35-39. a. "both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water" b. "he baptized (immersed) him" c. "they came up out of the water"

3. What of yourself? a. Was your baptism like that described in Acts 8:38-39? b. If you were sprinkled or had water poured upon you...

1) You were keeping a tradition of man 2) You have not yet kept the commandment of God!

4. If you have not been baptized (immersed) as commanded by Jesus and His apostles... a. You are still in your sins! - Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16. b. You have not yet put on Christ and become His disciple! - Galatians 3:27; Matthew 28:18-20.

'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' (Acts 22:16)

02.05. What About Infant Baptism?

Study 5: What About Infant Baptism?

Introduction 1. In the previous studies we have seen that baptism... a. Is essential to:

1) SALVATION - Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.

2) BECOMING DISCIPLES OF CHRIST - Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 3:27. b. Is immersion, for:

1) The Greek words can only mean immersion 2) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit with figures used to describe baptism in the N. T.

3) Scholars are unanimous in pointing out that immersion was the practice in the Bible and early church 2. Two more questions remain which are often in the minds of people: a. Should infants be baptized? b. Is there ever a need to be "re-baptized?"

[This study shall consider the question "What about infant baptism?" My first point is to suggest that...] I. "Infant Baptism" Is Not Baptism A. Baptism Requires Immersion. . .

1. We have seen that pouring or sprinkling is not baptism 2. Therefore "infant baptism" as commonly practiced is really a misnomer a. "Infant pouring" or "infant sprinkling" would be a more accurate description b. Only if the infant is immersed could it be called "infant baptism"

-- Of course, immersion is not the only thing which constitutes Bible baptism...

B. Baptism Requires Certain Prerequisites. . .

1. Bible baptism requires FAITH - Acts 8:35-38. a. Notice the eunuch's question, and Philip's response 1) "See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?"

2) "If you believe with all your heart, you may."

-- If one believes, they may be baptized - cf. Mark 16:16. b. Infants, however, are incapable of belief!

2. Bible baptism requires REPENTANCE - Acts 2:38. a. If one is a penitent believer, they may be baptized b. But infants are incapable of repentance!

[The first thing to realize about "infant baptism" is that it is not baptism in the strict sense of the word; nor is it the baptism spoken of in the N. T., which was only for those who possessed faith and a penitent heart.

Another point to consider is...] II. "Infant Baptism" Is Not Necessary A. The Rise Of Infant Baptism In Church History. . .

1. Even those who later approved of infant baptism admit that one could not prove it from the Scriptures... a. "It cannot be proved by the sacred Scriptures that infant baptism was instituted by

Christ, or begun by the first Christians after the apostles." (MARTIN LUTHER, On Rebaptism) b. "Infant baptism was established neither by Christ nor the apostles. In all places where we find the necessity of baptism notified, either in a dogmatic or historical point of view, it is evident that it was only meant for those who were capable of comprehending the word preached, and of being converted to Christ by an act of their own will." (JACOBI, Article on Baptism in Kitto's Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature, Vol. I, p. 287) 2. If this is true, when did the practice of "infant baptism" begin? a. The earliest mention of infant baptism is around 200 A. D. b. The practice began only after the doctrine of "original sin" had been developed

1) "The early theological development of the doctrine of original sin contributed to the importance of infant baptism." (Christianity Through The Centuries, p. 160) 2) The whole basis of "infant baptism", therefore, lies in the assumption that infants are born in sin B. Are Babies Born In Sin?

1. Of course, the doctrine of "original sin" means different things to different people a. Some understand it to refer only to inheriting the "fallen nature" of Adam, and not any personal guilt of his b. But the common conception includes the idea of inheriting the guilt of Adam's sin as well, meaning that babies are born in sin and guilty of sin c. It is this latter understanding that led to the practice of infant baptism 2. People are not held accountable for the guilt of their forbears! a. God has clearly said that He does not hold the child guilty for the sins of the father - Ezekiel 18:20. b. Paul described a time in his life when he was alive before he became a sinner - Romans 7:7-11.

1) According to the common idea of original sin, this would have been impossible!

2) But not if children are born free from the guilt of sin and remain so until they reach an age of accountability 3. Consider also the nature of the NEW COVENANT - Hebrews 8:6-13. a. One of the notable features about the new covenant is:

1) "None of them shall teach his neighbor, and none his brother, saying 'Know the Lord'..."

2) "For all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them."

-- In other words, no one enters into this new covenant without already knowing the Lord! b. Unlike the OLD COVENANT...

1) Where people entered the covenant by virtue of birth into the family (Israel) 2) Where males entered the covenant by virtue of circumcision when eight days old 3) Where as they grew older they had to be taught to know the Lord! c. When "infant baptism" is practiced, this distinctive feature of the new covenant is no longer present!

1) Children, who have supposedly entered a covenant relationship with the Lord, still need to be taught as they get older 2) They have to be taught to know the Lord! d. This distinctive feature of the new covenant is true only when:

1) Baptism (the means by which we enter a covenant relationship with the Lord today) is administered to penitent believers 2) Those who enter the covenant have already been taught about the Lord (via the gospel of Christ)

Conclusion 1. Should infants be baptized? The answer is "yes" if we can show... a. One example in the N. T. where infants were baptized b. That they meet the prerequisites of faith and

repentance required of all those baptized in the N. T. c. That they can know the Lord somehow before they enter into the relationship baptism places them, and so do not need to be taught to know the Lord 2. But the Biblical facts are... a. There is not one case of "infant baptism" in the N. T.! b. Only those who believe and have repented may be baptized! c. To baptize infants would make the point of Hebrews 8:11 without meaning!

3. The logical conclusion from the Biblical evidence is that babies... a. Are born into this world without the personal guilt of their ancestors b. Are not lost and in need of salvation c. Are "safe" (not "saved," for they were never "lost") d. Remain safe until they reach an accountable age where they become guilty of their sins, and in need of salvation 4. What if you were "baptized" as an infant? a. Most likely you were not actually baptized (immersed), simply "sprinkled" b. Even if immersed, it was not "Bible baptism", which requires faith and repentance -- Thus you are still in need of obeying the Word of the Lord!

Don't place your faith in the traditions of men, or in the doctrines of some church; place your faith in God's Word, and obey it accordingly!

02.06. What About "Re-Baptism?"

Study 6: What About Re-Baptism?

Introduction 1. In our study of baptism we have seen that it is... a. Essential 1) To salvation - Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.

2) To becoming disciples of Christ - Matthew 28:19-20; Galatians 3:27. b. Immersion, not pouring or sprinkling 1) The Greek words can only mean immersion 2) Pouring and sprinkling do not fit the FIGURES used to describe baptism in the NT.

3) Scholars are unanimous that immersion was the practice in the NT c. For penitent believers 1) For sinners with faith in the Lord Jesus who have repented of their sins 2) Not infants, who are incapable of faith and repentance 2. Another question that is often raised: "Is there ever a need to be re-baptized?" a. What about those who were sprinkled? b. What about those baptized as infants? c. What about those baptized believing they were already saved?

[This study examines the question of re-baptism, first by noticing...

I. A Case of "Re-Baptism" In The New Testament A. Recorded In Acts 19:1-5. . .

1. Background information is found in Acts 18:24-28. a. Apollos had been teaching the baptism of John b. But he himself was taught more accurately by Aquila and Priscilla 2. Paul finds some "disciples" at Ephesus - Acts 19:1-3.

3. Upon further examination he has them "re-baptized" - Acts 19:4-5.

B. Some Observations. . .

1. They had been previously "baptized"

2. But their baptism was lacking in some way a. Even though it was immersion b. Even though it was "for the remission of sins" - Mark 1:4.

3. But their baptism was not in the name of Jesus, i. e., by His authority - Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 19:5. a. Which would have been a baptism into the name of the Father, the Holy Spirit, and the Son - Matthew 28:19. b. Which would have been a baptism into the death of Christ, by which they would have been clothed with Christ - Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 3:27.

-- Because their first "baptism" lacked an essential element, "re-baptism" was necessary!

[May we not conclude that if an earlier "baptism" lacks some essential element, then "re-baptism" is necessary? To determine whether "re-baptism" is required of us, consider...] II. When "Re-Baptism Is Appropriate A. Four "Elements" Constitute Bible Baptism. . .

1. The proper mode: a burial (immersion) - Romans 6:3; Colossians 2:12.

2. The proper authority: in the name of Christ - Acts 19:5.

3. The proper purpose: for the remission of sins - Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16.

4. The proper subject: a penitent believer - Acts 2:38; Acts 8:37; Mark 16:16.

B. When One Element Was Lacking, "Re-Baptism" Was Commanded. . .

1. In Acts 19:1-5; the proper authority was lacking 2. Even though their previous baptism had the right mode, purpose, and subject, "re-baptism" was commanded!

C. Applying What We Have Learned. . .

1. If we were baptized by sprinkling or pouring: a. As practiced by Catholics, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists and others b. Our baptism lacked the proper mode (immersion) -- "Re-baptism" would be therefore be necessary 2. If we were baptized by the authority of anyone other than Jesus: a. Such as Ellen G. White (Seventh Day Adventists), The Watch Tower Society (Jehovah Witnesses), Joseph Smith (Mormons), and others b. Our baptism was not by the right authority (Jesus Christ) -- "Re-baptism" would be therefore be necessary 3. If we were baptized as a public confession of faith (thinking we were already saved): a. As practiced by most Baptists, Assemblies Of God and others b. Our baptism was not for the right purpose (remission of sins) -- "Re-baptism" would be required to ensure we have been scripturally baptized 4. Finally, if we were baptized but were not penitent believers: a. As is the case when people are baptized...

1) When all their friends are doing it 2) Because their spouse, fianc., or parents are pressuring them to do it (and they do it to please them, not God) 3) As infants incapable of faith or repentance b. Our baptism was lacking the right subjects (penitent believers) -- Our need for "re-baptism" would be just as great as any other!

Conclusion 1. In summarizing what has been said in this study: a. If our baptism lack any of the four essential elements of Bible baptism...

1) The proper mode - immersion 2) The proper authority - Jesus Christ 3) The proper purpose - for remission of sins 4) The proper subject - a penitent believer b. Then "re-baptism" is both appropriate and necessary to ensure that our sins have been washed away by the blood of Jesus!

2. But perhaps I should clarify: a. When one is baptized because their "first" baptism lacked an essential element...

1) It is not really "re-baptism"!

2) Technically speaking, the person is being baptized scripturally for the first time! b. When one has been scripturally baptized once...

1) There is never a need to be baptized again!

2) For once we have clothed ourselves with Christ in baptism: a) The blood of Christ continually cleanses us of our sins b) As we repent and confess our sins to God in prayer - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9. Have you been scripturally baptized? If you desire assistance, please feel free to let me know! May God bless you in your efforts to do His Will!

02.07. For Your Further Study

For Your Further Study For a much more indepth study on the subject of "baptism," I recommend the following books (you can purchase the book online by clicking on the title):

1) Baptism In The New Testament (G. R. Beasley-Murray, Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, Michigan 1962, 442 pages) This is an excellent treatment of the subject from a scholarly point of view, by one of the foremost scholars among the Baptist denomination. He readily admits that his conclusions run counter to the views held by those in his own denomination.

2) Baptism And The Remission Of Sins (Edited by David W. Fletcher, College Press Publishing Co., Joplin, Missouri 1990, 432 pages) This is a collection of articles surveying throughout church history the view that baptism is for the remission of sins. It also discusses controversies surrounding "re-baptism."

02.08. Arguments Against Baptism Answered. . .

Arguments Against Baptism Answered. . .

About This Section When someone suggests that baptism into Christ is essential to our salvation, several objections or arguments are frequently raised by those who sincerely differ.

Study 8: What About The Thief On The Cross?

Introduction 1. In this series we have already examined baptism... a. In the preaching of the apostles b. In the teaching of Paul c. In the teaching of Peter 2. The conclusion drawn from such sources was that baptism is... a. For the remissions of sins - cf. Acts 2:38. b. Therefore necessary for salvation - cf. Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:21.

-- Which certainly seems consistent with Jesus' own words in Mark 16:15-16.

3. But invariably someone will say: "What about the thief on the cross?" - Luke 23:39-43. a. This is the most popular objection to the necessity of baptism b. Despite all that is revealed about the purpose of baptism in the Bible!

4. The objection can be summarized like this: a. The thief on the cross was not baptized b. The thief was saved c. Therefore, baptism is not essential to salvation!

5. Is such reasoning valid? a. Might there be something the objector is failing to take into consideration? b. A significant fact that renders the salvation of the thief irrelevant to the issue?

[As we take a closer look at the objection, "What About The Thief On The Cross?", let's me first emphasize that...] I. The Thief Was Saved A. Jesus Certainly Had The Power To Save Him. . .

1. While on earth, Jesus had the authority to forgive sins 2. He exercised this authority on several occasions a. For the paralytic - Luke 5:18-26. b. For the sinful woman - Luke 7:36-50.

B. Jesus Clearly Offered Him Salvation. . .

1. The thief asked: "Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom." - Luke 23:42.

2. Jesus replied: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise." - Luke 23:43.

-- None can doubt that Jesus promised him salvation!

[Yet the question remains: Is the salvation of the thief relevant to the issue? Consider that...] II. The Thief Was Saved Before Baptism Was Commanded A. The Baptism Under Discussion. . .

1. Was commanded AFTER Jesus died and arose - Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16.

2. Was a baptism into Jesus' death - Romans 6:3-4.

-- How could the thief been baptized into Jesus' death, when Jesus had not yet died?

B. The Thief Was Never Subject To This Baptism. . .

1. It was commanded AFTER he died!

2. Just like Adam, Noah, Moses, etc. a. None of these were baptized b. But they all lived before the death of Jesus c. And like the thief, were never commanded to be baptized!

3. Yes, there was the baptism of John - Mark 1:4-5. a. But that was preparing people for the coming of Christ b. And it was designed to be replaced by baptism into Christ and His death - cf. Acts 19:4-5.

-- One might use the thief on the cross to say John's baptism was not necessary, but the argument can't be made regarding the baptism which Christ later commanded!

[The thief on the cross died BEFORE Jesus gave His commandment in Matthew 28:1-20 and Mark 16:1-20. Since we live AFTER Jesus commanded baptism, how can we use the example of the thief to say it is not necessary? In a similar vein...] III. The Thief Was Saved Before The New Covenant Began A. There Are Two Different Covenants. . .

1. There was a covenant between God and Israel - Deuteronomy 5:2-3. a. It governed all Israelites, such as Moses, David, Isaiah, Daniel, the thief on the cross, etc. b. It never commanded people to be baptized! c. It came to an end when Jesus died on the cross - cf. Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14.

2. There is the new covenant that is now in force - cf. Hebrews 8:6-7. a. Of which Jesus spoke when He instituted the Lord's Supper - Matthew 26:28. b. Which came into force when Jesus died - Hebrews 9:15-17.

B. We Now Live Under The New Covenant. . .

1. We must submit to Christ's authority as expressed after His death a. An authority delegated to His apostles - cf. Matthew 28:18-20; John 13:20. b. Who clearly commanded baptism! - cf. Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 22:16.

2. How can we appeal to the example of one who lived under the old covenant? a. Can we appeal to the example of David? (of course not) b. Can we appeal to the example of Isaiah? (of course not) -- Nor should we appeal to the example of the thief, who lived and died before the new covenant became of force!

3. We must heed what Jesus and His apostles taught AFTER the new covenant began!

Conclusion 1. Yes, the thief was saved on the cross without baptism a. For which we should be thankful b. For which we should give God praise for His wonderful grace 2. But the thief's example is irrelevant to the issue of baptism... a. He died before Christ ever issued the command to be baptized into His death! b. He lived under the old covenant, which did not require baptism into Christ!

3. The thief on the cross would be relevant IF... a. You lived BEFORE the command to be baptized into Christ was given b. You lived under the OLD covenant c. You were in the presence of Christ and he told YOU "Assuredly, I SAY TO YOU, today YOU will be with Me in Paradise."

4. But here are the FACTS... a. You live AFTER the command to be baptized has been given b. You live under the NEW covenant, in which baptism has a crucial role c. Christ has commanded YOU (and ALL) through His apostles to be baptized - Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 10:48; Acts 22:16.

Rather than depending upon an example of salvation that is nothing similar to our situation today, base your faith and assurance of salvation on the many examples of salvation that were recorded in the book of Acts for our benefit.

Heed the preaching and teaching of Christ and His apostles directed toward YOU!

02.08a. What About Cornelius And His Household?

Study 8a: What About Cornelius And His Household?

Introduction 1. At this point we are considering objections to the idea that baptism is... a. For the remission of sins b. Therefore necessary for salvation 2. In the previous study we examined the salvation of the thief on the cross, noting that... a. He was saved before the command to be baptized into Christ's death was given b. He was saved before the new covenant became of force -- Which makes his example of salvation irrelevant to the issue of baptism 3. Another objection concerns Cornelius and his household, which be summarized like this: a. The Spirit came upon Cornelius and his family before they were baptized b. The Spirit falling upon them was evidence that they were saved c. Therefore they were saved before baptism, making it not essential to salvation 4. Is this a proper conclusion to reach? a. Does the evidence in Acts support such a conclusion? b. Did Peter and the others conclude that the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles was for the purpose of saving them, and therefore they were saved before baptism?

5. There are important questions that must be answered as we consider the events of this conversion: a. Exactly when did the Spirit fall upon Cornelius and his household? b. What was the purpose of the Spirit falling upon them?

[As we consider the objection, "What About Cornelius And His Household?", let's first take a close look at...] I. The Actual Sequence Of Events In This Conversion A. The Angel Appears To Cornelius. . .

1. Cornelius, a centurion, is a very religious man - Acts 10:1-2.

2. The angel appears to him - Acts 10:3-6. a. With an announcement that his prayers and alms have been noticed by God b. With instructions to send for Peter; please note:

1) The angel said, "He will tell you what you must do." - Acts 10:6.

2) As Peter later recounted, "...who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved." - Acts 11:14.

-- NOTE WELL: Cornelius would not be saved until he heard words telling him what to do!

3. Cornelius then sends two servants and a devout soldier to Peter - Acts 10:7-8.

B. Peter Has A Vision. . .

1. While the three men are traveling toward Peter, he has a vision - Acts 10:9-16; Acts 11:4-10. a. It involves a sheet descending from heaven, containing all sorts of creatures b. A voice tells Peter to "kill and eat" c. Peter objects, for he has never eaten anything common or unclean d. The voice tells him, "What God has cleansed you must not call common."

2. Three times the vision is repeated C. The Spirit Tells Peter To Go With The Messengers. . .

1. The men from Cornelius arrive as Peter contemplates the vision - Acts 10:17-18; Acts 11:11.
2. The Spirit tells Peter to go, "doubting nothing, for I have sent them" - Acts 10:19-20; Acts 11:12.
3. Peter receives the men and takes six with him as they go to Cornelius - Acts 10:21-23; Acts 11:12.

D. Peter Arrives At Cornelius' House. . .

1. Cornelius has gathered his family and close friends - Acts 10:24.
2. Peter deflects an attempt by Cornelius to worship him - Acts 10:25-26.
3. Peter explains his presence is a violation of Jewish custom, but now understands "I should not call any man common or unclean" - Acts 10:27-28.
4. Asked by Peter to explain why he was called, Cornelius recounts the appearance and instructions of the angel - Acts 10:29-32; Acts 11:13-14.
5. Cornelius and his household were ready "to hear all things commanded you by God" - Acts 10:33.

E. As Peter Begins To Speak, The Spirit Falls Upon The Listeners. . .

1. At this point, carefully note the actual sequence of events
2. Luke's record gives attention to the sermon first, and then the Spirit coming upon the Gentiles - cf. Acts 10:34-44. a. But Luke also says that "WHILE Peter was still speaking... the Holy Spirit fell" b. From this we do not know exactly when the Spirit fell c. It could have been at the beginning, in the middle, toward the end, of his sermon 3. Peter, however, explained what happened "in order from the beginning" - Acts 11:4. a. He describes the events as they happened b. He says "AS I BEGAN TO SPEAK, the Holy Spirit fell upon them" - Acts 11:15.

-- NOTE WELL: We learn from Peter that the Spirit actually came upon the Gentiles at the BEGINNING of the sermon!

4. With the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles, they began speaking with tongues, which amazed Peter and his Jewish companions - Acts 10:45-46; cf. Acts 2:4, Acts 2:6, Acts 2:8, Acts 2:11.

F. Peter's Sermon To The Household Of Cornelius. . .

1. He begins with a full perception that God shows no partiality - Acts 10:34-35. a. A perception started with the vision of the sheet and unclean beasts b. A perception continued with the Spirit's instruction to go with the messengers c. A perception made clear with the Spirit falling upon the Gentiles - Acts 11:15-17.

2. Peter then proceeds to proclaim Jesus Christ - Acts 10:36-43. a. As Lord who was anointed with the Holy Spirit and power - Acts 10:36-38. b. Who was killed, but then raised from the dead and seen by eyewitnesses who knew Him well - Acts 10:39-41. c. Who has commanded the apostles to proclaim Him as ordained by God to be the Judge of the living and dead - Acts 10:42. d. Through Whom remission of sins is offered to those who believe - Acts 10:43.

G. Peter Commands Them To Be Baptized. . .

1. How could anyone forbid water to those who had received the Spirit just as the apostles did? - Acts 10:47; cf. Acts 11:17-18.
2. So Cornelius and his household were commanded to be baptized in the name of the Lord - Acts 10:48.

[The events surrounding this conversion are certainly remarkable. They evidently were intended to convey important truths. But our purpose in this study is to answer these questions:

- * At what point were Cornelius and his household saved?
- * If not to save them, what was the purpose of the Spirit falling upon Cornelius and his household?

Let's now answer the first question...] II. The Point At Which Cornelius Was Saved A. Remember What Cornelius Was Told. . .

1. Peter would tell him "what you must do." - Acts 10:6.
2. Peter would tell him "words by which you...shall be saved." - Acts 11:14.

B. Yet The Spirit Fell Upon Him Before He Heard. . .

1. As Peter said, the Spirit fell upon them "as I began to speak"
2. It wasn't until the end of his sermon and afterward that Peter told them the "words by which you...shall be saved."

C. Cornelius Was Saved After He Heard. . .

1. The "words" by which he would be saved (i. e., the sermon) 2. What he was told to do a. Such as to believe - cf. Acts 10:43. b. Such as to be baptized, as commanded in Acts 10:48.

-- Until he heard the words, and obeyed what he was told, he was not saved!

[Since Cornelius and his family were not saved until they heard the "words" by which they would be saved, and told what they "must do", the Spirit falling upon them did not save them, for it came upon them BEFORE they heard the "words" and were told what to do! But why did the Spirit come upon them, if not to save them? Consider what actually was...] III. The Purpose Of The Spirit Falling Upon Cornelius A. The Purpose Can Be Gleaned From The Following. . .

1. The effect it had on the Jewish brethren who were present, and Peter's response - Acts 10:45-47.
2. The reaction of the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem when Peter told them what happened - Acts 11:17-18.
3. Peter's explanation at the council held later in Jerusalem - Acts 15:7-11.

B. The Purpose Was To Show Jewish Brethren. . .

1. That God was no respecter of persons - Acts 10:34-35.

2. That God was willing to grant them opportunity to repent and have life - Acts 11:18.

3. That Gentiles could be saved in the same way as Jews... a. By faith, repentance, and baptism - Acts 15:9, Acts 15:11; cf. Acts 2:38 with Acts 10:48. b. Which faith comes through hearing the word of God - Romans 10:17.

Conclusion

1. While miraculous events surrounded the conversion of Cornelius and his family, their salvation was no different from what we see in other cases of conversion... a. They heard the gospel of Jesus Christ b. They were taught to believe and be baptized

-- Thus they were saved "in the same manner" as all those previously - cf. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12.

2. The purpose of the Spirit falling upon them... a. Was not to show one could be saved without baptism b. But to show that Gentiles were no longer to be considered "common" or "unclean", and could be granted the same opportunities to hear the gospel and be saved by it!

3. One might also ask... a. When the Spirit came upon Balaam to prophesy concerning Israel, did it save him? - Numbers 24:2. b. When the Spirit came upon Saul to prophesy, did it save him? - 1 Samuel 19:20-24. c. When Caiaphas prophesied, was he saved? - John 11:49-52.

-- The purpose of the Spirit coming upon a person may vary, and one should not assume that one filled with the Spirit at any given time is thereby being saved by the Spirit!

Those of us not descended from Israel can rejoice in what God revealed with the conversion of Cornelius and his household. As properly concluded by the Jewish brethren in Jerusalem:

"...God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life." (Acts 11:16) And when carefully noted, they were saved "in the same manner" (cf. Acts 15:9-11) as all others, having their hearts purified through faith when they heard and obeyed the word of God!

02.08b. Wasn't Paul Sent To Preach, Not Baptize?

Study 8b: Wasn't Paul Sent To Preach, Not Baptize?

Introduction

1. Another objection commonly raised concerning the necessity of baptism is based upon Paul's statement to the church at Corinth... a. This argument is taken from 1 Corinthians 1:14-17. b. Special note is made of Paul's statement: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..." - 1 Corinthians 1:17. c. From which some conclude baptism must not be essential to salvation 2. However, when one takes into account... a. The context of 1 Corinthians 1:10-13. b. The context of Paul's preaching in Corinth as recorded in Acts 18:1-8.

...it becomes apparent that Paul preached baptism, and his comments should not be taken as suggesting it was not essential

[In this study, let's take a closer look at the context in which Paul's statement is found. First, we notice that...] I. Paul Was Addressing A Problem At Corinth A. With Their Attitude Toward Preachers. . .

1. They were divided - 1 Corinthians 1:10-11.

2. Their division was a result of "preacher-itis" - 1 Corinthians 1:12. a. They were claiming, "I am of Paul", "I am of Apollos", etc. b. As Paul expounded later, they were thinking too highly of the different preachers 1) Their attitude was a mark of carnality - 1 Corinthians 3:3-4.

2) Preachers were simply fellow servants - 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

3) Thus they were not to boast in men - 1 Corinthians 3:21-23.

B. It Appears Related To Who Baptized Them. . .

1. As indicated by Paul's rhetorical questions - 1 Corinthians 1:13.

2. E. g., "Were you baptized in the name of Paul?"

3. The implication is that those who were baptized were claiming to be disciples of those who personally baptized them C. Which Is Why Paul Was Glad He Personally Baptized Few. . .

1. Thankful that he baptized only Crispus, Gaius, and the household of Stephanas 2. Lest any should say that he was baptizing in his own name - 1 Corinthians 1:14-15.

[So Paul was addressing a problem at Corinth. Are we to construe from this that Paul didn't preach baptism, or didn't think it necessary? To the contrary...] II. Paul's Preachings Had Resulted In Many Baptisms A. Luke Records Paul's Work At Corinth. . .

1. How he worked with Aquila and Priscilla - Acts 18:1-3.

2. How he reasoned in the synagogues, testified that Jesus is the Christ, and persisted despite rejection by unbelieving Jews - Acts 18:4-7.

B. Luke Records The Success Of Paul's Preaching. . .

1. Crispus, ruler of the synagogue, and his household believed on the Lord (and whom Paul personally baptized) - Acts 18:8; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:14.

2. But also "many" of the Corinthians believed and were baptized - Acts 18:8.

[Though Paul personally baptized few, his preaching resulted in many baptisms! Baptism must have played a significant role in his preaching. That is one reason why we must not twist Paul's words to the church at Corinth as implying that it was not necessary. As we return to 1 Corinthians 1:13; we should also note that...] III. Paul's Words Demonstrate The Necessity Of Baptism A. Note Carefully Paul's Reasoning. . .

1. For one to call himself after Paul (or any other man) required two things: a. Paul would have to be crucified for the person - 1 Corinthians 1:13. b. One would have to be baptized in the name of Paul - 1 Corinthians 1:13.

2. Neither had happened, of course, which is why they should not be calling themselves after men [But consider what Paul's argument means positively...] B. To Be Called After Christ, Two Things Are Required. . .

1. Christ would have to die for the person (which He did) 2. The person would have to be baptized in the name of Christ! a. Have you been baptized in the name of Christ? b. If not, then you cannot rightfully be called a Christian!

[In the very context of a passage which many use to claim that baptism is not essential, Paul implies one cannot be called a Christian unless they have been baptized in the name of Christ!

How then are we to understand Paul's statement: "For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel..."? The answer is easy...] IV. Paul Emphasizing His Role As An Apostle A. Paul Was Sent To Preach, Not Baptize. . .

1. As an apostle (which means "one sent"), Paul's role was to proclaim the gospel a. As explained to the Ephesians, he was given the task to preach "the unsearchable riches of Christ" - Ephesians 3:8. b. Which he did by inspiration - cf. Galatians 1:11-12.

2. Though his preaching resulted in baptism (cf. Acts 18:8), it was not imperative that he do the baptizing a. Others could easily do that task (such as his traveling companions) b. Which evidently happened at Corinth, for while many were baptized, he personally baptized only a few B. Paul Used a Semetic Style Of Preaching. . .

1. Notice the words of Jesus in John 6:27. a. "Do not labor for the food which perishes" b. "but for the food which endures to everlasting life"

-- Jesus was not saying one should not work, but rather was emphasizing the importance of seeking after spiritual food over physical food 2. Paul used similar style of speaking in 1 Corinthians 1:17. a. "For Christ did not send me to baptize" b. "but to preach the gospel"

-- Paul was not saying he was not to baptize, but that his role as an apostle to preach the gospel was more important!

C. How Others Have Understood Paul. . .

1. "That is, not to baptize as my main business. Baptism was not his principle employment, though he had a commission in common with others to administer the ordinance, and occasionally did it." - Barnes (Notes, on 1 Corinthians 1:17)
2. "According to Semitic idiom, 'not so much to baptize, as...'. The word 'sent' involves the meaning 'made me an apostle'. The primary function of an apostle was 'to bear witness'." - Farrar (Commentary on 1 Corinthians 1:17)
3. "Baptism was not his principal work, not the main business for which Paul was sent, it was part of his work, otherwise he would not have baptized Crispus, or Gaius, or 'the household of Stephanas,' but preaching was his principle work." - Poole (Annotations 1 Corinthians 1:17)
4. "...bearing mind Paul's other utterances about baptism, v. 17 is to be interpreted in the light of the Semitic manner of laying stress on an issue: Christ sent Paul to preach the gospel rather than to baptize. But this is no depreciation of the value of baptism." - Beasley-Murray (Baptism In The New Testament, p. 181)

Conclusion 1. When one considers all the evidence we have about the situation at Corinth, we learn... a. That many were baptized as a result of Paul's preaching - Acts 18:8. b. Paul was glad that he did not personally baptize many of them, because of the problem that later arose in Corinth - 1 Corinthians 1:14-15.

2. In the passage so many use to say that baptism is not important... a. Paul was simply emphasizing his role as an apostle - 1 Corinthians 1:17. b. Paul used reasoning which implies the necessity of baptism (to be called after Christ, one must be baptized into the name of Christ) - 1 Corinthians 1:13. Can you rightfully be called a Christian? Yes, Christ was crucified for you; but have you been baptized in the name of Christ?

02.08c. Baptism Is A Work, We Are Not Saved By Works!

Study 8c: Baptism Is A Work, We Are Not Saved By Works!

Introduction 1. A popular objection to the necessity of baptism involves salvation and works... a. People often say, "Baptism is a work, and we are not saved by works!" b. Support for this objection is made by appealing to passages like Ephesians 2:8-9.

2. Certainly baptism is a thing done, and as such is a "work"... a. But is it a work of merit, by which one earns salvation? b. Or is it a work of faith, by which one receives salvation?

3. In considering the work involved in baptism, who is truly the one "at work"? a. Is it the man or woman who submits to being immersed? b. Or is it God who forgives and regenerates through the blood of Jesus and working of the Holy Spirit?

[When one carefully considers what the Bible teaches, there is no contradiction between the idea that we are saved by faith and not works, and at the same time saved by baptism. In this study I hope to make that clear. Let me begin by pointing out that...] I. Baptism Is A Work Of Faith, Not Merit A. There Different Kind "Works". . .

1. There are works of "merit" a. These are works done to "earn" something b. Those who have done such works believe they "deserve" something; e. g., those who believe they will be saved:

1) Because they kept the Ten Commandments 2) Because they went to church, did good deeds, etc. c. It is these kinds of works Paul has under consideration in Romans 3:27-28; Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-5.

1) There is no way we can "earn" or merit" salvation!

2) All the good we might do cannot outweigh even one sin! - cf. James 2:10.

2. There are also works of "faith" a. These are things done to "receive" something b. Those who have done such works believe they "deserve" nothing!

1) They understand their obedience did not earn or merit their salvation 2) They understand their salvation rests upon God's mercy and grace, not because God owes it to them! c. Such works can rightly be called "works of God"

1) Of which faith itself is called by Jesus - John 6:28-29.

2) Other works of faith commanded by God include repentance and confession - cf. Acts 17:30; Romans 10:9-10. d. Though such works as faith, repentance and confession are commanded...

1) They are not meritorious works; we do not earn salvation through them 2) They are works God has ordained we do to receive His salvation -- When all is said and done, salvation is still by God's grace and mercy!

[What is said of faith, repentance, and confession may also be said of baptism...] B. Baptism Is A Work Of Faith, Not Merit. . .

1. Baptism requires faith a. The necessity of faith was emphasized by Jesus - Mark 16:16. b. Philip made it a prerequisite to baptism - Acts 8:36-37.

2. Baptism is an act of faith by which one receives (not earn)... a. The forgiveness of sins and gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38. b. Union with Christ in His death, raised with Him to new life - Romans 6:3-4; Galatians 3:27.

3. That baptism is not a work of merit is emphasized in Titus 3:4-5. a. While God saves us "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (an allusion to baptism)... b. He does not save us by "works of righteousness", i. e., by works of merit -- Thus baptism is clearly is not some work of righteousness done to earn or merit salvation!

[Nowhere does the Bible suggest that baptism is a work of merit, by which God owes us salvation upon the basis of our baptism. Like faith, repentance, and confession, baptism is simply an act of faith by which we receive salvation. And why is this so? Because...] II. Baptism Involves The Working Of God A. God Is At Work In Baptism. . .

1. We are buried and raised with Christ "through faith IN THE WORKING OF GOD" - Colossians 2:12.

2. It is God who does the work, not man! - Colossians 2:13. a. Man is dead in his sins b. But God makes him alive, forgiving him of sins

-- Thus it is God who saves us, not we ourselves, which He does through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:5.

B. Think Of Baptism As A "Spiritual Operation". . .

1. An operation in which the "Great Physician" does His work 2. When one needs physical surgery, it requires faith in the skills of a physician to submit to the operating table a. When the surgery is over, have I "earned" or "merited" my healing? No! b. It required both faith in the doctor and a willingness to submit to him!

3. So my faith in God and in the death of His Son for my sins prompted me to submit to the "spiritual operation" of baptism, in which God did His wonderful work of cleansing by the blood of Jesus and regeneration by the Holy Spirit!

Conclusion 1. When we understand that baptism... a. Is a work of faith, not a work of merit b. Is a working of God at which time we receive salvation, not earn salvation

-- We will not reject the necessity of baptism under the mistaken idea that it is some work by which we try to earn salvation 2. Sadly, many people reject baptism because they see it as something you DO... a. In reality, baptism is the most PASSIVE act of faith required to receive Christ and the blessings He provides b. I. e., "believe", "repent", "confess Christ", are all things we DO c. On the other hand, baptism is something DONE TO US 3. Consider this... a. "Faith," "repentance," and "confession" are all ACTIVE acts of faith on our part b. "Baptism" is but a PASSIVE act of faith in which we submit to the working of God in our lives (cf. Colossians 2:12)

-- To object to baptism because it requires man to "do" something would require one to object to "faith," "repentance," and "confession," for they also require man to "do" something!

4. Even Martin Luther, who coined the phrase "salvation by faith only", understood that salvation by grace through faith did not preclude the necessity of baptism: a. In answer to the question, "What gifts or benefits does Baptism bestow?", Luther replied in his Small Catechism, "It effects forgiveness of sins." b. He also wrote concerning the sinner: "Through Baptism he is bathed in the blood of Christ and is cleansed from sins." c. Again, he wrote: "To put it most simply, the power, effect, benefit, fruit, and purpose of Baptism is to save." d. Responding to those who call this a kind of works-salvation, he said "Yes, it is true that our works are of no use for salvation. Baptism, however, is not our work but God's." -- (as quoted by Jack W. Cottrell in *Baptism And The Remission of Sins*, College Press 1990, p. 32-34) So to those who say, "Baptism is a work, and we are not saved by works", I would reply:

"Baptism is a work of God, and we are saved by faith in the working of God!" Have you submitted to the working of God in baptism? If you believe that Jesus died for your sins on the cross, have repented of your sins and are willing to confess your faith in Him as the Son of God, you can receive the working of God in your life today!

"And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)

02.08d. Spirit Baptism Saves Us, Not Water Baptism!

Study 8d: Spirit Baptism Saves Us, Not Water Baptism!

Introduction

1. Another objection to the necessity of baptism involves making a distinction between baptism in the Spirit and baptism in water; this view proclaims... a. "The baptism which saves is a baptism in the Spirit at the point of faith" b. "Passages like Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 3:27; etc., refer to Spirit baptism, not water baptism"

2. Those upholding this view point out... a. There are many different types of baptisms in the Bible b. We should not assume that water baptism is always the subject under consideration 3. As expressed by one proponent of this view... a. "There is a way to distinguish between water baptism and Spirit Baptism in those scriptures which do not specifically tell which type is being discussed." b. "That way is this: if the passage is talking about being placed into Christ, then it is talking about Spirit Baptism, not Water Baptism, for Spirit Baptism is how we are placed into Christ." c. "...in Romans 6:1-23, for example, it is obvious that the context is being placed into Christ and the passage dwells on the believer's identification with Christ, with His death, and with His resurrection. In this passage, the believer is not baptized into WATER, but into the death of Christ." - Baptism and Salvation, Charles T. Buntin -- Of course, this argument presumes the very point to be proven

[There are several problems that I have with this effort to explain away the necessity of baptism in water for the remission of sins. To begin with, the Bible teaches...] I. There Is One Baptism A. The Bible Does Describe Many Baptisms. . .

1. At the very least there are six... a. The baptism of Moses (Israel) - 1 Corinthians 10:1-2. b. The baptism of John, a baptism in water - Mark 1:4-5. c. The baptism of the Holy Spirit - Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-45; Acts 11:15-16. f. The baptism of fire (judgment) - Matthew 3:11; Luke 3:16-17. d. The baptism of suffering (persecution) - Matthew 20:20-33; Luke 12:50. e. The baptism of the Great Commission, which was a baptism in water - Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 8:12-13, Acts 8:35-38; Acts 10:47-48; Acts 22:16.

2. Some include two more... a. The baptism of Noah, metaphorically speaking, which involved water - 1 Peter 3:20. b. The baptism of Jesus, which involved water and the Spirit - Matthew 3:16-17.

B. There Is Now Just One Baptism. . .

1. In describing the unity of the Spirit... a. Paul proclaims there is one baptism - Ephesians 4:3-7. b. Just as there is only one Lord, one faith, one hope, etc.

2. To which of the six (or eight) baptisms was Paul referring? a. I believe we can safely rule out all but two b. The issue boils down to this: Is the one baptism of Ephesians 4:5...

1) The baptism of the Holy Spirit?

2) The baptism of the Great Commission?

-- Or might there actually be a connection between these two, with the end result there being one baptism with two elements: water and the Spirit?

[Whichever, we cannot have two or more baptisms; there is only one baptism! Now let me explain why regarding the one baptism...] II. It Is The Baptism Of The Great Commission A. Why The Baptism Of The Great Commission. . .

1. This is a difficult subject, about which the Bible actually says very little... a. John promised that Jesus would baptize with the Holy Spirit - Matthew 3:11. b. Jesus promised that He would baptize with the Holy Spirit - Acts 1:5. c. But the baptism of the Holy Spirit is then explicitly mentioned in just three places 1) At the conversion of Cornelius - Acts 10:44-45; Acts 11:15-16.

2) Which reminded Peter of Pentecost - Acts 11:15-16; Acts 2:1-4.

2. This has led to much confusion about what the baptism of the Spirit is... a. Some say that it was an event that occurred only twice 1) On the day of Pentecost, and only upon the apostles - Acts 2:1-47.

2) At the conversion of Cornelius and his household, the first Gentiles - Acts 10:1-48; Acts 11:1-30. b. Some say it is an event that occurs at every conversion 1) When a person is saved, they are that moment "baptized" with the Holy Spirit 2) Occurs to all who become Christians, and no miraculous manifestations need be present c. Others say it is an event that occurs after conversion 1) A "second work of grace" that must be sought diligently 2) Many people understand "speaking in tongues" to be a sign of this "baptism of the Holy Spirit"

3) Some even say that it is necessary to be truly saved 3. I am persuaded the baptism of the Holy Spirit... a. Refers to the pouring out of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost - Acts 2:1-21. b. Was a one-time event, but with ramifications lasting throughout the gospel age

1) In which the Holy Spirit is now available in some way to all whom God calls through the gospel - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; Titus 3:7.

2) For those who receive the Spirit, the Spirit then empowers whom He wills to the degree He wills - 1 Corinthians 12:4-13. a) For the servants of God used in the revelation and confirmation of His Word, the Spirit imparted "spiritual gifts" (this work of the Spirit was temporary, and ended once God's revelation was completed) b) For all of the servants of God, the Spirit serves as the "instrumental agent" by which God strengthens and blesses them (this work of the Spirit continues today, and will until Christ returns)

-- This view presumes that one receives the Spirit at baptism (see below) - Acts 2:38-39; 1 Corinthians 12:13; Titus 3:5-7.

4. So while at first there may have been two baptisms spoken of by Jesus... a. The baptism of the Great Commission - Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15-16. b. The baptism of the Spirit - Acts 1:5.

...once the Spirit was poured out, only "one baptism" remained, which was that baptism commanded of people in every nation!

[Having declared the "baptism of the Holy Spirit" a promise that was fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, let me emphasize concerning the "baptism of the Great Commission"...] III. It Involves Both Water And Spirit A. That It Involves Water. . .

1. Is evidenced by conversion of the Ethiopian - Acts 8:35-38.
2. Is made clearer by the command of Peter - Acts 10:47-48.
3. Is alluded to by Paul and Peter in their epistles - Ephesians 5:26; 1 Peter 3:20-21.

B. That I Involves The Spirit. . .

1. Is indicated when Jesus declared that one must be "born again" - John 3:3-5. a. To be born "of water and the Spirit" b. Not two births, but one birth with two elements (water and Spirit) 2. Is made clearer when Paul wrote to Titus - Titus 3:5-6. a. God saved us "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" b. That washing (a clear allusion to baptism) involved a regeneration and renewing of the Spirit!

3. Is seen in Paul's remarks to the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 12:13. a. By the Spirit were we baptized into the one body b. In baptism, the Spirit not only regenerates, but incorporates us into the body of Christ!

[The baptism of the Great Commission is more than just an immersion in water. At the moment the penitent believer is lowered into the water, the Spirit is very much at work in renewing, regenerating, and incorporating us into the Body of Christ. In other words...] IV. It Has Spiritual Significance A. It Involves A Burial Into The Death Of Christ. . .

1. As Paul explains in Romans 6:3-7. a. Baptism into Christ is a burial into His death b. In baptism we are crucified with Christ c. In baptism we thus die to sin, and rise to walk in newness of life 2. Some contend Paul is teaching what water baptism symbolizes... a. That it pictures what took place when we were saved before baptism b. That it depicts the Spirit baptism which occurred at the moment of faith -- But if so, then we have two baptisms, and Paul taught there was only one!

3. Others say Paul is describing Spirit baptism... a. That water baptism (i. e., the baptism of the Great Commission) is not even under consideration b. That this passage is depicting what happens before water baptism -- Again, we would have two baptisms, not one!

4. This passage describes what happens when a person is baptized into Christ... a. Since there is only one baptism, it must be referring to that baptism b. Since the one baptism is the baptism of the Great Commission, Paul is describing the spiritual significance of what takes place when one is baptized in water!

B. There Are Other Things Of Spiritual Significance. . .

1. The one baptism (of the Great Commission) involves... a. A cutting away of sin - Colossians 2:11-13. b. A putting on of Christ - Galatians 3:27.

2. Again, some contend these passages are describing... a. "Spirit baptism" at the point of faith b. Not the baptism of the Great Commission -- But this makes two baptisms, when there is only one!

3. Since the baptism of the Great Commission involves both water and the Spirit... a. There is no reason God (i. e., the Spirit) could not be at work when a person is immersed in water b. God has chosen to use baptism in water to be the point in time in which His Spirit does His work of regeneration and renewal! - Titus 3:5; Acts 22:16.

Conclusion 1. Some people want to "have their cake and eat it too"... a. They want to say passages like Romans 6:3-7; Galatians 3:27; Colossians 2:11-13 are describing "Spirit baptism", not "water baptism" b. But then appeal to these passages when they seek to describe "water baptism" as symbolic of "Spirit baptism" which has already occurred 2. Note well: If these passages are not discussing "water baptism (i. e., the baptism of the Great Commission)... a. We have no Scripture that tells us what is the true significance and meaning of the baptism commanded by Christ and His apostles! b. The Lord has commanded water baptism, with no explanation as to what it means!

-- Any explanation as to the meaning and purpose of the baptism of the Great Commission is pure conjecture and without any scriptural basis!

3. The "unity of the Spirit" proclaims there is only one baptism... a. Not two baptisms, one of the Spirit at the time of salvation, and one later for some unexplained reason b. But one baptism, involving both water and the Spirit, in response to the preaching of Christ and His apostles 4. This one baptism... a. Is a rebirth involving both water and the Spirit - John 3:5. b. Is for the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit - Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16. c. Is a baptism in water - Acts 8:35-38; Acts 10:47-48. d. Involves the Spirit incorporating us into the body of Christ - 1 Corinthians 12:13. e. Is a burial into the death of Christ in which we are crucified with Him - Romans 6:3-7. g. Clothes us with Christ - Galatians 3:27. h. Is a spiritual circumcision, in which our sins are cut away - Colossians 2:11-13. i. Is a washing of regeneration and renewing by the Holy Spirit, who was poured out as promised by Jesus - Titus 3:5-7; Acts 1:5; Acts 2:1-4. j. Saves us, not through some physical cleansing, but by the resurrection of Jesus! - 1 Peter 3:21. Should we be surprised that the Great Commission of our Lord contains a great command having great significance?

"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, 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. (Matthew 28:19-20) And He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned." (Mark 16:15-16)

'And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord.' (Acts 22:16)

02.08e. "Baptism" Conclusion To This Section

Study 8e: "Baptism" Conclusion To This Section When all men's arguments fall, the Bible's teaching on this subject is still the same. Acts 2:38 still teaches baptism is for the remission of sins:

Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.

Acts 22:16 still teaches baptism washes away sins: And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord.

Mark 16:16 still teaches:

He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

1 Corinthians 12:13 still teaches that baptism puts us into the body of Christ: For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether [we be] Jews or Gentiles, whether [we be] bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.

Galatians 3:27 still teaches baptism puts us into Christ: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

Romans 6:3-4 still teaches baptism puts us into the death of Christ:

Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life.

Colossians 2:12-13 still teaches that through baptism we obtain the newness of life:

Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with [him] through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead. And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses;

1 Peter 3:21 still teaches that baptism saves us: The like figure whereunto [even] baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ: The first time the gospel was preached, "They then that received his word were baptized," (Acts 2:41). People today who receive the gospel do the same thing. Friend, if you believe in Jesus Christ, and have repented, i. e., determined that you will live according to His teaching, won't you confess His name before men and be baptized for the reasons HE said while you have opportunity?

03.00. Give Me The Bible

Give Me The Bible by Mark Copeland Sermon outlines on reading and studying the Bible

CONTENTS The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy Why I Read The Bible Why I Believe The Bible Why I Love The Bible Why I Obey The Bible Why I Study The Old Testament How I Read The Bible How I Study The Bible

03.01. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE" The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy

INTRODUCTION 1. A growing problem is one of biblical illiteracy... a. Not just by those in the world b. Also in the church

-- "Americans revere the Bible - but, by and large, they don't read it. And because they don't read it, they have become a nation of biblical illiterates." - George Gallup and Jim Castelli 2. How bad is it? Consider these results from various surveys... a. Fewer than half of all adults can name the four gospels b. Many professing Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the disciples c. 60 percent of Americans can't name even five of the Ten Commandments d. 82 percent of Americans believe "God helps those who help themselves" is a Bible verse e. 12 percent of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife f. A survey of graduating high school seniors revealed that over 50. percent thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife g. A considerable number of respondents to one poll indicated that the Sermon on the Mount was preached by Billy Graham -- "Increasingly, America is biblically illiterate." - George Barna

[Biblical illiteracy is like a poison, wreaking havoc in the lives of individuals, in our churches, and in our communities. To understand how, consider...] I. THE POISON OF BIBLICAL ILLITERACY A. ITS EFFECT ON INDIVIDUALS...

1. God's people have always been destroyed by lack of knowledge - Hosea 4:1, Hosea 4:6.

2. Where there is lack of God's Word, the people faint - cf. Amos 8:11-13. a. In ignorance they make the wrong choices b. When they stumble, they do not know where to turn 3. Without a knowledge of God's Word, a person has... a. No real direction or guidance in life - Psalms 119:105. b. No true joy or peace in life - Psalms 119:111, Psalms 119:165.

-- How many lives are being destroyed, how many people are stumbling through life, because they do not have the light of God's Word guiding them?

B. ITS EFFECT ON CHURCHES...

1. Churches languish for lack of teachers; teachers are few for lack of knowledge - Hebrews 5:12.

2. Churches are led astray by false teachers and false doctrine, for how can the ignorant know what is false? - cf. 2 Peter 2:1-3.

-- How many churches are "dying on the vine", or into wholesale apostasy because their members cannot discern between truth and error?

C. ITS EFFECT ON COMMUNITIES...

1. Our standards of morality are skewed, where good is evil and evil is good - cf. Isaiah 5:20. a. We slaughter the innocent (abortion), sparing the guilty (no capital punishment) b. We reward the

wicked (movie stars, entertainers), depriving the good (teachers, etc.) c. Divorce is made easy, adultery looked upon lightly, fornication "an affair, a relationship", homosexuality an alternative lifestyle 2. The effect of such things destroy our families and communities a. Evil (pornography, promiscuity) is allowed to spread in the name of "freedom", ripping families apart b. Children are deprived the kind of parenting that is their God-given right c. Leading to juvenile delinquency and greater evils

-- Consider how the moral fabric of our nation and others in the world is becoming unraveled when "everyone does what is right in his own eyes" - cf. Judges 21:25.

[The poison of Biblical illiteracy has infected and sickened our people, our churches, and our communities. Is there an antidote to this poison?

Indeed there is...] II. THE ANTIDOTE TO BIBLICAL ILLITERACY A. DAILY DEVOTIONAL BIBLE READING IN PRIVATE...

1. The truly blessed person feeds upon the Word of God daily - Psalms 1:1-3; Psalms 119:97-98.
2. A systematic practice of prayerful Bible reading as part of a daily devotional... a. Will bring a person closer to God b. Will gradually increase one's understanding of the Word of God c. Will offer strength, comfort and hope that only the Scriptures provide -- Are you willing to do your part, everyday, in stamping out Biblical illiteracy?

B. FREQUENT IN-DEPTH BIBLE STUDY WITH OTHERS...

1. The faithful Christian realizes the value of mutual edification - Hebrews 3:12-14; Hebrews 10:24-25.
2. Churches often provide the opportunity for Christians to study together a. In their Bible classes on the Lord's day, during the week, and in their homes b. Where they can benefit from the knowledge of other Bible students -- Are you willing to participate in such activities to stamp out Biblical illiteracy?

C. PARENTS ACCEPTING THEIR GOD-GIVEN RESPONSIBILITY...

1. God gave the responsibility of spiritual training to the parents - cf. Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Ephesians 6:4.
2. Church may provide assistance with their children's classes, and yet... a. Parents should not abdicate their responsibility to the church b. Parents should be very much involved in the teaching programs of any church -- Are you willing to accept your parental duties to stamp out Biblical illiteracy?

D. PREACHERS FULFILLING THEIR DUTY TO THE WORD...

1. Preachers are to give heed to the Word, and to preach the Word - 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5.
2. We should expect preachers to be "men of the Book" a. Preaching and teaching the Word of God, providing exposition of the Scriptures b. Not entertaining us with "pop theology" and "pop psychology"

-- Are you willing to require that preachers proclaim the Word to stamp out Biblical Illiteracy?

CONCLUSION

1. I was encouraged to prepare this study reading an article by Albert Mohler (The Scandal of Biblical Illiteracy: It's Our Problem) 2. I thought his concluding paragraphs to be especially on the mark... a. "Churches must recover the centrality and urgency of biblical teaching and preaching, and refuse to sideline the teaching ministry of the preacher. Pastors and churches too busy--or too distracted--to make biblical knowledge a central aim of ministry will produce believers who simply do not know enough to be faithful disciples." b. "We will not believe more than we know, and we will not live higher than our beliefs. The many fronts of Christian compromise in this generation can be directly traced to biblical illiteracy in the pews and the absence of biblical preaching and teaching in our homes and churches." c. "This generation must get deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy, or a frighteningly large number of Americans --Christians included--will go on thinking that Sodom and Gomorrah lived happily ever after." Are we willing to get "deadly serious about the problem of biblical illiteracy"? I hope the rest of the lessons in this series ("Give Me The Bible") will encourage us to do so...

03.02. Why I Read The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

Why I Read The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. Perhaps you have heard people say things like... a. "Oh, you don't read the Bible, do you?" b. "Why, the Bible is just another book; you ought to read..."

2. Perhaps you have heard... a. A teacher degrade the Bible before his or her students, ridiculing those who read it b. Those who are proud to have a Bible on their bookshelf, but only as one book among other "greats" of literature 3. But the Bible is more than simply one of the "greats"; it is unique... a. Meaning "one and only" b. Meaning "different from all others; having no like or equal"

[Our purpose in this lesson is to review ways in which the Bible is unique, truly "different from all others; having no like or equal". For example, the Bible is...] I. UNIQUE IN ITS CONTINUITY A. HERE IS A BOOK THAT WAS WRITTEN...

1. Over a long period of time a. About 1600 years b. A span of 40 generations 2. By approximately 40 authors from every walk of life a. Moses, political leader trained in the universities of Egypt b. Peter, fisherman c. Amos, herdsman d. Joshua, military general e. Nehemiah, cup bearer to the king of Persia f. Daniel, prime minister in the courts of Babylon g. Luke, physician h. Solomon, philosopher king i. Matthew, tax collector j. Paul, rabbi and tentmaker 3. In different places a. Moses in the wilderness b. Jeremiah in a dungeon c. Daniel on a hillside, and in a palace d. Paul inside prison walls e. Luke while traveling f. John in exile on the isle of Patmos g. Others in the rigors of a military campaign 4. At different times a. David in times of war b. Solomon in times of peace 5. During different moods a. Some writing from the heights of joy b. Others from the depths of sorrow and despair 6. On three continents: Asia, Africa, Europe 7. In three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek 8. With subject matter involving hundreds of controversial topics, such as: a. The origin of man and the universe b. The nature of God c. The nature of man, sin, and man's redemption B. YET THERE IS HARMONY AND CONTINUITY...

1. For example: a. "The Paradise Lost of the book of Genesis becomes the Paradise Regained of Revelation." - Geisler and Nix b. "Whereas the gate to the Tree of Life is closed in Genesis, it is opened forevermore in Revelation." - ibid.

2. Compare the continuity of the Bible with any other writings of men a. Imagine what you would have if you took just ten authors...

1) From one walk of life, one generation, one place, one time, one mood, one continent, one language 2) Speaking on just one controversial subject b. You would have a conglomeration of conflicting ideas, not harmony!

[The Bible is truly unique, one of a kind, in its continuity. It is also...] II. UNIQUE IN ITS DISTRIBUTION A. THE TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE...

1. One of the first major books translated a. E. g., the Septuagint version of the OT b. Translated into Greek in 250 B. C.

2. Between 1950-1960, 3000 Bible translators were at work

3. "By the end of 1993, the whole Bible had been translated into 337 languages; 2, 062 languages have translations of at least one book of the Bible." - Guinness Book of World Records (1998) B. THE CIRCULATION OF THE BIBLE...

1. As of 1804 - 409 million copies 2. As of 1932 - one and a third billion copies

3. "The world's best-selling and most widely distributed book is the Bible, with an estimated 2. 5 billion copies sold 1815 - 1975." - Guinness Book of World Records

4. "No other book has known the anything approaching this constant circulation" - The Cambridge History of the Bible

5. As said of the words of God, "Their voice has gone out to all the earth, and their words to the ends of the world." - Romans 10:18.

[You would think that if a person were sincerely seeking truth, he or she would give serious consideration to a book that has drawn so much attention! The Bible is also...] III. UNIQUE IN ITS SURVIVAL A. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH TIME...

1. Though written on material that perishes... a. ...having to be copied and recopied for hundreds of years by hand b. ...its style, correctness, or existence did not diminish 2. Compared with other ancient writings, the manuscript evidence of the Bible: a. Is greater than any 10 pieces of classical literature combined! b. Is sufficient to ensure that we are reading the words of the original B. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH PERSECUTION...

1. Many have tried to burn it, ban it, and otherwise outlaw it a. From the days of Roman emperors b. To the present Communist-dominated countries

2. For example: a. In 303 A. D., the Roman emperor Diocletian issued an edict to stop Christians from worshipping, and to destroy their scriptures b. Only 25 years later the Roman emperor Constantine called for 50 copies of the Bible to be prepared at the expense of the government!

3. How true is the statement: "All flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of the grass. The grass withers, and its flower falls away, but the word of the LORD endures forever." - 1 Peter 1:24-25.

C. ITS SURVIVAL THROUGH CRITICISM...

1. "Infidels for 1800 years have been refuting and overthrowing this book, and yet it stands today as solid as a rock. Its circulation increases, and it is more loved and cherished and read today than ever before. Infidels, with all their assault make about as much impression on this book as a man with a tack hammer on the pyramids of Egypt." - H. L. Hastings

2. "No other book has been so chopped, knifed, sifted, scrutinized, and vilified. What book on philosophy or religion or psychology...has been subject to such a mass attack as the Bible? With such venom and skepticism? With such thoroughness and erudition? Upon every chapter, line and

tenet? And yet, the Bible is still loved by millions, read by millions, and studied by millions." - Bernard Ramm [Next, consider how the Bible is...] IV. UNIQUE IN ITS TEACHING A. A BOOK OF PROPHECY...

1. "It is the only volume ever produced in which is to be found a large body of prophecies relating to individual nations (more than ten in Isaiah alone), Israel, all the peoples of the earth, certain cities, the coming Messiah and His kingdom." - Wilbur Smith 2. There is no other book of religious antiquity which provides so many explicit prophecies: a. So distant in the future b. Which came to pass B. A BOOK OF HISTORY...

1. The Old Testament "embodies the oldest history writing extant" - Cambridge Ancient History 2. The Hebrews are the only race of people that can give such a clear and accurate picture of their origins

3. "...in all of my archaeological investigation I have never found one artifact of antiquity that contradicts any statement of the Word of God." - Nelson Glueck C. A BOOK OF PERSONALITIES...

1. The Bible deals frankly with the sins of its characters, even its heroes: a. Adam and Eve - putting off responsibility on to others b. Noah - drunkenness c. Abraham - cowardice, lying to save his skin d. Moses - disobedience to God e. David - lying, adultery, murder f. Peter - denying the Lord, causing division through hypocrisy g. Churches - divided, arrogant, materialistic 2. The Bible has the habit of telling it like it was, and is unique in its portrayal of its key personalities [Finally, we briefly note that Bible is...] V. UNIQUE IN ITS INFLUENCE A. UPON THE LITERATURE OF THE WORLD...

1. "If every Bible in any considerable city were destroyed, the book could be restored in all its essential parts from the quotations on the shelves of the city public library" - The Greatest English Classic

2. "The Bible's influence is impossible to ignore. There are more than a thousand biblical references in the works of Shakespeare alone. John Milton, Herman Melville, Ernest Hemingway all drew on the Bible, too. Then there's Rembrandt, Chagall and Da Vinci, who all put the Bible on canvas. Even the Declaration of Independence alludes to the Bible. But it's not just history -- the Bible is in pop culture as well. The movie 'The Matrix' is so full of Biblical references people have written entire books about it." - Sean Alfano, The Bible As Literature

3. "I consider an intimate knowledge of the Bible an indispensable quality of a well educated man." - Dr. Robert Milikan, former President of the California Inst. Of Tech. And Nobel Peace Prize winner B. UPON THE WORLD ITSELF...

1. Our judicial system is based upon many of the principles found in the Bible 2. Our standards of morality owe much to the Judeo-Christian ethic

3. "The fundamental basis of this nation's law was given to Moses on the Mount. The fundamental basis of our Bill of Rights comes from the teaching we get from Exodus and St. Matthew, from Isaiah and St. Paul. I don't think we emphasize that enough these days. If we don't have the proper fundamental moral background, we will finally end up with a totalitarian government which does not believe in the right for anybody except the state." - Harry S. Truman

4. "I think for any educated person, it's absolutely essential to know something about the Bible. Whether a person is a believer or not, the Bible stands at the foundation of our form of civilization."
- Bart Ehrman C. UPON MANY GREAT PEOPLE...

1. "The Bible is worth more than all other books which have ever been printed." - Patrick Henry
2. "It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible." - George Washington
3. "It has been my custom for many years to read the Bible in its entirety once a year." - John Quincy Adams

4. "I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from the Savior of the world is communicated to us through this book." - Abraham Lincoln

5. "The Bible is a book in comparison with which all others are of minor importance, and which in all my perplexities and distresses has never failed to give me light and strength." - Robert E. Lee
6. "The New Testament is the very best book that ever was or will be known in the world." - Charles Dickens

7. "No man, educated or uneducated, can afford to be ignorant of the Bible...A thorough understanding of the Bible is better than a college education." - Theodore Roosevelt (cf. Psalms 119:97-100)

8. "Within the covers of this one single book, the Bible, are all the answers to all the problems we face today. If only we would read it and believe." - Ronald Reagan

CONCLUSION 1. This lesson has not been an effort to prove the Bible to be the Word of God... a. Though its continuity and fulfilled prophecy are certainly evidences of it b. But to show it to be truly a unique book ("different from all others; having no like or equal") c. That it's uniqueness is reason alone for everyone to read the Bible
2. Of course, I personally believe that what has made it so unique is... a. Its origin - it comes from the mind of the One True God b. Its process of revelation - it came by the work of the Holy Spirit, who guided the many writers and made their works harmonious c. Its central message - that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, the Son of God who is the only Lord and Savior of mankind

3. Because of its uniqueness, I believe it may be rightly stated: "If you are an intelligent person, you will read the one book that has drawn more attention than any other, IF you are searching for the truth." - Quoted by Josh McDowell
In my own search for truth, I have read through the Bible many times and continue to read it daily. Are you searching for the truth? Do you read the Bible? In our next study, I will offer reasons "Why I Believe The Bible"...

Note: Much of the material for this lesson was taken from "Evidence That Demands A Verdict", Vol. 1, by Josh McDowell.

03.03. Why I Believe The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

Why I Believe The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. In our previous study, we offered reasons to read the Bible... a. Its unique nature: Continuity - Distribution - Survival - Teaching - Influence b. Sufficient reasons for anyone searching for truth to read the Bible 2. But what reasons are there to believe the Bible...? a. Our study will offer several reasons to take it seriously b. The examples will be few, but illustrative c. Links are provided to assist in further study [I can think of at least five reasons to believe the Bible, i. e., evidences of inspiration, starting with its...] I. SCIENTIFIC FOREKNOWLEDGE

A. EXPLAINED...

1. In the Bible there are statements related to astronomy, cosmology, medicine, meteorology, oceanography, etc.
2. Mentioned thousands of years prior to scientific discovery of these truths 3. Discovered in modern times with the aid of scientific instruments 4. The writers of the Bible could have known these facts only through divine inspiration 5. Such evidence of inspiration confirms the Bible's claim to be from God the Creator

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Stars too great in number to count - Genesis 15:5; Jeremiah 33:22.
2. The roundness of the earth - Isaiah 40:22.
3. The suspension of the earth in space - Job 26:7.
4. The currents in the seas - Psalms 8:8.
5. The springs in the seas - Job 38:16.
6. All nations of one blood - Acts 17:26.

-- More examples can be found by searching here [Perhaps even stronger evidence for the divine inspiration of the Bible are the many...] II. FULFILLED PROPHECIES

A. EXPLAINED...

1. Prophecies in the OT foretold events in detail beyond the scope of human speculation 2. How did the writers do it? They attributed it to God!
3. God declared such evidence was proof of His existence and superiority over men and all heathen gods - Isaiah 41:21-24; Isaiah 42:8-9; Isaiah 46:8-11.

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Prophecies concerning nations a. The fall of Babylon, written two hundred years before it occurred - Isaiah 13:17-22. b. The fall of Egypt, that it would be destroyed more by civil war - Isaiah 19:1-4. c. The fall of Nineveh, with its utter desolation - Zephaniah 2:13-15. d. The fall of Tyre, with its becoming a place for the spreading of nests - Ezekiel 26:1-5. e. The destruction of Jerusalem, fulfilled in 70 A. D. - Matthew 24:1-51, Mark 13:1-37, Luke 21:1-38.

2. Prophecies concerning Christ a. Alluded to by Jesus - cf. Luke 24:44-45. b. It has been stated there are 332 prophecies fulfilled in Christ - Henry Liddon -- More examples can be found by searching here [The Bible's trustworthiness is often confirmed in ways that can be checked, especially in the area of...] III. ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONFIRMATION

A. EXPLAINED...

1. The Bible purports to be a book of history, describing real people, nations, events 2. Discoveries by archaeologists confirm the historical accuracy of the Bible

B. EXAMPLES...

1. Cities in Abraham's time (Ur, Haran) 2. Ancient empires once doubted (Hittites) 3. Cities in ancient Israel (Jericho, Shechem, Dan, etc.) 4. The house of David and Solomon's temple 5. The census at the time of Jesus' birth 6. Lysanias, tetrarch of Abilene 7. The Pavement (Gabbatha) in the court of the tower of Antonia 8. The politarchs in Thessalonica -- More examples can be found by searching here

[The Bible's trustworthiness is often questioned because we do not have the original manuscripts. But we have good reasons to believe that we have reliable copies, thanks to the science of...] IV. MANUSCRIPT ATTESTATION

A. EXPLAINED...

1. A bibliographical test is applied to all ancient documents, such as: a. Julius Caesar's Gallic War c. Annals of Tacitus b. Histories of Tacitus d. The New Testament 2. The purpose - to establish the likelihood that copies are: a. Faithful representatives of the original manuscripts b. Free from changes, errors, or collusion by copyists 3. Questions raised in the bibliographical test include: a. How many copies of the document in question are available? b. Where were the copies found? c. What time has passed between the original and earliest copies? d. What variances exist between the copies?

B. EXAMPLES...

1. How many copies of the NT manuscripts are available? a. Over 4, 000 Greek manuscripts; 13, 000 copies of portions b. Compare with other ancient writings: Caesar's Gallic Wars (10), Annals of Tacitus (2), Livy (20), Plato (7), Sophocles (100) 2. Where the copies of NT manuscripts found? a. In various places: Egypt, Palestine, Syria, Turkey, Greece, Italy b. Such diverse locations make collusion very difficult 3. What time has passed between the original and earliest copies of the NT? a. Several papyri fragments of the NT have been dated to within 50-100 years b. Complete NT Greek manuscripts were copied within 300-400 years c. Compare the time span with other classical histories:

1) Histories of Thucydides - 1300 years 2) Histories of Herodotus - 1350 years 3) Caesar's Gallic War - 950 years 4) Roman History of Livy - 350 years (and it is a fragment) 5) Histories of Tacitus - 750 years 6) Annals of Tacitus - 950 years (and there are just two manuscripts)

4. What variances exist between the copies of the NT? a. Only 1/2 of one percent is in question (compared to 5 percent for the Iliad) b. Even so: "No fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith rests on a disputed reading...It cannot be too strongly asserted that in substance the text of the Bible is certain: especially is this the case with the New Testament." - Sir Frederick Kenyon, authority in the field of New Testament textual criticism 5. The NT has the strongest manuscript attestation of any ancient document! a. "The evidence for our New Testament writings is ever so much greater than the evidence for many writings of classical authors, the authenticity of which no one dreams of questioning. And if the New Testament were a collection of secular writings, their authenticity would generally be as beyond all doubt." - F. F. Bruce b. "After trying to shatter the historicity and validity of the Scripture, I came to the conclusion that they are historically trustworthy. If one discards the Bible as being unreliable, then he must discard almost all literature of antiquity." - Josh McDowell c. "One problem I constantly face is the desire on the part of many to apply one standard or test to secular literature and other to the Bible. One needs to apply the same test, whether the literature under investigation is secular or religious." - *ibid.* d. "Having done this, I believe one can hold the Scriptures in his hand and say, 'The Bible is trustworthy, and historically reliable.'" - *ibid.*

-- More on this can be found by searching here [Finally, there is a more subjective reason to believe the Bible, based on...] V. PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

A. EXPLAINED...

1. Those who read, believe, and obey the Bible will receive evidence of its inspiration
 2. As Jesus stated: "If anyone wills to do His will, he shall know concerning the doctrine, whether it is from God or whether I speak on My own authority." - John 7:17.
 3. In other words, "He shall have evidence, in the very attempt to do the will of God, of the truth of the doctrine." - Albert Barnes
 4. "He who in his heart says, 'Thy will be done, give me light and I will walk in it,' will find that Christ is just the teacher demanded by his soul, and that the gospel meets his soul's want. Jesus will so meet the wants of his soul that he will be satisfied and will know the doctrine, that it comes from him who made the soul." - B. W. Johnson
3. As stated in a familiar proverb: "The proof of the pudding is in the eating"

B. EXAMPLES...

1. The Bible has transformed the lives of millions of people a. It has motivated them to become missionaries, even martyrs b. It has spurred them to care for the sick, the poor, the hungry, even enemies c. It has made them better spouses, parents, friends, neighbors, workers
2. For one willing to obey the Bible from the heart, there is: a. Peace to calm the troubled heart - John 14:27; John 16:33; Php 4:7. b. Joy to lift our spirits - John 15:11 1 Peter 1:8. c. Love which casts out fear - 1 John 4:18 Ephesians 3:19. d. Hope for facing the future - John 11:25 Revelation 14:13.

3. As a believer more than 50 years, I have found the Bible to be: a. A source of guidance, wisdom, and peace with God and man b. Worthy of my lifelong trust and obedience

CONCLUSION 1. The reasons I believe the Bible are both objective and subjective... a. The objective evidence includes its scientific foreknowledge, fulfilled prophecies, archaeological confirmation, and manuscript attestation b. The subjective evidence is seen in its impact on our lives and the world in which we live 2. I hope this brief survey of reasons to believe the Bible will encourage you... a. To read the Bible b. To believe the Bible

Again, follow the links above to search for more information on evidences related to this subject. In our next study, I wish to share reasons as to "Why I Love The Bible"...

03.04. Why I Love The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

Why I Love The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series ("Give Me The Bible"), thus far we have explored... a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy b. Why I Read The Bible c. Why I Believe The Bible 2. But I don't just read and believe the Bible, I love the Bible...! a. It is my favorite book b. It is my constant companion when I travel c. I read it daily, with the goal of reading through it at least once each year [Like the Psalmist, I love the Word of God (cf. Psalms 119:97-104) Why? First of all, because...] I. THE BIBLE GAVE ME NEW LIFE A. THE THEME OF THE BIBLE...

1. Is God's plan for the redemption of man from sin 2. Beginning with promises made in Genesis - Genesis 3:15; Genesis 12:1-3; Genesis 22:18.

3. Fulfilled with the coming of Jesus Christ - Acts 3:25-26; Galatians 3:16.

B. THE GIFT OF THE BIBLE...

1. It tells us how we can be reconciled to God - Romans 5:8-11.

2. It reveals the gospel whereby we can be saved - Romans 1:16; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.

3. A gospel with both commands and promises - Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38-39; Acts 3:19; Acts 22:16.

4. Through the Word of God, I was given a new life in Christ - 1 Peter 2:22-23; 2 Corinthians 5:17.
a. Freedom from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ- Ephesians 1:7. b. Freedom from the power of sin by the Holy Spirit - Romans 8:11-14. c. The opportunity to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ - 2 Peter 3:18.

5. As Jesus promised, I was given the opportunity for an abundant life! - John 10:10.

[I became a Christian early in life (at 13 years of age). For more than 45 years, I have sought to live as the Bible directs. I therefore love the Bible because of the benefits I receive as...] II. THE BIBLE GUIDES ME THROUGH LIFE A. DURING MY YOUTH...

1. I was inspired by young role models in the Bible a. Joseph, who resisted temptation - Genesis 39:9. b. Daniel, who purposed in his heart to do what was right - Daniel 1:8. c. Shadrach, Meshach, Abed-nego, with faith in the face of fire - Daniel 3:16-18. d. Timothy, who served as an example despite his youth - 1 Timothy 4:12.

2. I was given wise counsel from: a. Proverbs - encapsulating the wisdom of Solomon - Proverbs 1:1-4. b. Ecclesiastes - the meaning of life and how to live it - Ecclesiastes 11:9-10; Ecclesiastes 12:1. c. Jesus - regarding the proper priorities in life - Matthew 6:33; Matthew 16:26. d. The apostles - showing me how to live for Christ - 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Peter 1:5-11.

3. With the Bible as my guide... a. I avoided many of the pitfalls that plague youth (immorality, materialism) b. I made good choices involving life (friends, marriage, family, work) 4. And whenever I stumbled, the Bible... a. Offered me grace and forgiveness in Jesus Christ - 1 John 1:9. 1 John 2:1-2`. b. Gave me encouragement to get back up, to press on - Php 3:12-14.

B. INTO MY OLD AGE...

1. I am inspired by aged role models in the Bible a. Moses, who at 80 accepted a new calling - Exodus 7:7; cf. Psalms 90:10. b. Joshua, who starting at 80 led Israel for 30 years - Joshua 24:29. c. Caleb, who said "Give me this mountain!" at age 85 - Joshua 14:6-12. d. Daniel, who continued to serve God and man into his 90s - Daniel 6:1-3, Daniel 6:10. e. Anna, who though 84 continued to serve God with prayers and fasting - Luke 2:36-38. f. Paul the aged apostle, who continued to write letters and travel - Philemon 1:9, Philemon 1:21-22.

2. I continue to receive wise counsel from: a. Proverbs - always increasing in understanding - Proverbs 1:5-6. b. Ecclesiastes - always reminding me what is important - Ecclesiastes 2:24-26; Ecclesiastes 9:9. c. Jesus - always keeping my priorities straight - Luke 10:40-42; Luke 12:22-40. d. The apostles - guiding my life as a disciple of Christ - Php 4:4-9.

3. With the Bible as my guide... a. I can face the future with confidence - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18. b. I can look forward to what the Lord will provide - 2 Timothy 4:6-8.

4. And as this life comes to an end, the Bible... a. Offers me the hope of the resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:50-58. b. Promises a heavenly city, a new heavens and earth - Hebrews 13:14; 2 Peter 3:13-14; Revelation 21:1-7.

CONCLUSION 1. Yes, I love the Bible, because it... a. Introduced me to God and His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ b. Taught me the way of salvation through an obedient faith In Jesus c. Guides me to experience abundant life now, and receive eternal life hereafter - Psalms 119:105.

2. And so I concur with sentiments expressed by two great men...

"I believe that the one chief reason that I have been kept in happy useful service is that I have been a lover of Holy Scripture. It has been my habit to read the Bible through four times a year; in a prayerful spirit, to apply it to my heart, and practice what I find there. I have been for sixty-nine years a happy man; happy, happy, happy." - George Muller, who established orphanages in England "I am profitably engaged in reading the Bible. Take all of this Book that you can by reason and the balance by faith, and you will live and die a better man. It is the best Book which God has given to man." - Abraham Lincoln 16th president of the United States Many people love the Bible. Don't you? I hope I have encouraged you to truly love the Word of God...

03.05. Why I Obey The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

Why I Obey The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series ("Give Me The Bible"), thus far we have explored... a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy b. Why I Read The Bible c. Why I Believe The Bible d. Why I Love The Bible 2. But it does us no good to... a. Read the Bible b. Believe the Bible c. Love the Bible -- If we are unwilling to obey the Bible!

[To drive this point home, let's first take a close look at...] I. THE NECESSITY OF OBEDIENCE A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. Necessary to enter the kingdom of heaven - Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 6:46. a. It is not enough to believe in Jesus as Lord b. Not even to do many things in His name c. We must do the will of His Father in heaven d. We must do what Jesus says!

2. Necessary to qualify as good soil - Luke 8:15. a. It is not enough to hear (read) the Word of God b. Not even to initially do what the Word says c. We must receive the Word with good and noble hearts d. We must bear fruit with patience!

3. Necessary to be faithful disciples of Christ - Matthew 28:18-20. a. It is not enough to simply believe in Jesus b. Not even to be baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit c. We must be disciples of Christ (i. e., adherents) d. We must observe (do) what He says!

B. AS TAUGHT BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. Necessary in order to be saved - Hebrews 5:9. a. Jesus is the author (source) of eternal salvation b. But for those who obey Him!

2. Necessary to avoid God's wrath - Romans 2:4-11. a. The goodness of God is designed to lead one to repent b. The righteous judgment of God is coming, a day of wrath! c. Eternal life is for "those who keep on doing good" (NLT) d. Indignation and wrath is for those who do not obey the truth!

3. Necessary to avoid eternal destruction - 1 Peter 4:17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. a. What will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel? b. Vengeance in the form of everlasting destruction!

[Of course, we must understand that obedience does not earn or merit salvation (cf. Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 17:10), but obedience is necessary nonetheless. Especially so when one considers...] II. THE BLESSINGS OF OBEDIENCE A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. Enables one to withstand the storms of life - Matthew 7:24-27. a. It is not enough to hear the sayings of Jesus b. We must both hear and keep His says c. Only then will we be blessed to stand strong against the storms of life!

2. Qualifies one to be in the family of God - Luke 8:21. a. It is not enough to simply listen to the Word of God b. We must both hear and do it c. Only then will we be blessed to be a member of the family of God!

3. The key to blessedness (joy) - John 13:17. a. It is not enough to know what Jesus teaches b. We must do what He teaches c. The blessedness (joy) of following Jesus is in the doing!

B. AS TAUGHT BY HIS APOSTLES...

1. Delivers from the bondage of sin - Romans 6:16-18. a. We are slaves to that which we obey b. When one obeys from the heart the doctrine of God, they are set free from sin!

2. Purifies one's soul - 1 Peter 1:22-23. a. Obeying the truth purifies our souls b. It leads to being born again by the Word of God 3. Saves and blesses one's soul - James 1:21-25. a. The Word has the potential to save our souls b. But we must doers, not hearers only c. Again, the blessedness (joy) is in the doing!

CONCLUSION 1. Why do I obey the Bible? Because obedience is necessary... a. If we truly love Jesus - John 14:15. b. If we want Jesus and His Father to abide in us - John 14:21-24; John 15:20. c. If we want to truly know the Lord and experience the love of God - 1 John 2:3-5.

2. Again, such obedience is not an effort to earn or merit salvation... a. Salvation is by grace through faith, not of works - Ephesians 2:8-9. b. But grace does not preclude obedience done in faith - Hebrews 5:9. c. We obey the Word of God, not to earn salvation, but to receive salvation! As Jesus stated on one occasion: "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!" (Luke 11:28). Are you keeping (obeying) the Word of God in order to be blessed...?

03.06. Why I Study The Old Testament

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

Why I Study The Old Testament

INTRODUCTION 1. What benefit is the Old Testament (OT) to the Christian today...? a. Is the Christian under the OT as a system of justification? b. Is the OT authoritative regarding the work, worship, and organization of the church?

-- If not, why even bother with reading and studying the OT?

2. It is true Christians are not under the OT... a. Gentile Christians were never under the OT (or Old Covenant) 1) The Old Covenant was made with the Israelites at Mt. Horeb (Sinai) - Deuteronomy 5:1-2.

2) Not even Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc., were under the Old Covenant - Deuteronomy 5:3.

3) Thus Gentile Christians were not required to be circumcised or keep the Law - Acts 15:1-29. b. Jewish Christians have been delivered from the OT law 1) Through the body of Christ - Romans 7:1-6.

2) By His death on the cross, Jesus brought the OT covenant to an end - Ephesians 2:14-16.

3) It served to lead the Jews to Christ, a purpose fulfilled - Galatians 3:23-25.

3. Unfortunately, some conclude from this that we need not read the OT... a. I have known Christians who had never read through the OT once b. I have heard some who will not attend services if a study or sermon series is based on the OT -- "Why bother, if we are not under the OT?", is the reasoning of some 4. Is that the proper attitude of Christians toward the OT? This attitude... a. Is wrong, contrary to the teaching of the NT itself! b. Deprives the Christian of a wonderful source of peace and comfort c. Prevents the Christian from gaining wisdom and understanding concerning the life that now is, and that which is to come!

[To help us to appreciate the value of the Old Testament, let's begin by asking...] I. WHY STUDY THE OLD TESTAMENT?

A. WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING...

1. Note carefully what Paul wrote in Romans 15:4. a. Things "written before" (i. e., the OT) were "written for our learning" b. The OT was written and preserved especially for the Christians' benefit! c. The OT provides "patience and comfort", that we "might have hope"!

2. The OT provides a record of God's faithfulness, how He kept His promises: a. To Abraham and the nation of Israel b. To judge the wicked and avenge the righteous c. To forgive the penitent, and protect the humble -- The history of the OT is intended to give us hope that God will keep His promises to us!

B. WRITTEN FOR OUR ADMONITION...

1. Paul reminded the Christians at Corinth of Israel's fall in the wilderness - 1 Corinthians 10:1-10.
2. Note carefully what he says in 1 Corinthians 10:11. a. The events described may have happened to Israel b. But "they were written for our admonition..." c. Again, the OT was written and preserved especially for the benefit of Christians!
3. Other NT writers often appealed to the OT in admonishing Christians a. The writer of Hebrews, in exhorting Christians to remain steadfast - Hebrews 3:12-19. b. James, in encouraging Christians to be patient in their suffering - James 5:7-11. c. Peter, in warning of false teachers and scoffers - 2 Peter 2:1-22; 2 Peter 3:1-18.

-- The history of the OT is intended to serve as a warning to Christians!

C. MAKES ONE WISE REGARDING SALVATION IN CHRIST...

1. Paul noted that Timothy had known the "Holy Scriptures" since childhood - 2 Timothy 3:14. a. When Timothy was a child, the only scriptures available was the OT b. So Paul clearly had the OT in view
2. He said the OT is "able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus" - 2 Timothy 3:15.
3. How is this possible? The OT provides: a. The fall of man and the rise of sin b. The background and development of God's scheme of redemption c. Hundreds of Messianic prophecies which describe what to expect when He comes 4. One cannot hope to fully understand such books of the New

Testament like: a. Hebrews, without an understanding of the Levitical priesthood b. Revelation, without an understanding of OT prophecy and apocalyptic literature -- If one is to be wise concerning salvation in Christ, studying the OT is imperative!

D. PROFITABLE TO MAKE ONE COMPLETE...

1. Paul writes of the benefit of "All Scripture", which includes the OT - 2 Timothy 3:16-17.
2. Therefore the OT is profitable for: a. Doctrine - such as the nature of God, man, and sin b. Reproof and correction - the need for repentance c. Instruction in righteousness - how to live godly lives 3. The apostles often appealed to the OT concerning Christians' conduct: a. E. g., Romans 12:19-21; 2Co. 6:16-7:1; 2 Corinthians 9:7-10. b. E. g., James 2:20-26. c. E. g., 1 Peter 3:8-12.

-- There is much we can learn from the OT about truth and righteousness!

[Should the Christian study the Old Testament? Of course! Along with the NT, it was written "that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:17) To not read and study the OT is to deprive one of much admonition, learning, wisdom, and instruction that God intended for His children! In encouraging others to study the OT, let me offer...]

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDYING THE OLD TESTAMENT A. INCLUDE IN YOUR BIBLE READING PROGRAM...

1. Do not limit your daily Bible reading to just the New Testament 2. I encourage one to read the whole Bible through each year, both OT and NT a. One might start with Genesis and end with Revelation b. Others prefer both OT and NT concurrently throughout the year -- The important thing is make the OT a part of your regular study of the Bible B. USE A MODERN TRANSLATION...

1. I grew up on the KJV, had no problem with the NT, but found the OT extremely difficult 2. In high school, I began reading the NASB, and the OT came alive for me!

-- I personally recommend either the NKJV, ESV, NASB C. TAKE ADVANTAGE OF STUDY BIBLES, SPECIAL CLASSES...

1. Study Bibles provide historical background, maps, drawings, etc. (e. g., ESV) 2. If your congregation offers classes or sermons in the OT, take them!

-- Don't be like some who won't attend when the subject is from the OT D. GIVE FOCUS TO PSALMS, PROVERBS, AND THE PROPHETS...

1. Certainly all of God's word is of great value 2. But one might appreciate the value of the OT more quickly, by giving attention to: a. The Psalms - as a great source of comfort, peace, and drawing near to God, especially in troubling times b. The Proverbs - as a great source of practical wisdom for everyday living c. The Prophets - as a great source for learning about the righteousness, justice, mercy and love of God -- This is not to suggest that we neglect the other parts of the

OT

CONCLUSION 1. Should we only study Scriptures pertaining to the covenant under which we live...? a. Should Israel have discarded Genesis, and the first nineteen chapters of Exodus? No! b. Should we discard the gospels, since Jesus lived and died under the Old Covenant? No!

2. Neither should we ignore the OT, for it provides... a. The background and setting of the NT b. Much in the way of learning, admonition, comfort, hope, even wisdom concerning salvation! Be careful not to neglect that which was written and preserved for OUR benefit...

"For whatever things were written before were written for OUR learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." -Romans 15:4.

"Now all these things happened to them as examples, and they were written for OUR admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages have come." - 1 Corinthians 10:11. And remember that...

"ALL Scripture is inspired of God, and is profitable..." 2 Timothy 3:16.

03.07. How I Read The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

How I Read The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series ("Give Me The Bible"), thus far we have covered... a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy d. Why I Love The Bible b. Why I Read The Bible e. Why I Obey The Bible c. Why I Believe The Bible f. Why I Study The Old Testament 2. In the final two lessons, I want to share thoughts related to... a. How I Read The Bible b. How I Study The Bible 3. For many years I have engaged in daily Bible reading... a. Most years, reading through the Bible entirely b. Every time I find reading the Bible a pleasurable and beneficial experience

[You might say that I have developed the habit of daily Bible reading.I'll go further and say that I am positively addicted! How does one read the Bible with such enjoyment? First, it helps to remember...] I. WE NEED TO CREATE A GOOD HABIT A. THE ROLE OF HABITS...

1. We either have good habits or bad habits 2. If we have not developed the good habit of daily Bible reading...

3. Then we have developed the bad habit of NOT reading the Bible daily!

B. THE REALITY OF TIME...

1. As illustrated by James, our time on earth is brief - James 4:14.

2. If we have not developed the good habit of daily Bible reading...

3. ...our time on this earth will one day catch up with us a. We will have spent our lives on this earth without utilizing the benefits provided by daily reading of God's Word b. Many will have to face God having never read through His Word once!

[Assuming that we all desire to develop the good habit of daily Bible reading...] II. WE NEED TO CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION A. WHAT IS A POSITIVE ADDICTION...?

1. Usually when we hear the word addiction, we think of negative addictions a. Which is simply another phrase for bad habits b. Such as smoking, swearing, drinking, gambling c. When something bad for us:

1) Becomes "second nature"

2) We do it without much effort or thought d. We become dependent on it, either emotionally or physically e. When we try to do without it, we experience various degrees of discomfort 2. Positive addiction is when you become dependent upon a good habit a. For example, exercise can become a positive addiction 1) Those who have made exercise a pleasurable and frequent experience soon become "addicted" to it 2) So that if they go a few days without exercise, they feel uneasy, depressed, irritable 3) Of course, if they go without exercise long enough, the discomfort will

eventually pass b. So a positive addiction is a habit which is:

- 1) Good for you, either physically, mentally, or spiritually
- 2) A source of pleasure and satisfaction
- 3) One that should you neglect it, begins to give you "withdrawal pains"

B. WHY CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION TO BIBLE READING...?

1. It will help you maintain the practice of reading the Bible
 2. Should a few days go by without reading the Bible, the "discomfort" experienced will help motivate you to get "back on track"
 3. Most people who have tried to read the Bible daily and did not keep it up...
 - a. Never experienced a positive addiction to reading God's Word
 - b. Rather than a pleasurable experience, it was a chore
 - c. So when they fell behind in their goals, there was little motivation to catch up [Having explained what I mean by "positive addiction", here are some thoughts on...]
- #### III. HOW TO CREATE A POSITIVE ADDICTION FOR BIBLE READING
- ##### A. PRINCIPLES ARE THE SAME FOR CREATING ANY ADDICTION...

1. You must make the experience a pleasurable one
 - a. This is where many people fail when it comes to "exercise"
 - b. Going about it the wrong way, the daily workouts are painful and miserable
 - c. Therefore any excuse not to exercise prevents them from keeping it up
2. The same applies to reading the Bible
 - a. To many, they try to do too much too soon
 - b. The experience soon becomes little more than "marking a checklist"

B. SUGGESTIONS RELATED TO BIBLE READING...

1. Make Bible reading a pleasurable experience
 - a. An addiction requires a pleasurable habit
 - b. The goal: "I rejoice at Your word As one who finds great treasure." - Psalms 119:162.
2. Start slow, with small goals
 - a. Many try to start by reading through the Bible in one year
 - 1) An admirable goal, but most never make it past Exodus or Leviticus
 - 2) Before Bible reading has become a positive addiction, they run into difficult passages of Scripture
 - 3) They are like beginning joggers who try to run a mile the first time out
 - b. I would recommend starting with making the New Testament a yearly goal
 - 1) This requires no more than a chapter a day
 - 2) The material is easier, more edifying at the outset
 - c. Once you have read the New Testament in a year a couple of times
 - 1) You might read through the Old Testament one year
 - 2) Then begin reading through the entire Bible each year
 3. Begin each session with prayer
 - a. Like that found in Psalms 119:18 : "Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your Law."
 - b. This puts us in the most receptive frame of mind - cf. James 1:21.
 4. Read slowly, carefully
 - a. This prevents reading without comprehending what you read - cf. Psalms 1:1-2; Psalms 119:15-16.
 - b. Reading out loud, as though you were reading to someone else, often helps
 5. Make use of Bible study aids
 - a. Especially a Bible dictionary, and Bible maps
 - b. Don't observe the "pass over", passing over...
 - 1) Words you don't understand
 - 2) Names you don't know
 - 3) Places unfamiliar to you
 - c. Every time you do, there is that much more of the Bible you don't understand, don't get anything out of it
 - d. Take a moment to look them up in the references
 6. Discuss what you read with others
 - a.

Encourage others to follow the same program of reading b. Share your discoveries, the passages that encourage you 7. Read with the intention to do what it says a. Otherwise, you are wasting your time! - James 1:22-24. b. The true joy comes in the application of God's Word (another "positive addiction" to develop) - James 1:25.

8. End each session with prayer a. Like that expressed in Psalms 119:5-6. b. Or the one found in Psalms 119:10-11.

CONCLUSION

1. Following these suggestions, the practice of reading the Bible becomes one of great joy: "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure." - Psalms 119:162.

2. Done on a regular basis, a positive addiction for daily Bible reading quickly develops which helps one to keep up this wonderful habit 3. I hope that in some way I have encouraged everyone... a. To begin if they have never done so b. To continue if they are doing so c. To try again if they tried in the past and failed For there is so much to gain, and there is so much to lose...!

03.08. How I Study The Bible

"GIVE ME THE BIBLE"

How I Study The Bible

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series ("Give Me The Bible"), we have covered... a. The Problem Of Biblical Illiteracy e. Why I Obey The Bible b. Why I Read The Bible f. Why I Study The Old Testament c. Why I Believe The Bible g. How I Read The Bible d. Why I Love The Bible 2. In this final lesson I wish to share thoughts related to studying the Bible... a. To ensure proper comprehension b. To avoid misapplying the Bible 3. Not all Bible study proves profitable... a. We must handle the Word of God properly - 2 Timothy 2:15. b. Some twist the Scriptures to their own destruction - 2 Peter 3:16.

[This is not a definitive treatment of Bible exegesis, but a few thoughts that I keep in mind as I study the Bible. First, in a positive vein, with regards to...] I. SEEKING COMPREHENSION A. BASIC STUDY PRINCIPLES...

1. Study the Bible the way it was written a. The Word of God was revealed book by book; shouldn't we study it the same way? b. Many limit the bulk of their Bible study to topical studies or certain texts c. This increases the possibility of taking things out of context d. Truth requires considering all that God has revealed - cf. Psalms 119:160. e. Words, phrases, passages, should be studied in the context of their respective books f. "The Word of God well understood and religiously obeyed is the shortest route to spiritual perfection. And we must not select a few favorite passages to the exclusion of others. Nothing less than a whole Bible can make a whole Christian." - A. W. Tozer g. "The Bible is a harp with a thousand strings. Play on one to the exclusion of its relationship to the others, and you will develop discord. Play on all of them, keeping them in their places in the divine scale, and you will hear heavenly music all the time." - William P. White 2. Study both privately and corporately a. Some study only when at church (corporately) 1) Unprepared to truly benefit from their studies with others 2) Unlikely to know when others may misinterpret or misapply the text

3) "We have become so accustomed to hearing preachers or expositors, as important as that is, that many in the process have abandoned the grand privilege of personally hearing from God's Word daily." - Ravi Zacharias b. Some study only by themselves (privately) 1) Not appreciating assistance from others - e. g., Luke 24:44-45; Acts 8:30-31.

2) More likely to fall prey to misinterpretation or false teaching 3. Study with the proper spirit a. With meekness, humility - James 1:21; Psalms 25:9. b. This why I believe the bulk of one's study should be in the form of daily devotional reading, accompanied with meditation and prayer - Psalms 86:11; Psalms 119:33. c. "Reading the Bible without meditating on it is like trying to eat without swallowing." - Anonymous B. BASIC STUDY TOOLS...

1. Good translation a. Accurate, but readable b. Word for word translations preferred; thought for thought suitable for comparison c. Suggested: ESV, NKJV, NASB (word for word); NLT (thought

for thought) 2. Readable layout a. Font size - suitable for reading (for me, that means at least 10 point!) b. Paper - minimal ghosting or bleed through (text visible from other side) c. Paragraph vs. verse by verse (personal preferences may vary) d. The layout of the text on paper should be easy on the eyes and comprehension 3. Dictionaries, maps, study Bibles a. To look up the meaning of words, geographical information b. If we don't know the meaning of a word, we won't know the meaning of the text c. A good grasp of geographical information enhances Biblical understanding d. Beware of study Bibles with notes by one person, or a particular theological bias e. Suggested: ESV Study Bible, NLT Study Bible

4. Markup tools a. Many have found writing marginal notes, highlighting words or phrases helpful b. I like to highlight as I read, with a Zebra Eco Zebrite Double-Ended Highlighter c. For notes, many recommend this pen: Pigma Micron Pen #005. 0.2mm

[Other study tools are certainly available, perhaps best recommended by a mature Christian. Now for some thoughts related to how we might avoid misapplying the Bible...] II. AVOIDING MISAPPLICATION A. BEWARE OF REACTIONARY THEOLOGY...

1. This terminology is one of my own making 2. Studying the Bible, but mostly in reaction to false teaching 3. To prove others wrong, rather than to learn what is right for oneself 4. Applying texts based on usefulness in making a religious argument 5. We should study to learn and obey truth first, then to examine and expose error B. BEWARE OF CONCORDANCE THEOLOGY...

1. Another terminology of my own making 2. Studying the Bible with an overdependence of a concordance 3. Assuming scriptures listed under a similar topic are necessarily related 4. Applying texts without contextual considerations 5. We should study the context first, then words in their particular context C. BEWARE OF CONFUSING THE COVENANTS...

1. The Bible speaks of two covenants - Galatians 4:24-26. a. One first and old, the other second and new - Hebrews 8:7-13; Hebrews 9:15; Hebrews 12:24. b. The latter being better, coming of force when Jesus died - Hebrews 7:22; Hebrews 8:6; Hebrews 9:15-17.

2. Failure to distinguish leads to much confusion a. Many appeal to OT to justify worship and practice b. Christians live under the new covenant of our Lord and Savior 3. Some examples: Sabbath keeping, instrumental worship, separate priesthood D. BEWARE OF NOT SEEING THE FOREST FOR THE TREES...

1. Developing doctrines based on a few select passages 2. Often ignoring other passages which contradict their conclusions 3. Some examples: Calvinism, pre-millennialism, full preterism E. BEWARE OF ROOT FALLACIES...

1. Supposing etymology determines meaning, that words are defined by their roots 2. Not necessarily; words are defined by their usage, which may be quite different 3. English example: nice (from Latin, nescius, meaning ignorant!) 4. Greek example: church (ecclesia, called out) - properly defined as assembly, congregation 5. We must be careful to define words as used in their historical setting F. BEWARE OF IGNORING DIVERSE MEANINGS...

1. Assuming that a particular word or phrase means the same in every place 2. Words often have more than one meaning 3. English example: run (has at least 28 different meanings!) 4. Hebrew example: spirit (has at least 9 different meanings) 5. We must let the context define how a word or

phrase is to be understood G. BEWARE OF NOT WAITING FOR THE CONCLUSION...

1. Developing doctrines based on statements midway through the discussion 2. Which may contradict the author's own concluding statements 3. I see this especially involving Paul's lengthy and difficult arguments - cf. 2 Peter 3:15-16.

4. Example: Concluding that God predestines some to be lost, when God desires to show mercy on all - cf. Romans 9:15-24 with Romans 11:32; cf. 1 Timothy 2:4-6; 2 Peter 3:9.

H. BEWARE OF MISHANDLING PROPHECIES...

1. Interpreting prophecies literally when they may be fulfilled figuratively 2. This was the mistake of the Jews in Jesus' day regarding the nature of the kingdom 3. The apostles needed divine interpretation to understand OT prophecies - Luke 24:44-47.

4. We do well to let the NT interpret OT prophecies; where the NT is silent on OT prophecies, we should be cautious and not dogmatic in our interpretations

CONCLUSION 1. For the person willing to study the Bible carefully, there is great reward... - Psalms 1:1-3.

2. "The Bible is...as necessary to spiritual life as breath is to natural life. There is nothing more essential to our lives than the Word of God." - Jack Hayford I pray that this series of outlines will encourage you to let the Bible transform your life!

04.00. God's Will For You

God's Will For You Sermons by Mark Copeland Sermon outlines related to the will of God for Christians

Contents

Rejoice Always Pray Without Ceasing In Everything Give Thanks Your Sanctification Do Good Discerning The Will Of God Motivation To Do God's Will Making God's Will Priority One Seeking God's Providential Will

04.01. Rejoice Always

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Rejoice Always

INTRODUCTION 1. What is God's will for you...? a. Of course, if you are not saved, the answer is rather obvious b. But if you are saved, what is God's will for you in your life?

2. Sometimes the Scriptures are quite clear, as in passages like... a. 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. b. 1 Thessalonians 4:3. c. 1 Peter 2:15.

[Such passages do not exhaust what is God's will. But this series of lessons will focus our attention on what is clearly stated as the will of God for you. Starting with 1 Thessalonians 5:16; where we learn that...] I. GOD WANTS YOU TO REJOICE ALWAYS A. REJOICE IN LIFE...

1. To rejoice in your youth - Ecclesiastes 11:9.
2. To rejoice in your work - Ecclesiastes 2:24; Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, Ecclesiastes 3:22; Ecclesiastes 5:18-20.
3. To rejoice in life and wife - Ecclesiastes 9:7-9; Ecclesiastes 11:8.
4. To rejoice in the things God has given us - 1 Timothy 6:17.
5. Of course, we are to rejoice responsibly - 1 Timothy 6:18-19; Ecclesiastes 12:1.

B. REJOICE IN SALVATION...

1. To rejoice knowing that you are saved - Luke 10:20.
2. To rejoice as a kingdom quality - Romans 14:17.
3. To rejoice as fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22.

[It is clearly the will of God that you rejoice always! Now let's consider why...] II. YOU NEED TO REJOICE ALWAYS A. FOR PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL STRENGTH...

1. Anxiety weighs one down - Proverbs 12:25.
2. A glad heart raises the spirit - Proverbs 15:13, Proverbs 15:15.
3. A joyful heart is like good medicine - Proverbs 17:22.

B. FOR SPIRITUAL STRENGTH...

1. In the joy of the Lord there is great strength - cf. Nehemiah 8:10.
2. When we have joy in what we believe, we abound in hope - cf. Romans 15:13.
2. When we are joyful, it helps those around us to be joyful - e. g., 2 Corinthians 2:3.

[Our Creator understands the importance of a joyful spirit for both body and soul. Since He wants you to rejoice always, here are a few thoughts on...] III. HOW YOU CAN REJOICE ALWAYS A. IN THE LORD...

1. It is in the Lord that one finds the ability to "rejoice always" - cf. Php 4:4.
2. His salvation is the source of much joy - cf. Psalms 21:1.
3. He grants joy to those who please Him - Ecclesiastes 2:26; Ecclesiastes 5:20.
4. His mercy is a source of great joy - Psalms 31:7.
5. In His presence there is fullness of joy, and He will abide with us if we obey His commands - Psalms 16:11; cf. John 14:21, John 14:23.

B. SOME IMPORTANT SUGGESTIONS...

1. Read and feed upon the Word of God daily - cf. Psalms 1:1-3; Jeremiah 15:16.
2. Meditate upon the teachings of Christ and His apostles a. Jesus spoke that His disciples joy might be full - John 15:11. b. The apostles wrote that our joy might be full - 1 John 1:4.
3. Sing praises of joy to God a. Certainly we should sing when cheerful - James 5:13. b. But we can also find joy by singing praises (cf. "Sing and Be Happy") - Psalms 71:23; Psalms 104:33-34; Psalms 135:3.
4. Spend time with brethren who make us happy a. As Titus' joy encouraged Paul - 2 Corinthians 7:13. b. As Philemon's love and joy refreshed the hearts of others and gave Paul joy - Philemon 1:7.
5. Lead others to Christ, for they will be a great source of joy a. As the Thessalonians were to Paul - 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 1 Thessalonians 3:9. b. As Philemon was to Paul - Philemon 1:7. c. As John's converts made him joyful - 3 John 1:4.

CONCLUSION 1. So what is the will of God for you...? a. Rejoice always! b. Rejoice in the Lord always! c. Rejoice in the blessings He has given you! d. Rejoice in both the physical and spiritual blessings of life!

2. This does not mean we will never suffer hardship; but if it is in service to God... a. There can be great joy! - cf. Matthew 5:10-12. b. There can be inexpressible joy! - cf. 1 Peter 1:6-9.

Even if the hardships we experience are due to the vicissitudes of life, we can rejoice that we serve a God who offers comfort and hope to endure every trial:

"And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us." - Romans 5:3-5. And so, let us be diligent to do the will of God: Rejoice always...!

04.02. Pray Without Ceasing

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Pray Without Ceasing

INTRODUCTION 1. In our previous lesson, we saw that it is God's will that you rejoice always... a. To rejoice in life b. To rejoice in salvation 2. In 1 Thessalonians 5:17 we also read that it is God's will for you to pray without ceasing... a. Really? This is what God wants us to do? b. Why is prayer so important? c. How can we possibly pray "without ceasing"?

[In answer to such questions, let's begin by emphatically repeating that...] I. GOD WANTS YOU TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING A. ACCORDING TO JESUS CHRIST...

1. In the parable of the persistent friend - Luke 11:5-10.
2. In the parable of the persistent widow - Luke 18:1-8.

B. ACCORDING TO APOSTLE PAUL...

1. "pray without ceasing" - 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
2. "continuing steadfastly in prayer" - Romans 12:12.
3. "praying always with all prayer" - Ephesians 6:18.
4. "continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it" - Colossians 4:2.
5. "in everything by prayer...let your requests be made known to God" - Php 4:6.

[It is clear that God wants you to pray without ceasing. Why? I can think of at least 13 reasons why...] II. YOU NEED TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING A. TO PRAISE GOD...

1. Jesus taught us to praise God in prayer ("Hallowed be Your name") - Matthew 6:9.
2. Paul provides an example and good reason to praise God in prayer - Ephesians 3:20-21.

B. FOR GOD'S WILL...

1. Jesus taught us to pray for God's will on earth to be done - Matthew 6:10.
2. Especially as it relates to His kingdom (rule, reign) - *ibid*.

C. FOR DAILY NEEDS...

1. Jesus taught to pray for our daily needs - Matthew 6:11.
2. For God has promised to provide our necessities - cf. Matthew 6:25-34.

D. FOR FORGIVENESS...

1. Jesus taught to pray for forgiveness as we forgive others - Matthew 6:12.
2. The Christian finds forgiveness through the blood of Christ - 1 John 1:7-10; Acts 8:22.

E. FOR PROTECTION...

1. Jesus taught us to pray for deliverance from the evil one - Matthew 6:13.
2. And God will provide such protection - cf. 1 Corinthians 10:13.

F. FOR PEACE OF MIND...

1. The antidote to anxiety is to pray - Php 4:6.
2. The Christian will find his heart and mind guarded by the peace of God - Php 4:7.

G. FOR EMPOWERMENT...

1. Paul prayed the Ephesians might be strengthened in the inner man - Ephesians 3:14-16, Ephesians 3:20.
2. When we need to be strong, Christians can likewise pray for themselves!

H. FOR OPPORTUNITY...

1. Paul knew that the Lord often opened doors for opportunities to serve - 2 Corinthians 2:12.
2. He therefore requested prayer that such opportunities would continue - Colossians 4:3.

I. FOR BOLDNESS...

1. When the apostles needed boldness, they prayed and God delivered - Acts 4:23-31.
2. When Paul needed boldness, he asked for prayers in his behalf - Ephesians 6:19-20.

J. FOR WISDOM...

1. Wisdom is insight that makes the best use of the knowledge one has
2. The Christian is promised wisdom through prayer - James 1:5-8.

K. FOR HEALING...

1. Those who are sick should ask elders to pray for them - James 5:14-15.
2. Those who have sinned should confess, and we should pray for one another - James 5:16.

L. FOR TRANQUILITY...

1. The Scriptures proclaim God has ultimate control over the nations - Daniel 4:17; Romans 13:1-7.
2. Thus we are pray that we may lead a quiet (tranquil, ASV) and peaceable life - 1 Timothy 2:1-2.

M. TO THANK GOD...

1. Paul would have us be vigilant in prayer, with thanksgiving - Colossians 4:2.

2. Having an attitude of gratitude, which we intend to examine more closely in our next lesson

[For so many reasons, because there is power and privilege in prayer, we should pray as often as we can! Which leads to answering our final question...] III. HOW YOU CAN PRAY WITHOUT CEASING A. WHAT IT MEANS TO PRAY WITHOUT CEASING...

1. Does not mean praying constantly, but being persistent and consistent in prayer - NKJVS B 2. It means not giving up; it does not mean praying at every moment - NLT B

3. It suggests a mental attitude of prayerfulness, continual personal fellowship with God, and consciousness of being in his presence throughout each day - ESV B B. ESTABLISH SET TIMES TO PRAY...

1. This can help create the habit of praying 2. Consider the example of great men of prayer a. David, a man after God's own heart - Psalms 55:17. b. Daniel, a man greatly beloved by God - Daniel 6:10.

3. At the very least, find time each day to spend in prayer!

C. ENGAGE IN SPONTANEOUS PRAYER...

1. Praying on the spur of the moment as the occasion calls for it 2. Some Biblical examples a. The Israelites in the heat of battle - 1 Chronicles 5:20. b. Nehemiah in response to the king - Nehemiah 2:4-5. c. Paul and Silas when imprisoned - Acts 16:25.

3. At any moment, we should be ready to call on God in prayer

CONCLUSION 1. How can we fulfill the command to pray without ceasing...? a. Praying at set times each day develops experience and persistence in praying b. Praying spontaneously as needs arise develops the disposition to pray in every circumstance c. Both help to develop that "mental attitude of prayerfulness, continual personal fellowship with God, and consciousness of being in his presence throughout each day" (ESV B) 2. And why should we strive to pray without ceasing...? a. Because of the privilege of prayer made possible by Jesus - Hebrews 4:14-16. b. Because of the power of prayer to "obtain mercy and find grace to help" - *ibid*. And so it is the will of God for you to "pray without ceasing", that you might enjoy both the privilege and power of prayer in your life...!

04.03. In Everything Give Thanks

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU" In Everything Give Thanks

INTRODUCTION 1. In our previous two lessons, we saw that it is God's will... a. That you rejoice always b. That you pray without ceasing 2. As we return to our beginning text (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18), we learn that it also God's will... a. That we give thanks in everything - 1 Thessalonians 5:18. b. "give thanks in all circumstances" - ESV c. "be thankful in all circumstances" - NLT

[Not only are we to be thankful in everything, but for everything (Ephesians 5:20)! To understand why this is God's will for you, let's consider...] I. THE NEED TO GIVE THANKS A. INGRATITUDE DISPLEASES GOD...

1. It is included among other sins that would be prevalent in "perilous times" - 2 Timothy 3:1-5.
2. The wrath of God will be revealed against those who are unthankful - Romans 1:18-21.

B. WE ARE TO HAVE THE ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE...

1. Thankful for what the Father has done for us - Colossians 1:12-14.
2. Abounding in thanksgiving - Colossians 2:7.
3. A part of the "garment" we are to put on - Colossians 3:12-15.
4. A complement to our prayers - Colossians 4:2; 1 Timothy 2:1.

C. THANKFULNESS IS KEY...

1. To overcoming anxiety - Php 4:6.
2. To obtaining the peace of God which surpasses understanding - Php 4:6-7.
3. To pray without ceasing, and to rejoicing always - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18. a. When we give thanks in everything, we will pray without ceasing! b. When we pray without ceasing, we will rejoice always!
4. NB: thankfulness in everything -> praying without ceasing -> rejoicing always!

[If we desire to have the peace which passes understanding, that joy which is inexpressible (1 Peter 1:8), then we need to develop the attitude of gratitude, being thankful in everything! Some thoughts on...] II. HOW TO BE THANKFUL IN EVERYTHING A. REMEMBER THAT ALL THINGS WORK FOR GOOD...

1. If we love God and have responded to His call - Romans 8:28. a. Loving God presumes obedience to His will - 1 John 5:3. b. Responding to His call presumes obeying the gospel - cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14.

2. We can therefore glory in tribulation - Romans 5:3-5. a. Knowing that it produces character b. Which in turn produces hope 3. We can therefore rejoice in persecution - Matthew 5:10-12. a. Knowing that the kingdom of heaven is ours b. Knowing that our reward in heaven will be great 4. We can therefore rejoice in trials - James 1:2-3. a. Knowing that trials produces patience b. Knowing that patience produces perfection and completeness (maturity) B. EXPRESS THANKS IN EVERY PRAYER...

1. We are to include thanksgiving with our prayer requests - Php 4:6. a. Every time you pray for something, first thank God for something b. "Count your many blessings, name them one by one, And it will surprise you what the Lord hath done." - Johnson Oatman, Jr., 1856-1922.

2. Even when we are facing hard times - e. g., Daniel 6:10-11. a. Daniel made the giving of thanks part of his daily prayers b. Even when facing life-threatening crisis, he gave thanks as always

CONCLUSION 1. William Hendriksen has beautifully expressed the importance of giving thanks: When a person prays without giving thanks, he has clipped the wings of prayer, so that it cannot rise.

2. Do you want... a. The full benefit of prayer in your life? b. The ability to rejoice always, in every circumstance?

Then take the time to thank God in everything, indeed, for everything (Ephesians 5:20), knowing that God can use it for your good (Romans 8:28). Do this, and you will not only do what is God's will for you, but you will become "more than conquerors" through the love of Christ and the love of God...! - cf. Romans 8:35-39.

04.04. Your Sanctification

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU" Your Sanctification

INTRODUCTION 1. From 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, we learn that it is God's will for you to... a. Rejoice always b. Pray without ceasing c. Give thanks in everything 2. Turning to 1 Thessalonians 4:3; we learn that God's will includes your sanctification... a. The words sanctify and sanctification are translated from the Greek *hagiazō* b. It means to make holy, to set apart for a special purpose c. Related words include holiness, consecration, saint

[Sanctification is a term that is often misunderstood. As we reflect on God's will for us related to sanctification, let's start with...] I. OUR NEED FOR SANCTIFICATION A. GOD IS HOLY...

1. God who called us into His grace is holy - cf. Leviticus 11:44.
2. Thus we are to be holy - 1 Peter 1:14-16.

B. WE ARE GOD'S SPECIAL PEOPLE...

1. Like Israel of old, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation - Exodus 19:5-6.
2. Thus we are in Christ today - 1 Peter 2:9-10.

[Because God is holy, we are to be holy (sanctified). Now let's consider what is taught concerning...] II. OUR STATE OF SANCTIFICATION A. CHRISTIANS ARE SANCTIFIED...

1. Consider the church at Corinth: a. The church was made of people who were sanctified - 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Corinthians 6:11. b. Yet many of them were still babes in Christ and carnal - 1 Corinthians 3:1-3.
2. Thus, while Christians are not perfect, they are called "saints" a. Note the use of "saint" in addressing all Christians - Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Php 1:1; Colossians 1:2. b. Because they had been "set apart", it was appropriate to be called "saints"

-- This has been called "positional sanctification"

B. CHRISTIANS ARE BEING SANCTIFIED...

1. Sanctification is also referred to as an on-going process a. Those in Christ are "being sanctified" - Hebrews 2:11 (NKJV) b. It begins at conversion, and continues as we grow in the faith c. As Paul prayed for the Thessalonians: "may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely" - 1 Thessalonians 5:23.
2. Thus Christians are to pursue sanctification (holiness) a. As the Hebrews were admonished - Hebrews 12:14. b. As Paul commanded the Corinthians - 2 Corinthians 7:1.

-- This has been called "practical sanctification"

[Now let's look at...] III. OUR PRACTICE OF SANCTIFICATION A. IN GENERAL TERMS...

1. We are to be separate from the world - 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Corinthians 7:1.

2. Which involves conduct different from the world - 1 Peter 4:1-4.

B. ACCORDING TO OUR TEXT...

1. Sanctification involves sexual morality - 1 Thessalonians 4:3. a. Abstaining from sexual immorality b. I. e., any sexual activity outside the bond of heterosexual marriage 2. We are to possess our "vessel" in sanctification and honor - 1 Thessalonians 4:4. a. Vessel likely refers to one's body - cf. 2 Corinthians 4:7. b. Vessel possibly refers to one's wife - cf. 1 Peter 3:7.

3. Not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who don't know God - 1 Thessalonians 4:5. a. Who in their ignorance are given over to lewdness - cf. Ephesians 4:17-19. b. We are not give opportunity for the lusts of the flesh - cf. Romans 13:13-14.

4. We are not to defraud our brother in such matters - 1 Thessalonians 4:6. a. E. g., committing adultery with a man's wife b. E. g., committing fornication with a man's daughter or sister 5. God will avenge those who practice immorality - 1 Thessalonians 4:6; cf. Hebrews 13:4. a. Both in this life (STDs) - cf. Proverbs 5:7-14; Romans 1:27. b. And in the life to come (eternal condemnation) - cf. 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21.

6. For God has called us to holiness, not uncleanness - 1 Thessalonians 4:7. a. To be His chosen people - cf. 1 Thessalonians 1:4. b. To walk worthy of His kingdom and glory - cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:12.

7. Reject this teaching is to reject God and the gift of His Spirit - 1 Thessalonians 4:8. a. The Spirit who is promised to all who obey - cf. Acts 2:38-39; Acts 5:32; Galatians 4:6. b. The Spirit who indwells our bodies - cf. 1 Corinthians 6:18-20. c. Who empowers us to control the flesh - cf. Romans 8:12-13; Ephesians 3:16, Ephesians 3:20; Galatians 5:22-23.

CONCLUSION 1. God's will for you is to be sanctified in body and in spirit... a. You are to "flee immorality" - 1 Corinthians 6:18. b. For your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit - 1 Corinthians 6:19. c. And your body belongs to the Lord - 1 Corinthians 6:20.

2. By the grace of God, such sanctification is possible... a. First, through the blood of Christ that cleanses from all sin! b. Then, with the aid of the Spirit to empower us in our struggle against sin!

If you are a Christian, are you taking sanctification seriously? It is God's will for you...!

04.05. Do Good

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU" Do Good

INTRODUCTION 1. Topics covered thus far in this series... a. Rejoice always b. Pray without ceasing c. Give thanks in everything d. Your sanctification 2. In 1 Peter 2:11-15, we read that God's will for you includes doing good... a. That some might glorify God in the day of visitation - 1 Peter 2:12. b. That others in their ignorance might be silenced - 1 Peter 2:15.

[Let's take a closer look at the idea of doing good, beginning with...] I. THE PURPOSE OF DOING GOOD A. WE ARE NOT SAVED BY GOOD WORKS...

1. Good works cannot buy or earn our way into heaven 2. God saves us by His grace and mercy, not our works - Ephesians 2:8-9; Titus 3:4-7.

-- We should be very clear on this point!

B. WE ARE SAVED TO DO GOOD WORKS...

1. We have been created in Christ Jesus to do good works! - Ephesians 2:10.

2. We have been redeemed and purified to be zealous for good works! - Titus 2:11-14.

3. Thus it is the will of God that we: a. Be ready for every good work - Titus 3:1. b. Be careful to maintain good works - Titus 3:8. c. Learn to maintain good works - Titus 3:14.

-- We need to understand the role of good works!

C. WE ARE TO DO GOOD WORKS...

1. Because they bring glory to God - Matthew 5:14-16; 1 Peter 2:12.

2. Because they are necessary to be like Jesus - Luke 6:40; cf. Acts 10:38.

3. Because they demonstrate the living nature of our faith - James 2:14-17, James 2:20, James 2:26.

4. Because they prepare unbelievers to be more receptive to the gospel - 1 Peter 2:12; 1 Peter 3:1-2.

5. Because they help silence ignorant critics of our faith - 1 Peter 2:15.

6. Because they meet urgent needs of those around us - Titus 3:14.

-- We must appreciate the importance of good works!

[With an appreciation of the role of doing good in the life of the Christian, let's look at some...] II.

EXAMPLES OF DOING GOOD A. CARING FOR WIDOWS AND ORPHANS...

1. An indicator of pure and undefiled religion before God - James 1:27; cf. Psalms 68:5.

2. Two good role models are Job and Tabitha (Dorcas) - Job 29:12-13; Acts 9:36-39.

-- Are we practicing pure and undefiled religion before God?

B. SUPPORTING THE WEAK...

1. As exemplified by Paul, in keeping with Jesus' dictum - Acts 20:35.

2. As commanded by Paul, to support and bear their burdens - 1 Thessalonians 5:14; Galatians 6:1-2.

-- Are we fulfilling the law of Christ?

C. VISITING THE SICK...

1. Jesus and His apostles cared for the sick during their ministry - Luke 4:40; Luke 9:2; Luke 10:9.

2. Elders are to pray for the sick - James 5:14-15.

-- Do we care for the sick?

D. ENTERTAINING STRANGERS...

1. To show hospitality, which literally means "love of strangers" - Hebrews 13:2; Romans 12:13.

2. Required of elders, and widows taken into the number - 1 Timothy 3:2; 1 Timothy 5:9-10.

-- Do we show kindness to strangers?

E. REMEMBERING THE PRISONERS...

1. Especially those who are brethren - Hebrews 13:3; Hebrews 10:34.

2. Like those who visited Paul in prison, or sent him supplies - Acts 24:23; Php 4:14, Php 4:18.

-- Do we remember our brethren who are in prison?

F. SHARING OUR WEALTH...

1. Affluent brethren are to be ready to give, willing to share - 1 Timothy 6:17-19.

2. Sharing with others is a form of spiritual sacrifice that pleases God - Hebrews 13:16.

-- Do we stand ready to offer such spiritual sacrifices?

CONCLUSION 1. As we have ability and opportunity... a. We are to do good to all men, especially our brethren - Galatians 6:10. b. We are not to grow weary in doing good - Galatians 6:9; 2 Thessalonians 3:13.

2. Begin where you live... a. At home, do good for your family and neighbors b. At school, do good for your friends and those not your friends c. At work, do good for your employers, employees, fellow-workers d. At church, do good for your brothers and sisters in Christ e. In your community, do good for the poor, homeless, even your enemies

Doing good can lead to praising God on one hand, and silencing critics of our faith on the other; so let us not grow weary in doing good to all...!

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith." - Galatians 6:9-10.

04.06. Discerning The Will Of God

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Discerning The Will Of God

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series, we have focused on things explicitly stated as God's will for you... a. Rejoice always - 1 Thessalonians 5:16. b. Pray without ceasing - 1 Thessalonians 5:17. c. Give thanks in everything - 1 Thessalonians 5:18. d. Your sanctification - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8. e. Do good - 1 Peter 2:11-15.

2. In the next four lessons, I would like for us to consider... a. How else we can discern the will of God b. Motivation for doing the will of God c. Making God's will priority one d. Seeking God's providential will

[In regards to discerning the will of God, let's turn to Romans 12:2; where we read how you can prove (discern, ESV) what is that good, acceptable, and perfect will of God. First, we are told...] I. BE NOT CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD A. CONFORMITY DEFINED...

1. To conform to another's pattern - RWP 2. E. g., the desire to be like someone else 3. A conformist is often afraid to be different, who feels a need to be like everyone else B. CONFORMITY DEPICTED...

1. Doing what others do, imitating how others talk, wearing what others wear 2. Occurs most often during adolescence, but frequently in adults 3. Complicated by advertisers marketing their products, encouraging conformity C. CONFORMITY'S DANGERS...

1. The majority is rarely right a. Most are on the path to destruction - Matthew 7:13. b. The way to life is straight and narrow, which few follow - Matthew 7:14.

2. Conformity easily leads to doing things you know are wrong - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33. a. Friends in a car for a joyride, and one begins popping pills b. Men and women at business functions, where alcohol is consumed 3. Conformity to things of this world will separate you from God! - cf. 1 John 2:15-17. a. By giving way to the lust of the flesh (immorality) b. By succumbing to the lust of the eyes (materialism) c. By yielding to the pride of life (arrogance)

[You will never discern God's will trying to be like those in the world. That is very much the opposite of God's will for you! You will be able to discern God's will for you if you will...] II. BE TRANSFORMED BY RENEWING YOUR MIND A. TRANSFORMATION DEFINED...

1. The Greek word is metamorphoo a. "to change into another form" - Vine b. From which comes the word metamorphosis c. A change of form, as when a caterpillar becomes a butterfly 2. In the NT, this word is used to describe: a. What happened to Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-2. b. What is to happen to Christians in their service to God - Romans 12:1-2.

B. TRANSFORMATION DEPICTED...

1. Christians are to "undergo a complete change, which under the power of God, will find expression in character and conduct" - Vine 2. We are to become like Christ a. The purpose of discipleship and our salvation - Luke 6:40; Romans 8:29. b. The goal of Christian living - Colossians 3:9-10. c. Slowly, but surely, we are transformed to be like Christ - cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

3. Note that Paul uses the passive voice in our text - Romans 12:2. a. Indicating that transformation is something we allow to be done to us b. Not something we do by our own power alone c. We submit to God's power, and by His grace we are "changed into another form" and become a "new creation" - 2 Corinthians 5:17.

C. TRANSFORMATION DEVELOPED...

1. Begins with being in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), which requires baptism a. Whereby we put on Christ - Galatians 3:27. b. Which is a washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit - Titus 3:5.

2. Continues by renewing our minds - Romans 12:2; cf. Ephesians 4:20-24. a. Setting our minds on things above - Colossians 3:1-2. b. Setting our minds on the things of the Spirit - Romans 8:5.

3. With our minds "renewed" we can experience a true transformation! a. Putting off the old man and putting on the new man - Colossians 3:2, Colossians 3:5-10. b. Living according to the Spirit - cf. Romans 8:5, Romans 8:13.

4. The process of transformation is really quite simple - cf. Acts 2:42. a. Studying and contemplating God and His Word b. Keeping in regular communication with God via prayer c. Involving your mind in spiritual worship via frequent assembling with others

CONCLUSION 1. Discerning God's will for you does not come through conformity to the world... a. Letting the world determine your standard of dress, speech and conduct b. Letting worldly people influence you with their evil behavior - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:33.

2. Discerning God's will for you comes through a remarkable transformation... a. With the aid of the Spirit of God in conversion and regeneration b. With God's word renewing your mind so that you may discern good and evil - cf. Hebrews 5:11-14. Are you willing to let God and His Word transform your life in doing His will...?

04.07. Motivation To Do God's Will

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Motivation To Do God's Will

INTRODUCTION 1. In this study, we have considered... a. Things explicitly stated as God's will for you b. How to be transformed to discern God's will in general 2. In this lesson, we shall talk about motivation... a. Why we should want to do God's will b. Reasons given in the Scriptures for wanting to do the will of God

[Let's begin by turning to Jesus, Himself highly motivated to do the will of His Father in heaven (cf., John 4:34 John 6:38). In His sermon on the mount, He offers one compelling reason to do the will of God...] I. TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN - Matthew 7:21-23.

A. THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...

1. Broadly defined, it is the rule of God in or from heaven 2. Manifested today in the reign of His Son - Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-22; 1 Peter 3:22; Revelation 1:5.
3. Experienced in the lives of those who submit to Jesus, i. e., the church - Colossians 1:13; Revelation 1:9.
4. A reign with both present (the church) and future (heaven) aspects - 2 Timothy 4:18; 2 Peter 1:11.
5. Its future aspect described in various ways a. As a great house with many rooms - John 14:1-3. b. As a great marriage feast - Revelation 19:9. c. As a new city in a new heavens and new earth - Rev. 21:1-22:5.

B. TO ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN...

1. We must do the will of God - Matthew 7:21.
2. It is not enough to simply believe on the Lord or confess Him as Lord - *ibid*.
3. Nor to do many wonderful and amazing things in His name - Matthew 7:22-23.

[On another occasion, as His physical family drew near to speak to Him, Jesus gave another reason why we should want to do the will of God...] II. TO BE A MEMBER OF CHRIST'S FAMILY - Matthew 12:48-50.

A. THE FAMILY OF GOD...

1. Not every person is a member of God's family a. We may be God's creatures, so in one sense part of the "brotherhood of man" b. But not everyone can rightly call God their "Father" - John 8:42-44.

2. Those in God's family enjoy wonderful relationships a. With God as their heavenly father - Matthew 6:9. b. With Christ as their brother - Hebrews 2:11-12. c. With Christians as their brothers and sisters - Mark 10:29-30; 1 Timothy 5:1-2.

B. TO BE A MEMBER OF CHRIST'S FAMILY....

1. We must do the will of God - Matthew 12:48-50.
2. We must become disciples of Jesus Christ - *ibid*.
3. Which involves baptism followed by discipleship - Matthew 28:19-20.
4. This places us in the body of Christ, His church - Acts 2:41, Acts 2:47; 1 Corinthians 12:13.
5. Which church is the household or family of God - 1 Timothy 3:15.

[On yet another occasion Jesus spoke of the value of doing God's will as a means...] III. TO GAIN ASSURANCE - John 7:17.

A. ASSURANCE OF SALVATION...

1. One can easily have a false sense of assurance a. There is a way that may seem right, but be wrong - Proverbs 16:25; e. g., Acts 26:9. b. It not within man's heart alone to know what is right - Jeremiah 10:23.
2. But the very meaning of the word 'hope' implies assurance a. Hope means desire plus expectation b. And we have been saved to have hope - e. g., Romans 5:1-2; Romans 8:24.

B. WE GAIN ASSURANCE...

1. As we do the will of God - John 7:17.
2. Such as keeping His commandments - 1 John 2:3-5.
3. Especially to love one another - 1 John 3:18-23.

[Jesus certainly gives us motivation to learn and do God's will. And so do His apostles. For example...] IV. TO RECEIVE THE PROMISE - Hebrews 10:36.

A. WHICH PROMISE...?

1. We have exceedingly great and precious promises - 2 Peter 1:4.
2. The promise of eternal life - 2 Timothy 1:1; 1 John 2:25.
3. The promise of a heavenly rest - Hebrews 4:1, Hebrews 4:11.
4. The promise of Christ's coming - 2 Peter 3:4, 2 Peter 3:9-12.
5. The promise of the resurrection - Acts 24:15; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18.
6. The promise of a new heavens and new earth - 2 Peter 3:13.

B. WE SHALL RECEIVE SUCH PROMISES...

1. After we have done the will of God - Hebrews 10:36.

2. With endurance, faith, and patience - *ibid.*, Hebrews 6:12.

[Finally, in the words of John the beloved disciple, we are given another motivation to do God's will...] V. TO ABIDE FOREVER - 1 John 2:17.

A. WHAT WILL ABIDE FOREVER...?

1. Not this world, nor this universe - 1 John 2:17 2 Peter 3:10-12.
2. The words of Jesus will abide forever - Matthew 24:35.
3. The one who believes in Jesus - John 11:25.

B. TO ABIDE FOREVER...

1. We must do the will of God - 1 John 2:17.
2. Which involves not loving the world or the things in the world - 1 John 2:15-16.

CONCLUSION 1. Here, then, are five reasons to motivate us to do the will of God... a. To enter the kingdom of heaven b. To be a member of Christ's family c. To gain assurance d. To receive the promise e. To abide forever 2. Are not these sufficient motivators...? a. To seek out the will of God for our lives? b. To learn what is explicitly stated as God's will for you? c. To be transformed by the renewing of your mind so that you may discern His will? d. To do that which has been proven time again to be the good, acceptable and perfect will of God?

I pray that in some way this series of lessons is encouraging you to want to do the will of God, starting with obeying the gospel of Christ if you have not yet done so... - cf. Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38; Acts 22:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

"...for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." - 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

04.08. Making God's Will Priority One

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Making God's Will Priority One

INTRODUCTION 1. We have been examining what is God's will for you in this series of lessons...

a. But it is not enough to simply know what is God's will b. We must also make doing His will our number one priority 2. In His sermon on the mount, Jesus talks about the importance of priority...

a. In overcoming anxiety - Matthew 6:25-27. b. In experiencing the providential care of God - Matthew 6:28-32. b. By seeking first the kingdom of God - Matthew 6:33-34.

[Beginning with Matthew 6:33; let's first look at what is involved in...] I. SEEKING THE WILL OF GOD A. INVOLVES THE REIGN OF GOD...

1. Jesus said to "seek first the kingdom of God" - Matthew 6:33.

2. Broadly defined, the kingdom of God is the rule or reign of God via His will 3. Thus Jesus could use "kingdom" and "will" in synonymous parallelism - cf. Matthew 6:10.

4. Thus we must seek out what is God's will for us, live it out in our lives - e. g., John 4:34 John 6:38.

-- Seeking the will of God means looking to Him reigning over our lives B. INVOLVES THE DUTY OF DISCIPLESHIP...

1. It is God's will that we listen to His Son - Matthew 17:5; Matthew 28:18.

2. Jesus has all authority, and He desires that we become His disciples - Matthew 28:18-20.

3. Whereby we learn from Him, finding rest for our souls - Matthew 11:28-30.

-- Seeking the will of God means becoming disciples of Jesus Christ C. INVOLVES THE ROLE OF THE CHURCH...

1. Jesus came to establish His church - Matthew 16:18.

2. The church is that community of disciples who obey Him - Acts 2:41, Acts 2:47.

3. Such obedience involves fellowship, assembling together - Acts 2:42; Hebrews 10:24-25.

-- Seeking the will of God means participation in the local congregation

[But it is not sufficient to simply give the will of God a place in our lives, the will of God which involves God's reign, discipleship and the church must be "priority one" in our lives...!] II. PRIORITIZING THE WILL OF GOD

A. OVER SELF...

1. Jesus taught this in regards to discipleship - Luke 9:23.
2. We must deny self, making the will of God number one 3. As Jesus prayed, "not as I will, but as You will" - Matthew 26:39.

4. This actually makes us better persons, as it undoubtedly did for Timothy - cf. 1 Timothy 4:12-16.
-- The will of God must take priority over personal interests B. OVER FAMILY...

1. Jesus taught this in regards to discipleship - Matthew 10:34-37; Luke 14:26.
2. Thus we must put God's will before family 3. As Jesus demonstrated with His physical family - Matthew 12:46-50.

4. This actually creates better families, where love and respect abides - cf. Ephesians 5:22-33.
-- The will of God must take priority over familial interests C. OVER BUSINESS...

1. The apostles demonstrated this in answering the call to discipleship - Matthew 4:18-20; Matthew 9:9.

2. Thus we must put God's will before business affairs 3. How will we provide for family? With God's providential help! - Matthew 6:30-34.

4. This can actually lead to greater success in our business ventures - cf. Genesis 39:2-3; Daniel 1:9.

-- The will of God must take priority over occupational interests D. OVER EVERYTHING...

1. Jesus taught this in regards to discipleship - Luke 14:33.

2. Thus we must put God's will over everything else 3. As Paul demonstrated in his own life - Php 3:4-11.

-- The will of God must take priority over everything!

CONCLUSION 1. We need to understand what is really important in life... a. It is easy to be preoccupied with many things in this life - cf. Luke 10:40-41. b. We must chose the good part, that which is truly important - cf. Luke 10:42.

2. We have seen that the "good part" regarding the will of God involves... a. Seeking the rule of Christ in our lives b. Serving as disciples of Jesus Christ c. Involvement in the church of Christ 3. In the parable of the great supper, Jesus illustrated... a. The danger of making excuses - Luke 14:16-18. b. How many will use family or business duties to keep them away - Luke 14:18-20. c. The displeasure of God when people do not put His will first - Luke 14:21-24. But when we truly understand what is God's will for us, the blessings experienced by doing His will, then making God's will "priority one" will not be a problem for us. Have you made God's will "priority one" in your life, by submitting to the reign of Christ, becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ, and giving His church the proper place in your life? May we all be willing to say to God as Jesus Himself did...

"Not as I will, but as You will" - Matthew 26:39

04.09. Seeking God's Providential Will

"GOD'S WILL FOR YOU"

Seeking God's Providential Will

INTRODUCTION 1. "What is God's will for my life?" a. What devout person has not asked a question like this? b. Often asked pertaining to things like one's career, where to live, etc.

-- How can we live in harmony with the will of God?

2. Paul mentioned his desire to live in harmony with God's will... - Romans 1:9-10. a. As he made plans to visit his brethren in Rome b. As he prayed regarding such plans -- He sought to "find a way in the will of God" to come to them

[Paul's comments provide an opportunity for us to consider some final thoughts related to the will of God, especially on determining God's will for our lives. It might be of benefit to first review some...] I. FACETS OF GOD'S WILL A. THERE IS GOD'S PROCLAIMED WILL...

1. God has made His will known in many respects - e. g., 1 Thessalonians 5:18; 1 Peter 2:15.

2. This He has done through revelation a. By sending inspired prophets in the past - Hebrews 1:1. b. By sending His own Son - Hebrews 1:2. c. By having the Spirit guide the apostles - John 16:12-13; e. g., 1 Corinthians 14:36-37.

3. It is this proclaimed will of God that we must do to be saved - cf. Matthew 7:21.

-- That which is essential to know, God has revealed through Scripture - 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

B. THERE IS GOD'S PERMISSIVE WILL...

1. God allows things to happen that are not necessarily according to His desired will 2. He permits people to sin and even hurt other people a. He is not pleased, and will one day render judgment - Acts 17:30-31. b. He is able to fulfill His own will, despite such rebellion - cf. Isaiah 10:5-7.

3. God permits people to do things that are indifferent to Him a. There are some matters of indifference to God - e. g., Romans 14:5-6. b. Likewise, some decisions we make might not really matter to God -- Thus not all choices please God, nor are they necessarily required by God C. THERE IS GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL...

1. God acts providentially in our lives, as implied in our text - Romans 1:10; Romans 15:32.

2. If we seek to coincide our plans with His will, He will bless us - Proverbs 3:5-6.

3. For such reasons we should pray regarding our plans - James 4:13-15.

4. Our requests are answered if they suit God's will - cf. 1 John 5:14.

-- It is God's providential will that is of primary interest to us in this lesson [Since our focus in this lesson is on God's providential will in our lives, let's turn our attention to...] II. SEEKING GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL WILL A. BEGIN WITH THE PROCLAIMED WILL OF GOD...

1. I. e., study diligently to learn what God has revealed a. If you don't embrace and practice the revealed will of God... b. ...what difference does it make to seek other areas of God's will unknown to you?

2. The value of focusing on the proclaimed will of God a. We will not be ignorant of what is essential for us to know and do b. We can avoid choices that are clearly contrary to God's will B. SEEK ADVICE FROM OTHERS...

1. Discuss your alternatives with older, mature Christians - Proverbs 11:14; Proverbs 12:15.

2. Consult the wisdom found in the Bible (especially in books like Proverbs, Ecclesiastes) C. ASK GOD FOR WISDOM...

1. I. e., pray diligently for the ability to discern wisely - James 1:5-8.

2. Wisdom is that spiritual insight that enables you to evaluate situations clearly, and helps utilize what options and abilities you have 3. Use such wisdom to eliminate what appears less acceptable D. COMMIT YOUR WAY TO THE LORD...

1. Whatever you do, do it for the Lord's sake - cf. Psalms 37:5-6, Psalms 37:23-26.

2. Make your plans subject to God's will, both proclaimed and providential - James 4:15.

3. Give God permission to close the door on your choice if that is His will - Matthew 26:39.

4. If He closes the door on your choice, look for alternatives E. SOME OTHER THINGS TO CONSIDER...

1. God is not like a train, He is able to run on more than one track 2. A choice may not be between good and bad, but between good and better 3. God can use us in many different ways 4. If you need not choose right away, wait; that will give you time to grow and gain wisdom 5. Whatever your hands find to do in your existing circumstances, do it with all your might

CONCLUSION 1. Our goal should be to "stand perfect and complete in all the will of God" - cf. Colossians 4:12. a. Especially as it pertains to the proclaimed will of God b. As much as possible in the providential and permissive will of God 2. Epaphras' desire for his brethren serves as a good example; as does that of our Lord... a. Who taught us to pray, "Your will be done on earth as it in heaven" - Matthew 6:10. b. Who Himself prayed, "Not as I will, but as You will..." - Matthew 26:39-42. Are you seeking to "find a way in the will of God" as it pertains to your plans in life? You will if you are really committed to obeying "God's Will For You"...!

04A.00. Life After Death

Life After Death

Outlines Dealing With The Nature Of Man, The "Intermediate State," And The "Eternal State" Of Both The Righteous And The Wicked MARK A. COPELAND Table Of Contents

What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

What Is The Nature Of Man

Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go After Death?

Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious?

Shall We Know Each Other There?

What Is The Condition Of The Wicked?

What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

What Do We Know About The Judgment?

The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed

The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked

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04A.01. What is the Value of Such a Study?

What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

INTRODUCTION

1. Mankind has long been fascinated with the subject of life after death
2. Such fascination has given rise to such things as:
 - a. Interest in the occult
 - b. Speculation concerning the timing and events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ
3. It has also created much confusion among those who are Christians, who have every reason to look forward to the future with certainty and great expectation
4. Though the Bible has much to say about what will occur after death and in the future, many have not studied the Bible carefully on this subject
 - a. Their knowledge may be limited to what they have heard or seen on religious TV and radio programs
 - b. Or their understanding may be based upon a point of view that is taught by their religion's creed, rather than the Bible itself
5. It is my prayer that this series of lessons on "Life After Death" may help increase our understanding on what the Bible itself actually teaches on the subject

[In this lesson, I wish to answer the question, "What is the value of such a study?" But first, it may help to define a couple of terms...]

I. DEFINITION OF TERMS

A. ESCHATOLOGY...

1. The systematic study of that which the Bible has revealed regarding the future is called "eschatology"
2. The term comes from two words...
 - a. eschatos - meaning "last things"
 - b. logos - meaning "word" or "discourse"
3. Therefore, eschatology is a discourse or study about the last things

B. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY vs. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY...

1. The field of "eschatology" can be divided into two general areas

2. Individual eschatology...

a. Pertains to what happens to the individual between death and the final return of Christ b. Otherwise known as the "intermediate state"

3. General eschatology...

a. Pertains to what will happen when and after Christ's final coming

b. This relates to what we might call our "eternal destiny"

4. In this series of lessons, we will consider both fields of eschatology... a. Beginning with "individual" eschatology

b. Because for much of mankind, their death precedes the coming of Christ

[But what is the value of such a study, besides answering our curiosity? Is such a study really practical? Consider, then...]

II. THE VALUE OF SUCH A STUDY

A. IT ENCOURAGES US TO SO LIVE THAT THE BLESSINGS WILL BE OURS...

1. The Lord has promised wonderful blessing to those who endure - James 1:12

2. It is entirely proper for the believer to seek whatever blessings God has prepared for the righteous - 1 Peter 3:8-12

B. IT FURNISHES A STIMULUS AND A THEME FOR EVANGELISM...

1. Knowing what lay ahead for sinful mankind motivated Paul to preach - 2 Corinthians 5:10-11

2. It should also motivate sinners to obey - Acts 17:30; Matthew 16:24-27

C. IT HELPS ONE TO ANSWER INQUIRERS, AND TO QUIET DECEIVERS...1. Many are sincerely interested, and we should be able to give them the correct teaching - 1 Peter 3:15

2. But there are many bent on teaching their false doctrine, and we should be able to refute them - Titus 1:9-11

D. IT HELPS TO STIMULATE PRAYER...

1. The importance of prayer to the Christian can never be overemphasized - cf. Luke 18:1-8

2. Meditating upon the "end times" can stimulate serious and watchful prayer - 1 Peter 4:7

E. IT CAN STRENGTHEN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER...

1. Read carefully 1 Peter 4:7-10

2. Increasing our understanding for what awaits the faithful can spur greater devotion and service to one another (cf. Matthew 25:31-46)

3. That service in turn strengthens our love for one another!

F. IT CAN CAUSE MORE GLORY TO BE GIVEN TO GOD...

1. Note carefully Romans 2:4, where we learn the goodness of God leads men to repent
2. The more we learn of God's goodness which He has prepared for those who love and obey Him, the more we (and others) will repent...resulting in the glory of God - cf. 1 Peter 4:11

G. IT CAN INCREASE INCENTIVE TO BE STEADFAST IN THE FAITH...

1. Consider 1 Peter 5:8-9
2. The more we strengthen the inner conviction...
 - a. That hell is real
 - b. That it is Satan's sinister purpose to devour as many people as possible ...the more incentive we will have to remain steadfast in the faith!

CONCLUSION

1. Far from being an impractical subject of study, the truths concerning the "last things" can be of inestimable value to our present life
2. As John wrote, our hope in the One Who is coming, and what that means for us, can help to "purify" ourselves - cf. 1 John 3:2-3

In our next study, we shall begin looking at individual eschatology by examining different attitudes held towards death itself...

Life After Death

04A.02. What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lesson examined the value of such a study as "Life After Death", and a theme in which we suggested that it could...

- a. Encourage us to so live as to inherit blessings
- b. Furnish us a stimulus and theme for evangelism
- c. Help us to answer inquirers, and quiet deceivers
- d. Stimulate us to more fervent prayers
- e. Strengthen our love for one another
- f. Cause more glory to be given to God
- g. Increase incentive to be steadfast in the faith

2. Understanding the value of such a study, it may be proper to begin this study in earnest by stressing what our attitude as Christians should be towards death itself

- a. This will help us get started in the right direction
- b. For whatever "conclusions" or "convictions" we may reach in future studies must be in harmony with the proper attitude as taught in the Bible
 - 1) Some views of seem totally out of harmony with a Biblical attitude toward death
 - 2) E.g., if after death the soul "sleeps" or ceases to exist, I find it difficult to understand why the Bible says what it does about the death of the righteous [Let's notice first, then, some...]

I. WRONG ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH

A. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST"...

1. Who believes that "matter, sin, sickness, and death have no reality"
2. I.e., who in essence denies the reality of death
3. Who might to read Genesis 5:5, Genesis 5:8, Genesis 5:11, Genesis 5:14, Genesis 5:17, Genesis 5:20, Genesis 5:27, Genesis 5:31 and observe how often the Scriptures records "and he died"

B. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "ESCAPIST"...

1. Who fears death, and so tries to avoid all mention of it

a. Louis XV forbade his servants to mention the word "death" in his presence b. Some Chinese are afraid that the mention of "death" invites it 2. But that approach cannot provide any true comfort

C. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "FATALIST" OR "STOIC"...

1. This person appears to accept it without any emotion, one way or the other
2. E.g., saying "When I die, I rot...and what of it?"

D. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "BLATANT INFIDEL"...

1. This individual curses death and the God (if there is one) who allows it
2. Who might say, "This is a dirty trick!"

E. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "DESPAIRING PESSIMIST"...

1. Tired of life, and in despair commits suicide
2. But there is at least one passage that teaches us to have more respect for our physical body
- cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

F. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "SENTIMENTALIST"...

1. This person gushes over deathbed scenes, grows very sentimental, but actually enjoys it!
2. Just like there are those who enjoy "thrillers", there are those who delight in "tear-jerkers"
3. Why? You will have to ask a psychologist for that one...

G. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "RELIGIOUS FANATIC WITH A MARTYR COMPLEX"...

1. Not to be confused with true martyrs who faced inevitable death with great courage
2. This person actually looks for opportunity to die for the Lord
3. Who should probably study such verses like 1 Corinthians 13:3 b; Php 1:22-24

[Such attitudes toward death are harmful or otherwise wrong. How then should the Christian view death? The same way the Bible views it...]

II. BIBLICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS

A. PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD...

1. Cf. Psalms 116:15
2. Viewed from God's perspective, death simply means that one of His children is finally "coming home"

B. REMOVED FROM EVIL, AND AT PEACE...

1. Cf. Isaiah 57:1-2
2. In times of turmoil, the righteous are often caught up in the loss of life

3. But we can consider it from a positive perspective, that such are no longer have to endure the evil, and are now in peace!

C. A BEING CARRIED AWAY BY ANGELS TO BLISS...

1. Cf. Luke 16:22

2. Those righteous who have suffered are immediately released from that suffering, and are carried away by the angels to a place of comfort

1. Cf. Luke 23:43

2. So Jesus promised the thief on the cross

1. Paul viewed his impending death as a "departure", using "a metaphor drawn from loosing from moorings preparatory to setting sail" - 2 Timothy 4:6

2. Peter used the Greek word exodos {ex'-od-os} (translated "decease"), meaning "exit", the same word used to describe the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage

F. A "GAIN", SOMETHING FAR BETTER THAN LIVING...

1. Cf. Php 1:21, Php 1:23

2. This was another way Paul viewed his death

G. TO BE WITH CHRIST, AT HOME WITH THE LORD...

1. Cf. Php 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8

2. This is why death was considered by Paul to be a "gain", rather than a loss

H. "ASLEEP" IN JESUS, YET LIVING WITH HIM...

1. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11

2. Those who have died "in Christ", are said to "sleep in Jesus"

3. Whether this phrase ("sleep in Jesus") supports what some teach as "soul sleeping" will be examined more carefully later, but Paul does say that those who sleep in Jesus still "live together with Him" implying awareness - 1 Thessalonians 5:10

I. A BLESSED REST FROM THEIR LABORS...

1. Cf. Revelation 14:13

2. One of the many blessings promised to those who patiently keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12)

CONCLUSION

1. This should suffice to convince the faithful Christian that death...

a. Is not to be denied or feared

b. But can be something precious and even longed for, for the blessings it brings!

2. As said in the beginning of this lesson, whatever conclusions or convictions we reach concerning the death of the righteous must somehow fit in with these attitudes towards death as found in the Bible

3. May God give us more grace and greater faith to so view the death of those in Christ, and our own death as well!

4. And may we also ever give praise and glory to God, who through His Son has freed us from the "fear of death" - Hebrews 2:14-15

Have you been freed from the fear of death, by being made righteous in the blood of the Lamb?

04A.03. What Is the Nature of Man?

What Is The Nature Of Man?

INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lessons have simply served as an introduction to our study...
 - a. We have seen that such a study can be of value
 - b. We have seen also that death for the righteous is spoken of as a blessed thing in the sight of God, and something even desired, not feared, by some early Christians-Hopefully, this will have peaked our interest in what the Bible actually teaches concerning "life after death"
2. A study like this must necessarily include a discussion of the "nature" of man...
 - a. For our view of man's "nature" will have a bearing upon our views concerning what happens when man dies b. I.e., those who believe that man's nature is wholly material (like those who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses") have completely different views than those who hold that man possesses a soul or spirit which survives death
3. This is a difficult subject, and in this lesson I hope to...
 - a. Illustrate the difficulty, so that we may ever be cautious and humble in dealing with the subject
 - b. Look at those passages which I believe clearly teach that man possesses a "soul" (or "spirit") which continues to exist after death

[With these goals in mind, consider first, then...]

I. THE DIFFICULT NATURE OF THIS SUBJECT

A. IT REVOLVES AROUND THE USE OF THE WORDS "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT"...

1. Many try to make it sound simpler that it is
 - a. By suggesting there is one definition for each word which applies every time that word is found
 - b. "JW's" are notorious for doing this, but it is a mistake we all make at times
2. We might wish it was that simple, but we must bear in mind that one word often has many different meanings
 - a. E.g., consider the word "run"
 - 1) As an intransitive verb, it has at least fifteen (15) different meanings!
 - 2) As a transitive verb, fifteen (15) more!
 - 3) As a noun, eleven (11) more
 - 4) As an adjective, three (3) more
 - 5) In all, "run" can have at least forty-four (44) different definitions!

b. Such varied use of a single word is quite common in all languages, including Hebrew and Greek

3. The words translated "soul" and "spirit" likewise have many different meanings

B. CONSIDER THE WORD "SOUL"...

1. The HEBREW word is "nephesh", and at times it may refer to:

a. Animal life - Genesis 1:20-21 ("living")

b. The person - Numbers 31:19 ("killed any person")

c. The body - Numbers 6:6 ("a dead body")

d. Something distinguished from the body - Isaiah 10:18 ("soul and body") e. Breath - Job 41:21 (referring to Leviathan)

2. The GREEK word is "psuche", and at times it may refer to:

a. The person - 1 Peter 3:20 ("eight souls saved by water")

b. Life itself - John 13:38 ("lay down your life")

c. Something distinguished from the spirit - Hebrews 4:12 ("soul and spirit") d. Something distinguished from the body - 1 Thessalonians 5:23 ("spirit and soul and body") e. That which exists after the body is dissolved - Matthew 10:28 ("kill the body but not the soul")

C. CONSIDER THE WORD "SPIRIT"...

1. The HEBREW word is "ruach", and at times it may refer to:

a. Storms and wind - Genesis 8:1 ("wind")

b. The life principle - Genesis 6:17 ("breath of life")

c. Breath itself - Job 9:18 ("catch my breath")

d. Something distinct from breath - Job 34:15 ("spirit and breath") e. A disposition or attitude - Ecclesiastes 7:8-9 ("patient in spirit better than proud in spirit") f. Non-fleshly beings with intelligence - 1 Kings 22:21-22 ("a spirit came forward...") g. That which is interchangeable with "nephesh" - Isaiah 26:9

h. That which is distinct from the flesh

1) Numbers 16:22 ("spirits of all flesh")

2) Isaiah 31:3 ("are flesh, and not spirit")

i. The inner man

1) Isaiah 26:9 ("by my spirit within me I will seek You")

2) Zechariah 12:1 ("forms the spirit of man within him")

2. The GREEK word is "pneuma", and at times it may refer to:

- a. The wind - John 3:8 ("the wind blows...")
- b. Breath - 2 Thessalonians 2:8 ("will consume with the breath of His mouth")
- c. The Holy Spirit - John 1:32 ("I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove")
- d. Unclean spirits or demons
 - 1) Matthew 8:16 ("He cast out the spirits with a word")
 - 2) Luke 4:33 ("a spirit of an unclean demon")
- e. Angels - Hebrews 1:13-14 ("ministering spirits sent forth")
- f. Character and moral qualities - 1 Peter 3:4 ("a gentle and quiet spirit")
- g. Purpose, or aim
 - 1) 2 Corinthians 12:18 ("Did we not walk in the same spirit?")
 - 2) Php 1:27 ("stand fast in one spirit")
- h. Perception, desires, feelings, etc. - 1 Corinthians 5:3 ("absent in body but present in spirit")
- i. Part of man distinct from the flesh
 - 1) 1 Corinthians 5:5 ("for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved")
 - 2) Hebrews 12:23 ("to the spirits of just men made perfect")

D. WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS PROVE...?

1. Simply that "soul" and "spirit" have many different meanings and applications
 - a. Therefore we cannot just take one definition which may be true in one context and apply it to all others!
 - b. Yet many do this very thing
2. We must be cautious, and humbly consider the context of each passage to determine how the words are being used

[With that thought in mind, we are ready to consider the "nature" of man: Does man possess a spirit or soul that continues to exist after death? Consider those...]

II. SCRIPTURES WHICH INDICATE THAT MAN HAS A SOUL OR SPIRIT WHICH CONTINUES AFTER DEATH

A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. An interesting phrase is "gathered to thy people", implying existence after death, and is made in regards to the death of...
 - a. Abraham - Genesis 25:8
 - b. Isaac - Genesis 35:29
 - c. Jacob - Genesis 49:29, Genesis 49:33
 - d. Aaron - Numbers 20:24
 - e. Moses - Numbers 27:13; Deuteronomy 32:50
 - f. Josiah - 2 Kings 22:20; 2 Chronicles 34:28

2. There is the case of Samuel, who was brought back after his death - 1 Samuel 28:7-19
3. David could look forward to one day joining his infant son - 2 Samuel 12:22-23
4. The spirit will return to God at death - Ecclesiastes 12:6-7
5. The lament against the king of Babylon speaks of life after death - Isaiah 14:9-11
6. Likewise the lament against Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc., who are all consigned to the "Pit" - Ezekiel 32:17-32

B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. In the teaching of Jesus

a. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by another - Matthew 10:28 b. The story of Lazarus and the rich man - cf. Luke 16:22-23

1) Some say this is only a parable

2) Even if it was (which is highly unlikely), parables were "true to life" stories, not fantasy!

c. His promise to the thief on the cross - Luke 23:42-43

2. In the teaching of Paul

a. There is "the inner man" that can be ever renewed, even while "the outer man" decays - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

b. One can be with the Lord, while absent from the body - 2 Corinthians 5:6-8c. There is a part of man that can be "out of the body" - 2 Corinthians 12:3

d. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - Php 1:23

e. Reference is made to the "spirits of just men" - Hebrews 12:22-23

3. The teaching of Peter

a. He spoke of the "spirits in prison" - 1 Peter 3:18-20

b. He wrote of those who are "dead, but live in the spirit" - 1 Peter 4:6 c. He described the body as a tabernacle to be put off...if the body is a tabernacle (dwelling place), what dwells in it? - 2 Peter 1:13-14

d. The unjust are under punishment, just like some angels - 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Peter 2:9-10

4. John, in the Revelation given to him, saw "souls of those slain", and they were capable of crying out with loud voices, and being comforted - Revelation 6:9-11

CONCLUSION 1. Passages such these certainly lead me to believe that man is of a "twofold" nature... a. There is the outward man; the body of flesh which grows old and eventually dies b. There is the inward man; called at times the "soul" or "spirit", which can be renewed daily and continues to exist past death

2. Bearing in mind that "soul" and "spirit" can have many different meanings...

a. I suggest that in passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12...

1) Either "soul" or "spirit" is being used in one of the many senses other than what we commonly think of it

2) I.e., man is still basically "twofold" and not "threefold" in nature (as these two passages seem to imply)

b. Whenever Materialists use passages which might indicate that man's "soul" or "spirit" does not continue after death...

1) They are using a passage which utilizes one of the many different meanings of the words

2) And these passages should not cause us to completely throw out other passages which clearly teach there is something to man that does continue on after death! In our next study, we will consider more closely where the spirits of believers go at death...

04A.04. Where Do the Spirits of Believers Go After Death?

Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go After Death?

INTRODUCTION

1. Having determined from the Scriptures that man possesses a soul or spirit which continues after death, the question now before us is this: "Where do the spirits of believers go after death?"

2. In this lesson, I will be examining two different views:

a. One that I will call the "traditional" view, which is held by many Christians b. Another that I will propose as the "scriptural" view, which I believe is more in harmony with what is revealed in the New Testament [Beginning, then, with...]

I. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXPLAINED A. STATED BRIEFLY, THIS VIEW TEACHES THE FOLLOWING...

1. When we die...

a. Our body return to the dust

b. Our spirits go to Hades, the realm of the "unseen"

2. This realm of departed spirits (i.e., Hades) is divided into three parts... a.Paradise, the place of rest for the righteous

b. Tartarus, the place of torment for the wicked

c. And a Gulf, separating the two 3. During this interim period between death and the resurrection, the righteous... a. Are separated from God and Christ

b. For God and Christ are "in heaven", and Paradise is in Hades, not heaven

4. Such is the state of the "disembodied spirits" until the Resurrection

a. At which time the spirits of both the wicked and the righteous will be united with their resurrected bodies b. At this time will occur the Judgment, after which...

1) The righteous will spend eternity with God

2) The wicked will spend eternity in Hell (Grk., gehenna)

B. THE SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS VIEW...

1. Is based heavily upon what we read in Luke 16:16-31

a. I.e., the story of the rich man and Lazarus

b. Notice especially Luke 16:22-26

2. Luke 23:43 is also offered as support

a. Where we read of the account of Jesus and the thief on the cross

b. Both of whom would be in Paradise that very day following their deaths 3. That Paradise was not in Heaven where God dwells is based on Jesus' words in John 20:17 a. Words spoken three days after promising the thief they would both be in Paradise b. Yet Jesus had not yet ascended to the Father!

c. Suggesting, therefore, that Paradise was not Heaven (or in Heaven)!

4. As further evidence that Paradise is not in Heaven, appeal is made to Acts 2:29-35 a. Concerning Christ...

1) His soul was not to be left in Hades (the realm of the dead, which included Paradise)

2) But after His resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of God (i.e., Heaven) b. Concerning David...

1) Surely he went to Paradise (in Hades) when he died, as did Abraham, Lazarus, and the thief on the cross

2) But note that Peter said "David did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:34) a) Suggesting the one could die, be in Hades (Paradise), and yet not be in Heaven with the Father

b) Just as Christ implied to Mary in John 20:17

[Such is the "traditional" view as I understand it. Now let's take a closer look...]

II. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXAMINED

A. THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS VIEW IS CONVINCING, TO A POINT...

1. This explanation for what happens after death appears consistent with the information we have prior to the ascension of Christ!

2. But in light of what is revealed in the Scriptures after Jesus' ascension into heaven... a. This "traditional" view may need some revision

b. But only concerning "the intermediate state" of the righteous B. REASONS TO SUGGEST A REVISION OF THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW...

1. After Jesus ascended to heaven...

a. Paradise (the resting place of the righteous) is now spoken of as being in heaven!

1) We saw earlier that when Jesus spoke to Mary He had not yet ascended to the Father (i.e., heaven), though He had been in "Paradise" prior to His resurrection

2) Note carefully that "Paradise" is used synonymously with the "third heaven" (i.e., God's dwelling place) by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:4

3) Whereas Paradise was once distinct from heaven, now it is not!

b. The expectation of the righteous is to be with Christ upon death - Php 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10

c. The book of Revelation speaks of the righteous dead being in heaven while much is still going on here on earth - Revelation 6:9-11; Revelation 7:9-17

d. The Scriptures speak of Jesus bringing the righteous with Him at His Final Coming - 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14

1) I understand this to refer to the "spirits" of those who were righteous, and who are coming to be united with their resurrected bodies - cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16

2) Of course, I suppose Jesus could "pick up" these saints in Hades on His way, but in view of other passages I believe they are already with Him

2. I have a hard time reconciling...

a. Such passages as these found after Christ's ascension into heaven

b. With those made before Christ's ascension

-Unless something has changed

[Therefore, as an alternative to the "traditional" view, I propose a more "scriptural" view...]

III. THE "SCRIPTURAL" VIEW EXPLAINED

A. FIRST, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW REMAINS THE SAME FOR THE PERIOD "PRIOR" TO JESUS' ASCENSION...1. All who died went to Hades a. The wicked went to torment, awaiting judgment

b. The righteous went to Paradise to await the Judgment

2. Even Jesus, with the thief on the cross, went to Paradise, which was in Hades

B. BUT NOW, AFTER JESUS' ASCENSION, THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS DIFFERENT...

1. Paradise is now in Heaven, not Hades

2. The hope of the righteous is to spend the "intermediate state" in the presence of the Lord, awaiting the resurrection and the Judgment

C. IF THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS CHANGED, WHY?

1. That the change did occur appears to be clear

2. The "why" may be speculation on my part, but here is one suggestion...

a. God is holy, and sin cannot be tolerated in His presence

1) The righteous who died before the cross, were forgiven in view of Christ's death 2) But prior to the death of Christ, the true price for sin had not been paid

3) So until their spirits were actually "redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ", they were not permitted in God's presence, and Paradise remained in Hades b. After the cross, and when He ascended, Jesus offered His blood as the "eternal redemption price" to God to appease for sin - cf. Hebrews 9:11-15, Hebrews 9:23-26). With such an offering, the spirits of just men were now "made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23), and now in a position to be with God and Christ in heaven, awaiting the resurrection and Day of Judgment - cf. Revelation 6:9-11

2) Thus Paradise (the intermediate place for the righteous) can now be in heaven! c. And therefore the Christian, whose spirit is also made perfect by the blood of Christ, can have the hope to be with Christ and God in heaven, during the "intermediate state" prior to the bodily resurrection at the Last Day!

CONCLUSION

1. Again, the why may be purely speculation, but I do believe there is sufficient evidence to reexamine a view many have traditionally held...

a. A view that was true prior to the ascension of Christ

b. But one that now fails to adequately explain many statements made after Christ's ascension 2. Our next study will look more closely at the condition of the righteous during the "intermediate state"

04A.05. Are the Souls of the Redeemed Conscious?

Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious?

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous study, I suggested that the spirits of believers go to be with the Lord during the "intermediate state" between death and the resurrection

a. Implied was the idea that the souls of the redeemed are conscious during this interim b. But are they?

2. In this lesson, we shall consider the doctrine of "soul-sleeping", and make some observations concerning it

I. THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING"

A. THE THEORY...

1. The souls of the departed continue to exist, but are in an unconscious state until the resurrection

2. This is not to be confused with the doctrine held by JW's, who believe there is no consciousness until the resurrection because until then there is no existence at all

B. THE ARGUMENTS...

1. The Scriptures often represent death as a "sleep"

a. Matthew 27:52 - ...bodies of the saints who had "fallen asleep"...

b. John 11:11-14 - Jesus says of dead Lazarus, "our friend sleeps"

c. Acts 7:60 - As Stephen is stoned to death, it is said "he fell asleep"

2. Other passages come very near to saying that the dead have no consciousness a. Psalms 30:9 - The psalmist asks, "When I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you?" b. Psalms 115:17 - The psalmist declares, "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence."

c. Ecclesiastes 9:5, Ecclesiastes 9:10 - Solomon, in his search for meaning, observes:

1) "...the dead know nothing..."

2) "there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going."

d. Isaiah 38:18-19 - King Hezekiah says concerning God that "Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You, those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth."

[Such is the theory and the arguments presented by those who believe in "soul sleeping." At face value, the doctrine appears very convincing. But let's take a closer look at it...]

II. EXAMINING THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING" A. ARGUMENT #1: DEATH IS CALLED "SLEEP"...

1. Nowhere do the Scriptures say that the soul of the departed one fell asleep a. It was the person who "fell asleep"

b. Thus it can have reference to the body, not the soul

2. The term "sleep" can be a figurative reference, and a very appropriate one: a. For sleep implies rest...

1) When one sleeps literally, there is rest from one's labor

2) So it is that the dead also "rest from their labors", cf. Revelation 14:13 b. For sleep implies a ceasing of participation...

1) In literal sleep, one ceases in the activities pertaining to the sphere in which one has been busy during the hours of wakefulness

2) So it is with the dead, they are no longer active in the world which they left c. For sleep is generally a prelude to an awakening...

1) In literal sleep, it is followed by an "awakening"

2) So it is with death:

a) Though the souls may be conscious during the intermediate state... b) ...at the resurrection there will be the "awakening" of the glorified and transformed bodies in which to house our souls

3. Perhaps it can also be said that the term "sleep" became a euphemism for death because of the sleep-like appearance of the body

B. ARGUMENT #2: PASSAGES WHICH SUGGEST THE DEAD HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER DEATH...

1. Notice first that these passages are in the Old Testament, when revelation of God's truth was not yet complete

a. The passages in Psalms and Isaiah are the expressions of faith and understanding by those who knowledge of God's revelation was incomplete b. I.e., their concept of "life after death" was not as complete and developed as that found in the New Testament

c. We should be cautious, therefore, against developing a doctrine of life after death which does not take into account what is ultimately revealed when revelation is complete

2. In some cases, the statements are made solely from an earthly perspective

a. This is especially true in Ecclesiastes

b. Where the theme is "Life Under The Sun"

c. When one looks at things purely from an earthly perspective...

1) It does not appear the dead know anything

2) It does not appear the dead praise God

d. Thus, Ecclesiastes 9:10 is saying nothing more than that when we die, we are no longer conscious of things in this life

C. FINALLY, THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING" IS OUT OF HARMONY WITH PASSAGES THAT CLEARLY TEACH CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOULS AFTER DEATH...

1. Luke 16:22-26 - Abraham, the rich man, and Lazarus a. Some believe that this is only a "parable"

b. Highly unlikely in my opinion, but even if so, parables used "true to life" experiences as a basis for comparison, not science fiction or fantasy!

2. Luke 23:43 - How can Paradise be a state of unconsciousness?

3. Revelation 6:9-11 - Can souls cry out if they are not conscious?

4. Revelation 7:9-17 - Can souls praise God and serve Him if they are not conscious?

5. Revelation 20:4-6 - Can souls reign with Christ if they are not aware of what is going on?

CONCLUSION

1. In view of such passages...

a. Describing the condition of souls during the "intermediate" state

b. Where they are very much awake, praising and serving God, reigning with Christ

-The doctrine of "soul sleeping" does not hold up

2. We can best harmonize the Scriptures if we view the term sleep in reference to death as only a figure of speech...

a. Naturally drawn from how the body appears at death

b. Pertaining to our relationship to this earthly realm

1) We are at rest from labors in this life

2) We are not aware of what goes on in this life

3) But one day, there will be an "awakening" (the resurrection), in which we will be rejoined with those who are still in this life (of course, they too will be changed) 3. In the next study, we shall consider the question: "Shall we know each other in the life after death?"

04A.06. Shall We Know Each Other There?

Shall We Know Each Other There?

INTRODUCTION

1. Our studies in "life after death" so far have endeavored to show that:

- a. Such a study is profitable
- b. Death should be thought of as a positive thing for Christians
- c. The nature of man is twofold: soul and body
- d. The departed spirits of believers go to be with Christ at death
- e. The souls of the redeemed are in a conscious state during this "intermediate" state

2. The question we will focus on in this lesson pertains to the idea of recognition after death: ana1hema a. I.e., shall we know each other after death?

b. For one may agree with all that has been said so far, yet believe that we shall not know one another...

1) Either in the "intermediate" state

2) Or in the "final" state

3. But what does the Bible reveal about this question?

[We begin by observing...]

I. SCRIPTURES WHICH SUGGEST RECOGNITION AFTER DEATH

A. Isaiah 14:3-4, Isaiah 14:9-11, Isaiah 14:16...

1. This passage refers to the king of Babylon
2. Who is recognize by those in Hades upon his death

B. Ezekiel 32:17-32...

1. This passage speaks of Pharaoh and his army
2. Who is recognized by others in Hades - Ezekiel 32:21
3. Who in turn recognizes those of Assyria, Elam, Edom, etc. - Ezekiel 32:22-31

C. Luke 16:19-31...

1. This is the familiar story of Lazarus and the rich man

2. In which the rich man recognizes both Lazarus and Abraham - Ezekiel 32:23-24

D. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:14...

1. Both passages reveal Paul's expectation of being with His converts at Christ's coming

2. Recognizing them would be a source of great joy for Paul

E. Matthew 8:11-12...

1. Reference is made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven

2. The recognition of which would increase the joys of those present (and the dismay of those "cast out into outer darkness")

[To these examples we could add Samuel (who after his death was recognized by Saul - 1 Samuel 28:3-19), plus Moses and Elijah (recognized on the Mount of Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-5). All clearly indicating that we will indeed know one another after death! But what are some objections commonly made about this view? And how might one answer them?]

II. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

A. OBJECTION #1...

1. Stated...

a. Some of these passages speak of conditions after the resurrection

b. At that time we will have bodies by which recognition may be possible c. But that does not prove that "disembodied" souls in heaven now recognize each other 2. Answered...

a. Most of these passages are definitely speaking of the "intermediate" state 1) Those referring to the King of Babylon, Pharaoh and his army

2) The rich man and Lazarus

3) Samuel, Elijah, and Moses b. Angels have no "bodies", yet recognize one another - e.g., Daniel 10:13 B. OBJECTION #2...

1. Stated...

a. If we can actually recognize one another, then we can miss those not there b. This would cause unhappiness in heaven 2. Answered...

a. What about Jesus?

1) Does He not miss many that He sincerely admonished (as in the case of the rich young ruler - Mark 10:21)?

2) Would one then say that Jesus is unhappy?

b. Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the following direction:

1) That when we die, all earthly ties that were not in Christ (including family ties) will lose their meaning!

2) Do not passages like Matthew 12:46-50 and Matthew 10:37 point in that direction? a) Our spiritual family becomes our true family, as it was with Jesus b) Our love for Jesus will far surpass the love we have for others c. Or does not God...

1) Who has the power to take away death, sorrow, crying, pain (cf. Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4)

2) Also have the power to remove any unpleasant awareness of loved ones lost while still permitting blessed awareness of loved ones saved?

C. OBJECTION #3...

1. Stated...

a. According to Matthew 22:23-33, all earthly ties will lose their meaning b. Hence, any recognition of those whom we have known on earth would be meaningless

2. Answered...

a. The passage simply teaches that there will be no "marriage" relationships in the resurrection

b. In this sense, we will be like the angels in heaven

c. This does not say "all" relationships will be abolished!

CONCLUSION

1. There is good reason, therefore, to believe that we shall know one another after this life

2. And that can serve as a powerful motive...

a. To live our lives pleasing in the sight of God

b. To try and take those we love with us by encouraging them to live likewise! In our next study, we shall take a look at the condition of the wicked during the "intermediate" state...

04A.07. What is the Condition of the Wicked?

What Is The Condition Of The Wicked?

INTRODUCTION

1. So far in this series, we have concentrated our attention upon...
 - a. The "intermediate state" of man between death and the resurrection
 - b. In particular, the temporary state of the departed righteous
2. Stated briefly, I have tried to show that upon death the souls of the righteous:
 - a. Are in Paradise, which since the ascension of Christ is in Heaven with Jesus and the Father
 - b. That they are conscious in this state of "bliss", and recognize one another
3. A passage which I understand to beautifully describe this "intermediate state" of the righteous after death is Revelation 7:9-17
4. In this lesson, I wish to address the following question: "What is the condition of the departed wicked?"
5. Once again, we are considering at this time only the "intermediate state" between death and the resurrection

[The Bible reveals several things about the condition of the departed spirits of the wicked. For example, they are...]

I. ALIVE AND CONSCIOUS

A. AS SUGGESTED BY THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS...

1. Recorded in Luke 16:19-31
2. Even if this story is a "parable" (which I doubt), like all parables it is "true to life", not based upon fantasy
3. The reference to "Moses and the prophets" (31) makes it clear the time frame of the story is set while the Law of Moses was still in effect, so this is a description of the "intermediate state"

B. FROM THIS ACCOUNT, WE LEARN THAT THE WICKED...

1. Do not cease to exist ("he lifted up his eyes and saw") - Luke 16:23
2. Are aware of where they are, and what is going on around them ("I am tormented in this flame") - Luke 16:24 b
3. Recognize others ("Father Abraham...send Lazarus...") - Luke 16:24 a

4. Remember those who have yet to follow them in death ("for I have five brothers") - Luke 16:28 a
[Not only alive and conscious, but as already hinted at, they are...]

II. IN TORMENT

A. AS EMPHASIZED FOUR TIMES IN THE STORY OF THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS...

1. "being in torments" - Luke 16:23 a
2. "I am tormented in this flame" - Luke 16:24 c
3. "and you are tormented" - Luke 16:25 c
4. "lest they also come to this place of torment" - Luke 16:28 b

B. AS REVEALED BY PETER...

1. The Lord knows how to "reserve the unjust under punishment for the day of judgment" - 2 Peter 2:9
2. According to Robertson's Word Pictures, the Greek word for "under punishment" (kolazomenous) is a present passive participle; the present tense emphasizes continuity of the punishment
3. Note that the wicked are reserved under punishment "for" the day of judgment, so the punishment is something going on prior to the Judgment itself

[Where is this "torment" or punishment taking place? As revealed in the Scriptures, the wicked dead are...]

III. IN HADES

A. THE ORIGIN OF THE WORD "HADES" IS UNCERTAIN...

1. Either from Idein (seen) with a negative prefix A, meaning "the unseen, invisible"
2. Or from Aianes, meaning "gloomy, gruesome"

B. IN THE SEPTUAGINT VERSION OF THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. It is used to translate the Hebrew word, Sheol
2. Depending upon the context, "sheol" (hades) may mean...
 - a. Simply an unseen place
 - 1) As in Jonah 2:2
 - 2) Where it refers to the belly of the great fish
 - b. The grave - Genesis 42:38; Genesis 44:29; Genesis 44:31; Job 17:13; Psalms 16:10
 - c. The realm of the dead (but not the tomb), where both good and bad people go upon death
 - 1) Genesis 37:35 - How could Jacob hope to go down "into the grave" to his son (even though that is how the NKJV translates "sheol") when he thought his son had been eaten by animals? This

makes me think Jacob had in mind the "realm of the dead", not the tomb

2)Psalms 55:15; Proverbs 9:18; Isaiah 14:9-11 - These passages speak of the wicked

C. IN CLASSICAL GREEK...

1. Homer used the word as a proper name for the "god of the underworld"

2. In other literature, it stood for "the underworld" as the abode of all the dead a. Which was divided into two parts (similar to Luke 16:1-31)

b. These two parts were:

1) The "Elysian fields", the abode of the good 2) "Tartarus", the place of punishment for the wicked

D. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, "HADES" IS FOUND ONLY ELEVEN TIMES...1. Ten times it is translated "hell" or "hades" (Matthew 11:23; Matthew 16:18; Luke 10:15; Luke 16:23; Acts 2:27, Acts 2:31; Revelation 1:18; Revelation 6:8; Revelation 20:13-14), and once it is the "grave" (1 Corinthians 15:55)

2. Some believe that "hades" is the realm of ALL the dead (similar to the concept of the Greeks), and made up of two separate parts...

a. With Paradise (at least prior to the Ascension of Christ) for the righteous

b. And Tartarus for the wicked - cf. 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Peter 2:9

3. Others believe the term "hades" refers only to the place of the wicked

a. That it is not clear in Luke 16:22-23 whether Hades was just the abode of the rich man, or also that of Lazarus and Abraham

b. And in Acts 2:26-27, Acts 2:31 we may have a case of synonymous parallelism, with only the resurrected body of Christ in view ("soul" being used to refer to the body, and "hades" is referring to the grave, as "sheol" in the Hebrew sometimes does)

c. But remember the statement of Jacob in Genesis 37:35

4. In any case, "hades" is used at least on several occasions in the New Testament...

a. As the place of the wicked - Luke 16:23

b. As a place where the wicked are in torment - Luke 16:23

c. As a temporary place, to be thrown into "the lake of fire" after the Judgment - Revelation 20:13-14

CONCLUSION

1. Though the Scriptures may not tell us everything we might like to know about the "intermediate state", enough is revealed to make the following comparison:

a. Concerning the righteous...

- 1) With God and Christ
- 2) In Paradise, which since the ascension of Christ is in Heaven
- 3) Alive and conscious
- 4) At rest in a state of blessedness

b. Concerning the wicked...

- 1) Separated from God and Christ
- 2) In Hades
- 3) Alive and conscious
- 4) In torment, reserved under punishment for the day of Judgment

2. In future lessons we shall consider the "eternal state" of man, both of the righteous and the wicked...

a. But does this not suffice to move us to so live as to experience the blessings of the righteous and to avoid the torment of the wicked?

b. If so, what are we doing about it?

04A.08. What Do We Know About the Lord's Second Coming?

What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

INTRODUCTION

1. Everything we have examined up to this point in this series on "Life After Death" has pertained to the "intermediate state"

2. Though Christians can look forward to experiencing bliss during the "intermediate state", there are even greater blessings for us to look forward to...

a. The resurrection of the dead, in which our spirits will obtain glorified and immortal bodies
b. The Day of Judgment, which for the Christian will be a day of glory and vindication
c. The new heavens and new earth, in which God and Christ will dwell with us for eternity

-All of these blessings will be ushered in with the Lord's Second Coming

3. While most professing Christians look for the Lord to return, they often differ greatly over the details surrounding His "second coming"

a. The premillennial view looks for Christ to come in order to establish a literal kingdom on the earth, over which He will reign for a 1000 years

b. The postmillennial view understands that Christ will at some point begin a thousand year reign from heaven, at the end of which He will come to judge the world

c. The amillennial view believes that Christ has been reigning as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" ever since His ascension to heaven, and that His coming will be to raise the dead, judge the world, and usher in the "new heavens and new earth"

4. In this lesson, the amillennial view will be presented, which I believe most accurately teaches what the Bible reveals about the Second Coming of our Lord

[We begin, therefore, with...]

I. THE "CERTAINTY" OF HIS COMING

A. PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS AT HIS ASCENSION...

1. Cf. Acts 1:9-11, the "two men...in white apparel"

2. Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

B. PROCLAIMED BY THE APOSTLES...

1. Peter, in his second recorded sermon - Acts 3:19-21

2. Paul, in writing to...

a. The Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 b. The Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:133 c. The young evangelist, Timothy - 2 Timothy 4:1

3. The writer to the Hebrews - Hebrews 9:27-28[Just as throughout the Old Testament one finds the recurring theme "The Messiah is coming!", so in the New Testament we find not only "He has come!" but also "He is coming again!" To the certainty of His coming, we can add...]

II. THE "MANNER" OF HIS COMING

A. HE WILL COME IN PERSON...

1. "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - Acts 1:11

2. "the Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17

B. HE WILL COME "WITH THE CLOUDS"...

1. "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - Acts 1:11
(referring to verse 9: "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight")

2. "...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - 1 Thessalonians 4:17

3. "Behold, He is coming with clouds..." - Revelation 1:7

C. HE WILL COME WITHOUT WARNING...

1. "...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." - 1 Thessalonians 5:2

2. "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes..." - 1 Thessalonians 5:3

3. "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night..." - 2 Peter 3:10

[Of course, this unexpected coming of the Lord will not surprise the faithful, who seriously watch for the Lord's coming (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11). With joyful anticipation, they await the personal return of their Savior.

What will happen when the Lord returns? To answer this question we now consider...]

III. THE "PURPOSE" OF HIS COMING

A. TO RAISE THE DEAD...

1. "...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." - John 5:28-29

a. Note that there is but one resurrection, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time ("the hour")

b. As Paul said, "...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust."

- Acts 24:15

2. Those who are alive at the Lord's coming . . .

a. Will be "changed" in "the twinkling of an eye", being clothed with immortality and

incorruption - 1 Corinthians 15:50-54

b. Then "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air." - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

B. TO DELIVER UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD...

1. Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven!

a. In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the "throne of David", Jesus was raised from the dead and made "Lord" - Acts 2:30-36 b. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - Matthew 28:18

1) He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - Ephesians 1:20-22

2) At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - 1 Peter 3:22

c. Christians are said to be "in" His kingdom

1) Having been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" - Colossians 1:13

2) They are "in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ" - Revelation 1:9

d. Christ will continue to reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - 1 Corinthians 15:25

1) Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present

2) As prophesied by the Psalmist: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" - Psalms 110:1-2 e. Thus Christ is NOW "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of

Lords" - 1 Timothy 6:15; cf. Revelation 19:16

f. And He will reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - 1 Corinthians 15:25

1) The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26

2) Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - 1 Corinthians 15:51-54

2. So when Jesus comes, it will not be to "set up" His kingdom, but to "deliver up" His kingdom!

a. As Paul clearly told the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 15:23-26

b. As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares

1) His kingdom will last until "the end of this age"

2) After which "the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (i.e., the heavenly kingdom) - cf. Matthew 13:36-43

[As suggested by the Parable of the Tares, delivering up the kingdom to the Father requires some "weeding". This leads us to consider another purpose of our Lord's coming...]

C. TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND PUNISH EVIL...

1. God has appointed "a day" in which He will judge the world - 2 Peter 3:7

a. The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - Acts 17:31; 2 Corinthians 5:10 b. The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - John 12:48 2. It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - 2 Peter 3:7 a. Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with "everlasting destruction" - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

b. Those whose names are not in the "Book of Life" will be cast into the "lake of fire" - Revelation 20:11-15

3. More about the "judgment" will be considered in a future lesson . . .

D. TO USHER IN THE "NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH"...

1. As taught by Peter - 2 Peter 3:10-14

a. This will follow the "passing away" of the present heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:10-13) b. It is in fulfillment of God's promise (2 Peter 3:13; cf. Isaiah 65:17-19; Isaiah 66:22-23) c. It is something we are to "look for" (2 Peter 3:13-14) d. It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found "in peace, without spot and blameless" when Christ returns (2 Peter 3:13-14)

2. As taught by John - Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-5

a. It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have "passed away" (1, cf. Revelation 20:11) b. It will be the place where the "New Jerusalem" will abide when it "comes down out of heaven" (2; cf. Revelation 3:10 c; Revelation 21:10)

c. God will dwell with us in this "New Jerusalem" that has "come down out of heaven" (3-27; Revelation 22:1-5)

CONCLUSION

1. The "purpose" of Jesus' second coming can be summed up by His statement in Revelation 22:12...

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

2. That Jesus has not yet come is only an indication of God's long-suffering (2 Peter 3:8-9), but rest assured that "day" will one day come!

3. In succeeding lessons, I intend to examine more closely several of the subjects mentioned in this lesson 4. In the meantime, what should be our attitude be toward the coming of our Lord? a. One of prayerful preparation - Luke 21:34-36; 2 Peter 3:14

b. One of joyful expectation - Php 3:20-21

c. One of patient endurance - Hebrews 10:35-39

04A.09. What Do We Know About the Resurrection

What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

INTRODUCTION

1. As noted in the previous study, the "Second Coming" of our Lord will usher in a series of wonderful events...

- a. The resurrection of the dead
- b. Deliverance of the kingdom to the Father
- c. The day of judgment
- d. The new heavens and new earth

2. In this study, we shall concentrate our attention to just one of these events: the resurrection of the dead

- a. As with many other things pertaining to "life after death", there can be a great deal of speculation about the resurrection
- b. But what can we know about the resurrection?
- c. I.e., what has been clearly revealed in the Scriptures about this subject, that can give the Christian assurance and hope for the future?

[First of all, we can know...]

I. THE "FACT" OF THE RESURRECTION

A. JESUS TAUGHT THERE WILL BE A RESURRECTION...

1. A time is coming in which both those good and evil will come forth from the grave - John 5:28-29
2. Jesus assures those who believe in Him will be raised at "the last day" - John 6:39-40, John 6:44, John 6:54

B. HIS APOSTLES PROCLAIMED A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD...

1. Peter and John "preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead - Acts 4:1-2
2. In his defenses before the Sanhedrin and Felix, Paul confessed his hope in the resurrection - Acts 23:6; Acts 24:15
3. To the church at Corinth, Paul asserted the necessity of the resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

4. To the church at Thessalonica, he taught the doctrine of the resurrection as a source of comfort - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

[Unless one questions the authority of Christ and His apostles, the "fact" of the resurrection is undeniable. But how can such a thing happen? It helps to remember...]

II. THE "AGENT" OF THE RESURRECTION

A. CHRIST ATTRIBUTED IT TO THE POWER OF GOD...

1. As He reminded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection - Matthew 22:29
2. And of course, "with God nothing will be impossible" - cf. Luke 1:37

B. PAUL ALSO EMPHASIZED THE POWER OF GOD...

1. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead - 1 Corinthians 6:14
2. He who can raise Jesus from the dead can certainly raise us up at the last day - 2 Corinthians 4:14

[While it may be difficult for us to comprehend "how" the dead can be raised, it is not difficult for God to do it (unless "your" God is too small)! Another question to be addressed concerning the resurrection pertains to "who" will be raised. Therefore we note...]

III. THE "UNIVERSALITY" OF THE RESURRECTION

A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS...

1. "ALL who are in the graves will...come forth" - John 5:28
2. Both "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil" - - John 5:29
 - a. One to experience a "resurrection of life"
 - b. The other a "resurrection of condemnation"

B. PAUL TAUGHT ALL WOULD BE RAISED...

1. "both of the just and the unjust" - Acts 24:15
2. "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" - 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

[While there may be a difference in the nature of the resurrected bodies experienced (see later under the comments on "the body of the resurrection"), in some way EVERYONE will be raised from the dead! What about the timing of the resurrection?]

IV. THE "TIME" OF THE RESURRECTION

A. AT THE "LAST DAY", WHEN THE LORD COMES AGAIN...

1. Jesus spoke again and again of raising the dead at "the last day" - John 6:39-40, John 6:44, John 6:54
2. Paul wrote of it occurring when Jesus comes again, to deliver the kingdom to the Father, having destroyed the last enemy, death itself - 1 Corinthians 15:22-26

3. He later says that it will occur at "the last trumpet" - 1 Corinthians 15:52 B. WHAT ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE RESURRECTIONS...?

1. The premillennialists (and others) teach that there will be more than just one resurrection a. E.g., all premillennialists teach at least two resurrections:

1) The resurrection of believers at the beginning of the millennium 2) The resurrection of unbelievers at the end of the millennium b. Dispensational premillennialists add even two more:

1) The resurrection of tribulation saints at the end of the seven-year tribulation

2) The resurrection of millennial saints at the end of the millennium 2. There are several reasons why the doctrine of several resurrections is found wanting... a. The Bible presents the resurrection of believers and unbelievers as occurring together - Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15; Revelation 20:11-15

b. The Bible teaches that believers will be raised at "the last day", not several times (and therefore several days, years, or millennium) before "the last day"! - John 6:39-40; John 6:44; John 6:54 c. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what premillennialists say they do

1) E.g., 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time

2) E.g., Revelation 20:4-6 describes a resurrection of "souls", not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely to be occurring in heaven, not on earth - cf. Revelation 2:26-27; Revelation 3:21

[One more subject to be considered in this study, and that pertains to...]

V. THE "BODY" OF THE RESURRECTION

A. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE RIGHTEOUS...

1. Will be our physical bodies, but gloriously changed and different! - 1 Corinthians 15:35-55a. By the power of God (cf. Matthew 22:29), our physical bodies will serve as the "kernel" from which comes incorruptible and immortal bodies in which to house our souls - 1 Corinthians 15:35-37 b. Our physical bodies...

1) Sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption! - 1 Corinthians 15:42

2) Sown in dishonor, will be raised in glory! - 1 Corinthians 15:43a

3) Sown in weakness, will be raised in power! - 1 Corinthians 15:43b

4) Sown as natural bodies, will be raised as spiritual bodies! - 1 Corinthians 15:44-49c. Even those who are alive at Christ's coming will undergo this "change", in which that which is corruptible and mortal will "put on" incorruption and immortality - 1 Corinthians 15:1-58:

50-55

2. Will be conformed to the glorious body of our Lord! - Php 3:20-21

a. That which is "lowly" will be transformed to be like that which "glorious" b. How? "...according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" - i.e., by the power of God!

B. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE WICKED...

1. Very little is actually revealed, other than the wicked will indeed be raised from the dead

2. Though the Scriptures only apply the terms "incorruption" and "immortality" to the resurrection bodies of the righteous, most interpreters hold that the resurrection body of the wicked...

a. Is not subject again to death

b. Is capable of experiencing eternal suffering

3. There are some, however, who understand that the "second death" will be literal... a. I.e., after the resurrection and judgment, the wicked will "die" again (a separation of resurrected "body" and spirit)

b. Not that the wicked will be annihilated, but that they will spend eternity as "disembodied spirits" in the lake of fire

c. This is not to be confused with those who don't believe in a resurrection of the wicked, or who believe the wicked will be annihilated

4. Since the Bible is relatively silent on this subject perhaps "...the best course seems to be simply leave the problem where it was left by the writers of the New Testament." (Ray Summers, *The Life Beyond*, p. 93)

CONCLUSION

1. There is probably much more about the resurrection that we would like to know

2. But certainly enough is revealed to motivate those who desire whatever God has prepared to love and obey Him!

Are you making it your aim to be ready for whatever God has prepared...?

So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written:

"Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?"

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

04A.10. What Do We Know About the Judgment?

What Do We Know About The Judgment?

INTRODUCTION

1. In his sermon at the Areopagus (Mar's Hill) in Athens, Paul concluded with a reference to the day of judgment - Acts 17:31

2. While in one sense people are judged in this present life by the response they make to Jesus Christ (cf. John 3:18), the Bible clearly speaks of a day in which God will judge the world

[The focus of this study will be to ascertain from the Scriptures what we can know about the Final Judgment. Beginning with...]

I. THE "NECESSITY" OF THE JUDGMENT

A. WHY HAVE A JUDGMENT...?

1. From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, it is apparent that one's "destiny" is determined by the time of one's death - cf. Luke 16:22-23

2. If the "destiny" of each person is determined by the time of his or her death, why the need for a day of judgment at the end of time?

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT...

1. Bear in mind that there is a difference between a "human trial" and the "Divine trial" of which we speak...

a. A "human trial" is primarily a process of investigation, in which the judge and jury are trying to learn the truth

b. The "Divine trial" is presided by an omniscient Judge with perfect knowledge, so the

purpose of this judgment is one of publication and execution of the sentence - cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10 ("that each one may receive...")

2. Another purpose is to glorify God for His grace, and to vindicate God for His justice! a. Why is it that some sinners are lost, and other sinners are saved?

b. How can God be just in condemning lost persons who never heard the gospel? c. At the judgment, those currently ignorant of the answers to such questions...

1) Will be made aware and come to see that God has been both just and gracious in His efforts throughout the history of mankind

2) Those condemned will come to fully realize they can blame no one but themselves!

[So it will be a time in which all will be made known, and the sentences executed. Exactly when will this occur?]

II. THE "TIME" OF THE JUDGMENT

A. SOME BELIEVE IN A SERIES OF SEPARATE JUDGMENTS...

1. Dispensational premillennialists, for example, believe there will be...
 - a. A judgment of the believer's works at the time of the "rapture"
 - b. A judgment of individual Gentiles just before the millennium
 - c. A judgment of Israel just before the millennium
 - d. A judgment of the wicked dead after the millennium
2. But just as we saw in the previous lesson concerning the resurrection, the same may be said about the judgment
 - a. There will be but one bodily resurrection, and that at the "last day"
 - b. So there will be just one "day of judgment".

B. THE FINAL JUDGMENT WILL OCCUR...

1. At the end of the present age, at which time the "heavens and earth" will be no more - 2 Peter 3:7; 2 Peter 3:10-14; cf. Revelation 20:11-12; Revelation 21:1
2. At the end of "this age", as Jesus taught in His parable of the tares - Matthew 13:36-43
3. At the coming of Jesus "in that Day", who will give rest to His disciples and vengeance to unbelievers - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

[We turn next to consider...]

III. THE "CIRCUMSTANCES" OF THE JUDGMENT

A. WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE...?

1. The New Testament clearly reveals that Christ will be the Judge
 - a. As claimed by Jesus Himself - John 5:22, John 5:26-27
 - b. As proclaimed by Paul in Athens - Acts 17:31
 - c. And as written by Paul to the church at Corinth - 2 Corinthians 5:10
2. In some way not fully revealed, even the saints (i.e., Christians) will have a part in the judgment - 1 Corinthians 6:2-3

B. WHO WILL BE JUDGED...?

1. Angels will be judged, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6

2. All humans will be judged, as evident from passages like Romans 2:4-6; Romans 3:6; Revelation 20:12-13

3. Even Christians will be judged - 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10; cf. 1 Peter 4:17; 1 John 4:17

C. WHAT WILL BE JUDGED...?

1. All deeds done during this present life - 2 Corinthians 5:10

2. All words spoken in this life - Matthew 12:36-37

3. Even our thoughts! - 1 Corinthians 4:5

4. Indeed, there is nothing "hidden" that will not then be "known" - cf. 1 Timothy 5:24-25

D. WHAT WILL BE THE STANDARD WHEREBY MEN WILL BE JUDGED...? 1. Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" - John 12:48 a. As He will be the Judge, so it will be by His words that we will be judged! b. I.e., it will be the words of the New Testament

2. And that standard is a strict one!

a. One sin makes one guilty of all! - cf. James 2:10

b. And it declares that all are sinners! - cf. Romans 3:23

E. WHAT HOPE IS THERE TO SURVIVE THE JUDGMENT...?

1. The only hope one can have is made clear in the judgment scene of Revelation 20:11-15

2. That hope pertains to having one's name "written in the Book of life"

a. It is called the "Lamb's Book of Life" in Revelation 21:27

b. Those Christians who persevere have their names in this Book of Life - Revelation 3:5

3. Indeed, only those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are in the "Book of Life", but only if they persevere to the end!

CONCLUSION

1. Contemplating the reality and circumstances of the coming Day of Judgment ought to cause every person to humbly consider their relationship to God and His Son Jesus Christ

2. There is no way we can hope to "pass the test" based upon ignorance, or on good works... a. God now commands all men everywhere to repent - cf. Acts 17:30-31

b. But only by the mercy of God can we be saved, and that "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" - cf. Titus 3:4-7

c. Only by being justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God to come - cf. Romans 5:8-9

3. For those who will respond to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, they can have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life, and not fear the day of judgment!

IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN THERE?

04A.11. The Eternal Destiny of the Redeemed

The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed

INTRODUCTION 1. As we rapidly near the end of this series, we have considered what the Bible says about... a. The intermediate state, i.e., the condition of man between death and the resurrection b. The second coming of Christ

c. The resurrection of the dead

d. The day of judgment 2. Now we shall begin to examine what the Bible reveals about the final state of man... a. What is the eternal destiny of the redeemed?

b. What is the eternal destiny of the wicked?

[With this lesson we shall look first at "The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed"...]

I. THE "HOPE" OF THE REDEEMED

A. WONDERFUL PROMISES ARE GIVEN BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES...1. Jesus speaks of the righteous as being in "the kingdom of their Father", and inheriting "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world"

a. In explaining "The Parable of the Tares" - Matthew 13:43

b. In describing the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-34

c. Compare this with statements by His apostles...

1) Paul speaks of the "heavenly kingdom" - 2 Timothy 4:18

2) Peter speaks of the "everlasting kingdom" - 2 Peter 1:10-11

2. Jesus speaks of the redeemed being with Him

a. In "The Parable of the Talents" ("Enter into the joy of your lord") - Matthew 25:21 b. In praying to the Father in John 17:24 (cf. also John 14:1-3)

c. Paul also alludes to this continued fellowship with the Lord - 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

3. Indeed, such promises are comforting for the Christian, for they speak of unhindered and uninterrupted fellowship with our Lord!

4. Is this not our ultimate hope? To be with the Lord for eternity?

B. BUT WHERE WILL WE EXPERIENCE THIS "HOPE"...?

1. In other words...

a. Where will this fellowship with the Lord be experienced?

b. Where will the "abode" of the righteous be?

2. Will the "abode" of the redeemed...

a. Be heaven itself?

b. Or is it something now "reserved" for us in heaven, but when experienced it will actually be somewhere else?

[Previously I have suggested that when Christians die they will spend the intermediate state in heaven. While most Christians automatically assume they will spend the eternal state in heaven, it appears the Biblical evidence concerning the eternal abode may state otherwise! Consider carefully, then, as we examine what the Bible says about...] II. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS

A. TWO PASSAGES OFTEN QUOTED TO SAY THAT IT WILL BE HEAVEN...1. The first is Colossians 1:5

a. Which speaks "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven"

b. Note carefully: this verse does not say that our hope is heaven, but rather that our hope is "laid up for you in heaven"

c. Whether our hope, when experienced, will be in heaven, cannot be determined with certainty in this verse

d. Only that for now, heaven is where our hope is stored

2. The second is 1 Peter 1:3-4

a. This passage speaks of our hope and inheritance, "reserved in heaven for you" b. Again: this does not say that our hope (or inheritance) is heaven, but rather that it is "reserved in heaven"

c. As before, we cannot determine from the passage alone whether our hope and inheritance, when realized, will be in heaven itself

d. Only that for now our hope and inheritance are presently secured in heaven

B. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED IN HEBREWS...

1. First, we find the author speaking of having "a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven" - Hebrews 10:34

a. Here the same point can be made as before

b. I.e., at the present, our "possession" is in heaven; but when we receive it, will it be in heaven then?

2. In describing the hope of Abraham and the faithful, the author speaks of a city (or dwelling place)...

a. "...the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" - Hebrews 11:10 b. "...for He has prepared a city for them" - Hebrews 11:13-16

3. Speaking of himself and his fellow Christians, the author writes: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" - Hebrews 13:14

4. Here, then, is one way of speaking of the hope of the righteous, as it relates to their eternal abode:

a. It is a city, whose builder and maker is God

b. It is a heavenly city, in the sense of its nature

c. This "enduring possession" is presently "prepared...laid up...reserved" for us in heaven!

5. But we have yet to answer the question: "Where will this city (abode) of the righteous actually be when they experience it?"

C. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY PETER...

1. After describing the "day of the Lord" in which the present universe will be dissolved, Peter speaks of looking for "new heavens and a new earth" - 2 Peter 3:7-13

2. For Peter, this is what "we" (himself and all Christians) should be looking for!

3. Some questions:

a. Is the "new heavens and a new earth" just a figurative reference to heaven, or is it something different from heaven?

b. How do we reconcile looking for the "new heavens and a new earth" (Peter), and looking for "the city whose builder is God" (Hebrews)?

-The answer to these questions is found as we now look at...

D. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY JOHN...

1. After describing the judgment scene (Revelation 20:11-15), John says that he saw: a. "a new heaven and a new earth" - Revelation 21:1 (cf. Peter)

b. "the holy City, New Jerusalem" - Revelation 21:2 (cf. Hebrews)

-In this way, John brings together both the "hope" of the author of Hebrews and the apostle Peter!

2. But where is this "city" at this point? Note carefully how three times in Revelation, it is stated that the city is not in heaven at this time...

a. "...the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from my God." - Revelation 3:12
b. "...the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God" - Revelation 21:2
c. "...the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God" - Revelation 21:10

3. Rather than being in heaven (the present dwelling place of God), this "eternal abode" is described as being in "the new heavens and a new earth"!

a. A realm where there is the absence of death, sorrow, and pain - Revelation 21:4b. A realm in which there is complete fellowship with God and Christ - Revelation 21:3; Revelation 21:22-27c. A place of perpetual life and good health - Revelation 22:1-2

d. A place where God's servants both serve and reign! - Revelation 22:3-5

E. TO SUMMARIZE AND PERHAPS CLARIFY...

1. The redeemed have a wonderful hope concerning their "eternal destiny"

2. It pertains to a "city", built by God and presently reserved for us in heaven... a. However, when experienced, this "city" (abode) will not be in heaven b. But having come down out of heaven, it will be in the "new heavens and new earth" (i.e., a totally new order of things)

3. This is not to say that we will not be with God and Christ...

a. For as one considers the experience of the righteous as described in Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-21, we see that we will be with God and Christ forever!

b. To be exact, however...

1) It is not that we will be with God and Christ in heaven...

2) But that They will be with us in the "new heavens and new earth"! c. Consider...

1) "Behold the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them...and God Himself will be with them" - Revelation 21:3

a) Note that in each phrase the direction is one in which God is with us; He dwells with us in this "city" which comes down out of heaven

b) Contrary to the idea that we are in heaven with God!

2) "...the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it" - Revelation 22:3a) In the "eternal state", the throne is in this "holy city" which comes down out of heaven

b) Whereas earlier in the Revelation, the throne of God was in heaven - Revelation 4:2; Revelation 7:9-17

1) This latter passage I take to describe the "intermediate state"

2) It is during this interim that the righteous are with God in heaven

3) "But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." - Revelation 21:22

a) John saw no temple in this "holy city"

b) Whereas he saw the temple of God in heaven when describing the "intermediate state" - cf. Revelation 7:15

d. Again, the indication is that God will dwell with us for eternity in this "new heavens and new earth" (in the "New Jerusalem"), not that we will be with Him in heaven

CONCLUSION

1. Admittedly, in a book like Revelation we are dealing with very symbolic language, and we must be careful not to strain a point too far...

2. But the terminology used by John...

a. Is the same as that used by Peter and the author of Hebrews b. As they wrote plainly of our "hope" (i.e., "city", "new heavens and new earth")

3. And these terms are used consistently in such a way as to make a clear distinction between... a. What is currently the dwelling place of God (i.e., in heaven)

b. And where God will spend eternity with the redeemed (i.e., in the "holy city" that comes down out of heaven into the "new heavens and new earth")

4. Should we not be careful to make the same distinction?

Do we, "according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13)? If so, then be sure to heed the admonition of Peter...

"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation..." - 2 Peter 3:14-15 a And remember the words of John:

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." - Revelation 22:14

04A.12. The Eternal Destiny of the Wicked

The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked

INTRODUCTION

1. We now come to the final lesson in this series...

a. In which we will examine the last thing any Christian would ever want to consider b. I.e., "the eternal destiny of the wicked"

2. Yet, if we are to faithfully proclaim "the whole counsel of God", it is necessary to speak of... a. The righteous indignation of God

b. The place that is prepared for those who reject the gospel of God's grace

3. As we begin, consider this quotation by ana1hema Ray Summers in his book, "The Life Beyond"...

"We would do well to remember that we are dealing with terms in an attempt to describe a condition that almost defies description."

[First of all, then, consider what we know about...]

I. THE "ABODE" OF THE WICKED

A. WE KNOW THEY WILL BE "SEPARATED FROM GOD"...

1. Jesus spoke of such separation on several occasions

a. In His sermon on the mount - Matthew 7:21-23

b. In describing the judgment scene - Matthew 25:41-46

c. These passages describe separation from the blessings and fellowship of the Lord's presence

2. Other passages speak of similar separation...

a. No inheritance in the kingdom of God for some - Ephesians 5:5

b. Shut out of the "eternal city" where there are blessings and fellowship with God - Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:15

B. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "HELL"...

1. The Greek word is "geenna" {gheh'-en-nah}

a. It represents the Hebrew word "Ge-Hinnom"

b. B. W. Johnson comments: "The term Gehenna arose from the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch. After the return of the Jews

from the Captivity they made it a place of defilement, where the refuse of the city was thrown and burned. The name was applied to the place of future punishment by the Jews. The word is often used in the New Testament, and always denotes a place of future punishment."

2. Jesus used the term to describe the final place of punishment...

a. In His sermon on the mount - Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:29-30

b. When sending His apostles on the "limited" commission - Matthew 10:28 c. In warning against personal stumbling blocks - Matthew 18:8-9

d. Perhaps the most vivid use of this term is in Mark 9:43-48

-Jesus evidently used this word which spoke to His contemporaries the horror and abomination of the eternal destiny awaiting the wicked

3. This place called "hell" was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41), but will serve as the place of punishment for the wicked as well

C. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "THE LAKE OF FIRE"...

1. Where the "beast" and "false prophet" of Revelation are thrown - Revelation 19:20

2. Where the devil (Satan) himself will one day be cast - Revelation 20:10

3. The same is said for "death" and "Hades", and all whose names are not written in "the Lamb's book of life" - Revelation 20:14-15

4. The future residents of this place are also described in Revelation 21:8

[Such is the place that God has prepared for the eternal destiny of the wicked! To appreciate further the horror of this place, consider...]

II. THE "EXPERIENCE" OF THE WICKED

A. WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE IDEA OF "SEPARATION" IS INVOLVED...1. What such separation from God can be like, no one in this life can really know a. For everyone in this life experiences a degree of God's presence - cf. Acts 17:28 b. E.g., the physical blessings of the sun, rain, etc. are all manifestations of God's presence in our lives - cf. Matthew 5:45

2. Perhaps those who drift farthest away from God in this life have an "inkling" of what it must be like...

a. Those in this life who drift away from God ultimately experience "despair" b. Even as Jesus experienced a sense of being "forsaken", when He suffered that momentary separation from God while bearing the sins of the world on the cross - cf. Matthew 27:46; Psalms 22:1

3. If we have ever experienced separation from a loved one, perhaps we can begin to understand what eternal separation from God must be like

B. A TERM USED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE IS "DEATH"...

1. The wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23

2. In Revelation 2:11; Revelation 20:14; it is called the "second death", so we know that the experience of the wicked is not simply physical death (which is the "first death")

3. Since physical death is a "separation" of body and spirit, it is natural to conclude that the second death is a "separation" of one's soul from His God!

C. THE ETERNAL DESTINY IS DESCRIBED AS "DESTRUCTION"...

1. An everlasting "destruction" from the presence of the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 1:9

2. "whose end is destruction" - Php 3:19

3. The idea of destruction...

a. Does not require the idea of "annihilation"

b. It can just as easily describe the condition of existing in a state of "total ruin"

-The next description confirms that "annihilation" is not under consideration...

D. IT IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS "EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT"...

1. Punishment for the wicked is as "everlasting" as the life given the righteous - Matthew 25:46

2. The wicked will be "punished" with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord

- 2 Thessalonians 1:9

E. IT IS FURTHER SPOKEN OF IN TERMS OF "OUTER DARKNESS"...

1. As in the punishment of the unfaithful servant - Matthew 25:30

2. And the punishment reserved for false teachers - 2 Peter 2:17; Jude 1:13

F. OTHER TERMS INCLUDE "WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH"...

1. Jesus used these expressions several times - Matthew 25:30; Matthew 24:51; Matthew 22:13

2. When such terms are used, it is difficult to accept any view that suggests the wicked will simply cease to exist at death, or raised for judgment and then annihilated!

G. FINALLY, IT IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF "FIRE"...

1. The "fire" of Gehenna

2. The "lake of fire"

3. A fire that is never quenched - Mark 9:43-48

4. A fire of indignation which "devours" (but does not destroy out of existence) - Hebrews 10:26-27

CONCLUSION 1. To some degree we must take terms that describe the destiny of the wicked as figurative a. How could you have darkness where there is fire?

b. How could you have worms where there is fire?

2. But they are terms anyone can relate to, which describe...
 - a. Something we cannot possibly comprehend with our finite minds
 - b. A place of punishment reserved for those who "do not know God, and...who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" - 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9
3. It is natural to revolt against any idea such as "hell"...
 - a. Unfortunately, many have revolted by trying to deny the reality of hell, and sought to offer some other destiny of the wicked beyond this life b. But one cannot define away "hell" without belittling...
 - 1) Either the terribleness of sin
 - 2) Or the holiness and justice of God A much better way to react to the truth concerning hell is to accept God's saving grace offered through His Son Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save us from hell!

04A.13. For Your Further Study

Life After Death For Your Further Study For a much more indepth study of the issues relating to life after death, I recommend the books listed below. While I do not necessarily agree with every conclusion drawn by the authors, they certainly provide food for thought... The Bible & The Future (Anthony A. Hoekema, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989)

The Bible On The Life Hereafter (William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, 224 pages)

05.00. Ministering Spirits

Ministering Spirits A Study of Angels in the Bible Mark A. Copeland Topic Note Version for e-Sword: Stephen Jovanovic, Timaru - New Zealand. <mailto:stephenjovanovic@yahoo.com>
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Contents

- 01 Terms and Description of Angels
- 02 Angels in the Old Testament
- 03 The Angel of the Lord
- 04 The Cherubim and Seraphim
- 05 The Ministry of Angels to Christ
- 06 The Ministry of Angels to Christians

05.01. Terms And Description of Angels

Study 1: Terms And Description of Angels

Introduction 1. The subject of angels has certainly become a popular one... a. Bookstores are filled with books dealing with angels b. Popular TV shows and movies depict angels working in our lives ("Highway To Heaven", "Touched By An Angel", "The Preacher's Wife", "It's A Wonderful Life") 2. Angels were an important part of the Jewish religion... a. Angels assisted with the giving of the Law at Mount Sinai - cf. Deuteronomy 33:2; Psalms 68:17; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19 b. They appear throughout the history of Israel, coming to Abraham, Daniel, and many others 3. Angels also serve an important role in the Christian faith... a. They are described as "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" - Hebrews 1:13-14 b. They have certainly ministered in the past - cf. Luke 1:11-38 c. They will certainly minister at the time of Christ's return - cf. Matthew 13:36-43 4. But to what extent do they minister in the present...? a. This is a subject that is prone to much speculation b. It is easy to get caught up in idle myths and fables c. About which we are warned to avoid - cf. 1 Timothy 1:3-4; 1 Timothy 4:7; 1 Timothy 6:20; 2 Timothy 2:16; 2 Timothy 4:3-4 -- Yet angels are a Biblical subject, therefore worthy of careful consideration

[With a desire to be content with what the Bible reveals on the subject of angels, we begin this study with a look at some terms and descriptions regarding angels...] I. Terms in connection with Angels A. The Word 'Angel'. . .

1. The Hebrew word malak (found 103 times in the OT) simply means "messenger" a. It can refer to a human messenger - 1 Kings 19:2 1) It is applied to the prophet Haggai - Haggai 1:13 2) It is applied to a priest - Malachi 2:7 3) It is applied to both John the Baptist and Jesus in prophecy - Malachi 3:1 4) The name of the prophet Malachi comes from the same word b. It can refer to a divine messenger - Genesis 28:12 1) Supernatural or heavenly beings sent as messengers to men 2) Agents who carry out the will of God - ISBE 2. The Greek word angelos likewise means "messenger" a. The word occurs 175 times in the NT b. Of men, it is used only 6 times in the NT B. Other Terms Applied to 'Angels'. . .

1. Sons of God - God's sons by virtue of His creation - cf. Job 1:6; Job 38:7

2. Holy ones - suggesting they belong to God, 'set apart' for His purposes - Psalms 89:5; Psalms 89:7 (NASB, NIV) 3. Watcher, watchers - likely referring to angels - cf. Daniel 4:13; Daniel 4:17; Daniel 4:23 4. Host - denoting the armies of heaven, which likely included angels - cf. 1 Samuel 17:45 5. Archangel - used twice, once in connection with Michael - 1 Thessalonians 4:16; Jude 1:9 6. Prince, chief princes, great prince - used in the book of Daniel - Daniel 10:13,21; 12:1 7. Paul used terms that may refer to angels - cf. Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21; Ephesians 3:10 a. Principalities (archai) b. Powers (exousiai) c. Thrones (thronoi) d. Dominions (kyriotetes) e. Powers (dynamesis)

-- Yet these are sometimes distinguished from angels (Romans 8:38; 1 Peter 3:22), and at times described as negative forces (Colossians 2:15; Ephesians 6:12)

[It quickly becomes apparent that the Bible has a lot to say about angels. More about angels can be gleaned from the Bible as we consider...] II. Descriptions of Angels A. Their Nature and Attributes. . .

1. They are spirit beings a. Called "spirits", suggesting they do not have corporeal bodies - Hebrews 1:14 b. Though they did reveal themselves at times in the form of human bodies - Genesis 18:3 c. They do not function as human beings in such things as marriage - Mark 12:25 d. They are not subject to death - Luke 20:36 2. They are created beings a. They are part of the creation that is to praise Jehovah - Psalms 148:1-5 b. They were created by Christ, among all other things - Colossians 1:16 3. They are innumerable a. An innumerable company - Hebrews 12:22 b. John's descriptions suggests their number is countless - Revelation 5:11 4. They are a higher order than man a. Man was created lower than the angels - Hebrews 2:6-7 b. Angels are not capable of death - Luke 20:36 c. They have greater wisdom, though limited - 2 Samuel 14:20; Matthew 24:36 d. They have greater power, though it too is limited - Mt 28:2; Daniel 10:13 5. They always appeared as men a. Never as women or children, always clothed b. Other than Cherubim and Seraphim> (whose classification as angels is suspect), they never have wings - though cf. Revelation 8:13; Revelation 14:6 c. Many times they were so disguised as men they were not first identified as angels - Genesis 18:1-2; Genesis 19:1; Hebrews 13:2 B. Their Classifications. . .

1. The archangel, the "great prince" a. Michael is called the archangel - Jude 1:9; cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 b. Michael is called the "great prince", who watched over Israel - Daniel 12:1; cf. Daniel 10:21 c. Michael is mentioned in Revelation 12:7 d. Some (JWs and others) believe Michael was the pre-incarnate Christ 2. The chief princes a. Of whom Michael was one - Daniel 10:13 b. Some would include Gabriel in this classification 1) The angel sent to explain visions to Daniel - Daniel 8:16; Daniel 9:21 2) Who also made announcements to Zacharias and Mary - Luke 1:19; Luke 1:26

3. The princes a. The term applied to angels in the book of Daniel - e.g., Daniel 10:13; Daniel 10:21 b. Also to what appear to be evil angelic forces - cf. Daniel 10:13; Daniel 10:20-21 4. The Angel of the Lord a. An angel who seems to speak as the Lord Himself - e.g., Judges 2:1; Genesis 16:10-13 b. Leading some to wonder if this was the pre-incarnate Christ

5. Cherubim? a. Thought by some to be an order or class of angels, though others hold them to be a higher class of heavenly beings than angels b. Whose purpose was to be "proclaimers and protectors of God's glorious presence, His sovereignty, and His Holiness" - C. Fred Dickason c. In the Bible... 1) They stood guard at the Garden of Eden - Genesis 3:24 2) Their golden figures covered the mercy seat above the ark in the tabernacle - Exodus 25:17-22 3) Their designs graced the walls and veils of the tabernacle, and later in the temple - Exodus 26:1, Exodus 26:31; 1 Kings 6:23-35; 1 Kings 7:29; 1 Kings 7:36 4) They attended the glory of God in Ezekiel's vision - Ezekiel 1:1-28; cf. Ezekiel 1:1-10; Ezekiel 10:11-20 d. Their description fits those of the four living creatures in Revelation rather than angels - cf. Revelation 4:4-6

6. Seraphim? a. Six winged creatures attending the Lord in Isaiah's vision - Isaiah 6:1-13 b. Whose name literally means "burning one", also considered by many as a higher class than angels c. Their work was to "praise and proclaim the perfect holiness of God" - Dickason d. Their description is also akin to those of the four living creatures in Revelation rather than angels - cf. Revelation 4:8-9 7. Satan and his angels a. Many believe that Satan is a fallen angel 1) That he is

"Lucifer", a name applied to the king of Babylon - Isaiah 14:1-12 2) That he was among the highest of God's creation, a cherub whose fall and judgment is applied figuratively to the king of Tyre - cf. Ezekiel 28:11-19 b. Satan does has his angels, for whom condemnation awaits - cf. Matthew 25:41; Revelation 20:10 c. The doctrine of Satan and his angels (along with demons) will hopefully be examined in another study

Conclusion 1. With this brief introduction it should be apparent that... a. The Bible has much to say about angels b. It is easy to speculate about angels 2. My hope and prayer is that our future studies will... a. Focus on what the Bible actually reveals b. Avoid the vain speculation that is condemned In the course of our study, we should never forget the One who deserves our greatest attention:

"For to which of the angels did He ever say: 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You'? And again: 'I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son'? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: 'Let all the angels of God worship Him.'" (Hebrews 1:5-6) Have we joined the angels in worshipping the Son, through our own faith and obedience...?

05.02. Angels In The Old Testament

Study 2: Angels In The Old Testament

Introduction

1. We have seen that angels are "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" - Hebrews 1:13-14 2. Their ministry as "messengers" of God is evident in the Old Testament. . . a. During the Patriarchal age, from the creation to giving of the Law at Mount Sinai
b. During the Mosaic age, from Mount Sinai to the time of Christ

[An understanding and appreciation of the ministry of angels may be gleaned by a survey of their appearances as revealed in the Old Testament...] I. The Patriarchal Age A. Before the Flood. . .

1. 'Sons of God' (angels?) shouted for joy at the Creation - Job 38:7
2. 'Cherubim' (angels?) were placed at the east of the Garden of Eden to guard the way to the tree of life - Genesis 3:24
3. 'Sons of God' (angels?) cohabitate with 'daughters of men' - Genesis 6:1-4; cf. 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6 B. In the Life of Abraham. . .

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Hagar in the wilderness - Genesis 16:7-14; cf. Genesis 21:17
2. Two angels together with the Lord appeared to Abraham - Genesis 18:1-2 3. The same two angels appeared to Lot before destroying Sodom - Genesis 19:1-11; Genesis 19:12-22 4. The Angel of the Lord prevented Abraham from sacrificing Isaac - Genesis 22:11-18

5. Abraham was confident that an angel would guide his servant in finding a wife for Isaac - Genesis 24:7; Genesis 24:40 C. In the Life of Jacob. . .

1. In his dream at Bethel, Jacob saw angels ascending and descending on a ladder up to heaven - Genesis 28:12 2. The angel of God spoke to him in a dream, telling him to return to Canaan - Genesis 31:11-13 3. Angels of God met him on his return at Mahanaim - Genesis 32:1-2 4. He wrestled with a "Man", who is later called as "the Angel" - Genesis 32:24-30; Hosea 12:4 5. Toward the end of his life, he refers to "the Angel who has redeemed me from all evil" - Genesis 48:15 D. In the Life of Moses. . .

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared to him at the burning bush - Exodus 3:1-2; cf. Acts 7:30; Acts 7:35 2. The Angel of God led the Israelites out of Egypt - Exodus 14:19

[When the nation of Israel came to Mount Sinai, the Law was given, ushering in a new dispensation. It too was a time in which angels ministered to the people of God...] II. The Mosaic Age A. On the Way To The Promised Land. . .

1. God's angel led Israel through the wilderness - Exodus 23:20-23; cf. Exodus 32:34; Exodus 33:2; Numbers 20:16 2. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Balaam's donkey, and then to him -

Numbers 22:22-35 3. Some believe "the Commander of the Lord's Army" was the Angel of the Lord - cf. Joshua 5:13-15 4. The Angel of the Lord rebukes Israel at Bochim - Judges 2:1-6 B. In the Time of the Judges. . .

1. Through Deborah the Angel of the Lord tells Israel to curse Meroz - Judges 5:23 2. The Angel of the Lord appears to Gideon - Judges 6:11-24 3. The Angel of the Lord appears to the parents of Samson - Judges 13:1-23 C. In the Days of The Kings. . .

1. The Angel of the Lord was sent to destroy the people of Israel after David's census - 2 Samuel 24:15-17; 1 Chronicles 21:14; 1 Chronicles 21:18; 1 Chronicles 21:26-30 2. The Angel of the Lord fed Elijah - 1 Kings 19:5-7 3. The Angel of the Lord sent Elijah with messages to the king of Samaria - 2 Kings 1:3; 2 Kings 3:15

4. The Angel of the Lord slew 185,000 men of the army of Assyria - 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:20-22; Isaiah 37:36; cf. Isaiah 63:9 5. Isaiah sees 'seraphim' praising the Lord on His throne - Isaiah 6:1-7 D. In the Babylonian Captivity. . .

1. Ezekiel sees 'cherubim' (angels?) in several visions - Ezekiel 1:1-28; cf. Ezekiel 10:1-20

2. Nebuchadnezzar praised God for sending His Angel to deliver Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego - Daniel 3:28; cf. Daniel 3:24-25 3. They appeared (as 'watchers') in Nebuchadnezzar's dream - Daniel 4:13; Daniel 4:17; Daniel 4:23 4. God sent His angel to shut up the lions' mouths when Daniel was in the den - Daniel 6:22 5. Gabriel interpreted several visions for Daniel - Daniel 8:15-17; Daniel 9:21-23

6. A "certain man" appeared to Daniel and revealed what certain "princes" (like Michael, the archangel) were doing - Daniel 10:4-13; Daniel 10:21; Daniel 12:1 E. Period Following the Restoration. . .

1. The Angel of the Lord appeared in Zechariah's eight visions a. The vision of the horses - Zechariah 1:7-17 b. The vision of the horns - Zechariah 1:18-21 c. The vision of the measuring line - Zechariah 2:1-5 d. The vision of Joshua, the high priest - Zechariah 3:1-10 e. The vision of the lamp stand and olive trees - Zechariah 4:1-14 f. The vision of the flying scroll - Zechariah 5:1-4 g. The vision of the woman in a basket - Zechariah 5:5-11 h. The vision of the four chariots - Zechariah 6:1-8

2. These visions along with the message of Zechariah were used to encourage the completion of the temple following their return from Babylon - cf. Ezra 5:1; Ezra 6:14 F. In the Songs of Israel. . .

1. "For You have made him a little lower than the angels, And You have crowned him with glory and honor." - Psalms 8:5 2. "The angel of the LORD encamps all around those who fear Him, And delivers them." - Psalms 34:7 3. "Let them be like chaff before the wind, And let the angel of the LORD chase them." - Psalms 35:5 4. "Let their way be dark and slippery, And let the angel of the LORD pursue them." - Psalms 35:6 5. "Men ate angels' food; He sent them food to the full." - Psalms 78:25

6. "He cast on them the fierceness of His anger, wrath, indignation, and trouble, By sending angels of destruction among them." - Psalms 78:49 7. "For He shall give His angels charge over you, To keep you in all your ways." - Psalms 91:11

8. "Bless the LORD, you His angels, Who excel in strength, who do His word, Heeding the voice of His word." - Psalms 103:20 9. "Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire." - Psalms 104:4 10. "Praise Him, all His angels; Praise Him, all His hosts!" - Psalms 148:2

Conclusion 1. Angels played important roles in the Old Testament... a. Including the giving of the Law - cf. Acts 7:38; Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19; Hebrews 2:2 b. Who wondered at the scheme of redemption slowly being revealed - cf. 1 Peter 1:9-12 2. They were truly ministering spirits... a. Serving the faithful saints throughout the Old Testament b. Serving the will of God as He prepared for the coming of His Son Their service continued with the coming of Christ, which we shall consider in a future study...

05.03. The Angel Of The Lord

Study 3: The Angel Of The Lord

Introduction 1. We have seen that there are many references to angels in the Old Testament... a. The Hebrew word malak (found 103 times in the OT) simply means "messenger" b. It can refer to a human messenger - e.g., 1 Kings 19:2 c. It can refer to a divine messenger - Genesis 28:12 1) Supernatural or heavenly beings sent as messengers to men 2) Agents who carry out the will of God - ISBE 2. In our previous survey of angels in the Old Testament... a. We noted many references to "the Angel of the Lord" - e.g., Genesis 16:10 b. Who speaks in the first person, as though it was the Lord Himself c. You will note that some translations capitalize "Angel" (e.g., NKJV) 3. Who is "the Angel of the Lord"...? a. "This phrase is especially employed to denote the Lord himself in that form in which he condescends to make himself manifest to man" - Barnes (commentary on Genesis 16:10) b. "It seems to denote some person of the Godhead in angelic form." - ibid.

-- Indeed, many believe that it was Jesus Christ, the Son of God in pre-incarnate form, sometimes called "the Angel of the Theophany"

[Could this be? What other explanations might there be? In answer to such questions, let's take a closer look at some of the...] I. Appearances of the Angel of The Lord A. To Hagar. . .

1. When she was in the wilderness - Genesis 16:7-14 2. The Angel speaks as though he was the LORD - Genesis 16:10-12 3. Note carefully Genesis 16:13 a. It was "...the LORD who spoke to her" b. She called His name "You-Are-the-God-Who-Sees" c. She said "Have I also here seen Him who sees me?"

B. To Abraham. . .

1. When he was about to sacrifice Isaac - Genesis 22:9-19 2. The Angel speaks in the first person as though he were God a. "you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me." - Genesis 22:12 b. "By Myself I have sworn, says the LORD...blessing I will bless you..." - Genesis 22:15-18 C. To Moses. . .

1. At Mount Sinai, in the burning bush - Exodus 3:1-6 2. The Angel identifies himself as the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob - Exodus 3:6 D. To Israel. . .

1. The Angel of God led the Israelites out of Egypt - Exodus 14:19; cf. Numbers 20:16 2. God's angel led Israel through the wilderness - Exodus 23:20-23; cf. Exodus 32:34; Exodus 33:2 a. Note that God says "My Name is in Him" b. This angel was called "the angel of His presence" - Isaiah 63:9; cf. Exodus 33:14-15

[There are other examples where "the Angel of the Lord" speaks as the LORD in the first person (e.g., Numbers 22:32) or where the Angel and the LORD are described interchangeably (e.g., Judges 6:11-14). So, just who was "the Angel of the Lord"? Here are two...] II. Explanations For

The Angel Of The Lord A. An Angel With A Special Commission. . .

1. Acting as God's representative or ambassador

2. One problem some pose with this explanation: implied is the ability of the Angel of the Lord to forgive sin, something only God can do-cf. Exodus 23:20-23 B. Jesus Christ, The Pre-Incarnate Son of God. . .

1. A kind of temporary pre-incarnation of the second person of the Godhead 2. If the Angel of the Lord were the pre-Incarnate God the Son a. Then the term 'Angel' would be taken in its root sense of 'Messenger' b. Making the pre-incarnate Word of God 'the Messenger of God'

3. Evidence offered for this explanation a. The Messiah to come is described as "the Messenger of the covenant" - Malachi 3:1 1) So Jesus would be a "messenger" of the New Covenant 2) Could He then have been a "messenger" (angel) during the Old Covenant? b. Paul reveals that Israel in the wilderness:

1) Was nourished by "that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ" - 1 Corinthians 10:1-4 2) Tempted Christ - 1 Corinthians 10:9

3) Which some take to be a reference to the Angel of the Lord, the Angel of His Presence - cf. Isaiah 63:9; Exodus 33:14-15 4. But if Jesus was "the Angel of the Lord" where so mentioned in the Old Testament... a. He was the One sent to destroy Jerusalem after David's census - 2 Samuel 24:15-17; 1 Chronicles 21:14; 1 Chronicles 21:18; 1 Chronicles 21:26-30 b. He was the One who slew 185,000 men of the army of Assyria - 2 Kings 19:35; 2 Chronicles 32:20-22; Isaiah 37:36; cf. Isaiah 63:9 c. Then again, Jesus is the One who will exercise judgment on those who know not God nor obey His gospel - cf. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

Conclusion 1. Who was "the Angel Of The Lord"? I like what one wrote about the different explanations... a. "Each has its difficulties, but the last (Jesus in pre-incarnate form) is certainly the most tempting to the mind. Yet it must be remembered that at best these are only conjectures that touch on a great mystery." - J. M. Wilson, ISBE b. "It is certain that from the beginning God used angels in human form, with human voices, in order to communicate with man; and the appearances of the angel of the Lord, with his special redemptive relation to God's people, show the working of that Divine mode of self-revelation which culminated in the coming of the Savior, and are thus a foreshadowing of, and a preparation for, the full revelation of God in Jesus Christ." - ibid. c. "Further than this, it is not safe to go." - ibid.

2. We can be thankful that whoever was "the Angel of the Lord"... a. We have the fullness of God revealed in Jesus today - Colossians 2:9; cf. John 14:6-9 b. Jesus is indeed the "brightness of His glory and the express image of His person" -Hebrews 1:1-3

Unlike those in Old Testament times who may have wondered whether they had seen an angel or even God Himself, today we can know that in Jesus we see Deity as completely as humanly possible for us to comprehend! Have we obeyed Him who "by Himself purged our sins"...? - cf. Hebrews 1:3

05.04. The Cherubim And Seraphim

Study 4: The Cherubim And Seraphim

Introduction 1. The Old Testament certainly has much to say about angels... a. Their service to God and to His people b. Carrying out God's will as messengers and in other ways 2. Also serving God are two other classes of spiritual beings... a. Cherubim (singular, cherub or cherubim) - a word whose etymology is uncertain b. Seraphim - a word meaning "fiery ones"

3. What were these spiritual beings...? a. They certainly fall into the category of 'ministering spirits' b. Are they angels, perhaps of a higher order or class?

[We may not know the answer this side of eternity, but let's see what the Bible reveals...]

I. The Cherubim A. As Guardians Of Paradise. . .

1. Placed by God after Adam and Eve were expelled from the Garden - Genesis 3:24

2. "In their function as guardians of Paradise the cherubim bear an analogy to the winged bulls and lions of Babylonia and Assyria, colossal figures with human faces standing guard at the entrance of temples (and palaces), just as in Egypt the approaches to the sanctuaries are guarded by sphinxes." - ISBE 3. No description is given, but note the mention of "flaming sword"

B. As Bearers Of The Throne. . .

1. As attendants of God, they bear the throne upon which He descends from His high abode - Psalms 18:9-10 a

2. Through the use of synonymous parallelism they are described as "the wings of the wind" - Psalms 18:10 b; cf. Psalms 104:3 3. Thus God is described as "enthroned above the cherubim" - Psalms 80:1; Psalms 99:1; 1 Samuel 4:4 C. Winged Creatures Of Fire. . .

1. "...the function of the cherubim as bearers and movers of the Divine throne is brought out most clearly in the vision of Ezekiel" - ISBE a. In chapter 1 the prophet designates them as 'living creatures' - Ezekiel 1:4-5 b. He later perceives that the living creatures were 'cherubim' - Ezekiel 10:15; Ezekiel 10:20 c. The chariot or throne, from which the glory of God went up, is spoken of as a cherub - Ezekiel 9:3 2. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel were four living creatures, each having... a. Four faces: man, lion, ox (replaced in the parallel chapter by cherub) and eagle - Ezekiel 1:10; Ezekiel 10:14 b. The figure and hands of men - Ezekiel 1:5; Ezekiel 1:8 c. Straight legs, with the soles of their feet like that of calves, sparkling like burnished bronze - Ezekiel 1:7 d. Four wings

1) Two stretched upward, meeting above and sustaining the 'firmament', the bottom of the Divine throne- Ezekiel 1:11; Ezekiel 1:22; Ezekiel 10:1 2) Two stretched downward, covering their bodies -Ezekiel 1:11; Ezekiel 1:23 3) Having the noise of many waters, like the voice of the Almighty, the tumult of an army - Ezekiel 1:24 3. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel in appearance were... a.

Surrounded by coals of fire - cf. Ezekiel 10:2; Ezekiel 10:6 b. Like burning torches, the fire flashing up and down among the creatures, out of which went lightning - Ezekiel 1:13 4. The cherubim as seen by Ezekiel... a. Run back and forth in appearance like a flash of lightning - Ezekiel 1:14 b. Do not turn as they changed direction, but always go straight forward - Ezekiel 1:9; Ezekiel 1:17; Ezekiel 10:11 c. Each had beside them a wheel - Ezekiel 1:15-21 1) Like the color of beryl (sea green or gold colored) - Ezekiel 1:16 2) Like a wheel within a wheel - Ezekiel 1:16 3) That did not turn aside as they went in the four directions - Ezekiel 1:17 4) With rims high and awesome, full of eyes - Ezekiel 1:18 5) Which followed the cherubim wherever they went - Ezekiel 1:19 6) The spirit of the cherubim provided the direction of the wheels - Ezekiel 1:19-21; Ezekiel 10:16-17 5. Above the cherubim (living creatures) was... a. A firmament like the color of an awesome crystal - Ezekiel 1:22-23 b. A voice from above the firmament - Ezekiel 1:25 c. A throne like a sapphire stone, on which sat one with a likeness of a man - Ezekiel 1:26 1) His waist upward was the color of amber, like fire all around - Ezekiel 1:27 2) His waist downward like fire with brightness all around - Ezekiel 1:27 d. The brightness like the rainbow all around - Ezekiel 1:28 -- Which Ezekiel described as the likeness of the glory of the Lord - Ezekiel 1:28; cf. Revelation 4:2-6 D. As Ornaments In The Tabernacle And Temple. . .

1. In the tabernacle a. On the mercy-seat covering the ark were two cherubim of solid gold 1) Facing each other, with wings outstretched above - Exodus 25:18-20; Exodus 37:7-9

2) On which the glory of the Lord appeared, and from which He spoke - Exodus 25:22; Numbers 7:89; cf. 1 Samuel 4:4; 2 Samuel 6:2; Hebrews 9:5 b. On the curtains were woven artistic designs of cherubim - Exodus 26:1; Exodus 36:8 c. On the veil of the tabernacle also - Exodus 26:31; Exodus 36:35 2. In the temple of Solomon a. In the inner sanctuary, the Most Holy Place - 1 Kings 6:23-29; 2 Chronicles 3:10-13 1) Placed over the ark of the covenant - 1 Kings 8:6-7; 2 Chronicles 5:7-8 2) Where God's presence was manifested - 2 Kings 19:15; Psalms 99:1 b. On the veil - 2 Chronicles 3:14 c. On the walls and door - 1 Kings 6:29-35; 2 Chronicles 3:7 d. On the ten carts and ten lavers - 1 Kings 7:29; 1 Kings 7:36 3. In the temple of Ezekiel a. That is, the temple seen by Ezekiel in a vision - Ezekiel Chapter 41 through to Chapter 43 b. The inner walls of the temple were carved with alternating palm trees and cherubim, each with two faces, a lion on one side, a man on the other - Ezekiel 41:18-20 c. The doors of the sanctuary were carved with cherubim - Ezekiel 41:23-25 4. In the temple of Herod a. "There were no cherubim in the temple of Herod, but the walls were painted with figures of them (see Talmud)." - ISBE b. "In the times of Josephus no one knew what the Scriptural cherubim looked like (Ant., VIII, iii, 3)." - ISBE [Unlike the cherubim, there is only one specific mention of the seraphim in the Bible...] II. The Seraphim A. As Seen In Isaiah's Vision. . .

1. The Lord is on a throne in the temple, high and lifted up - Isaiah 6:1 2. The seraphim are above the throne - Isaiah 6:2 a 3. They had six wings - Isaiah 6:2 a. Two covered the face b. Two covered the feet c. With two they flew

4. One cried to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts, the whole earth is full of His glory!" - Isaiah 6:3 5. One flew to Isaiah - Isaiah 6:6-7 a. With a live coal in his hand taken with tongs from the altar b. Touching Isaiah's mouth with it, saying: "Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity is taken away, and your sins purged."

B. As Described in Various Sources. . .

1. "This word means fiery ones, in allusion, as is supposed, to their burning love. They are represented as 'standing' above the King as he sat upon his throne, ready at once to minister unto him. Their form appears to have been human, with the addition of wings." - Easton's Dictionary

2. "Nowhere else applied to God's attendant angels; but to the fiery flying (not winged, but rapidly moving) serpents, which bit the Israelites (Numbers 21:6), called so from the poisonous inflammation caused by their bites. Seraph is to burn; implying the burning zeal, dazzling brightness (2 Kings 2:11; 2 Kings 6:17; Ezekiel 1:13; Matthew 28:3) and serpent-like rapidity of the seraphim in God's service. Perhaps Satan's form as a serpent (nachash) in his appearance to man has some connection with his original form as a seraph of light. The head of the serpent was the symbol of wisdom in Egypt (compare Numbers 21:8; 2 Kings 18:4). The seraphim, with six wings and one face, can hardly be identified with the cherubim, which had four wings (in the temple only two) and four faces (Ezekiel 1:5-12). (But compare Revelation 4:8). The 'face' and 'feet' imply a human form; something of a serpentine form (perhaps a basilisk's head, as in the temples of Thebes) may have been mixed with it: so the cherub was compounded of various animal forms. However, seraph may come from a root meaning 'princely,' applied in Daniel 10:13 to Michael [MAURER]; just as cherub comes from a root (changing m into b), meaning 'noble.'" - JFB

3. "The most that can be said with certainty about the seraphim is that they were a separate group of attendants who praised God at His throne." - ISBE (revised)

Conclusion 1. Whether seraphim or cherubim can rightly be called angels may be uncertain... a. Perhaps they are a higher class or order of angels - cf. Hebrews 1:7 b. If they are akin to the 'living creatures' in the book of Revelation, they seem to be distinguished from angels - cf. Revelation 4:6-8; Revelation 5:11 2. In either case, they were certainly 'ministering spirits' whose service reminds us... a. Of the glory and majesty of Him who sits on the throne b. Of the mercy and forgiveness of the God Whom they praise Do we like the cherubim over the mercy-seat long to behold the mercy God extends to His people? Do we like seraphim find the holiness of God worthy to be praised? We should...

"But you [are] a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; who once [were] not a people but [are] now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but now have obtained mercy." (1 Peter 2:9-10) Have you accepted the gospel call that qualifies you to live a life of praise and service to such a wonderful God...? - cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:14; Colossians 1:12-13

05.05. The Ministry Of Angels To Christ

Study 5: The Ministry Of Angels To Christ

Introduction 1. We've seen that angels and other spiritual beings rendered service to God... a. Angels as messengers and executors of God's will b. Cherubim as guardians and bearers of His throne c. Seraphim as proclaimers of His holiness 2. Angels also provided significant service to Jesus Christ... a. Their ministry to Christ emphasizes His deity - Hebrews 1:4-14 b. A ministry that is part of the "mystery of godliness" - 1 Timothy 3:16 [What service did angels render to Christ? What service will they yet render on His behalf...?] I. Their Past Ministry to Christ A. Fortold His Birth. . .

1. Gabriel appeared to Mary - Luke 1:26-38 2. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream - Matthew 1:18-21 B. Announced His Birth. . .

1. First, a single angel to the shepherds in the field - Luke 2:8-12 2. Then, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God - Luke 2:13-15 C. Protected Him in His Infancy. . .

1. By warning Joseph in a dream to flee to Egypt - Matthew 2:13 2. By telling Joseph in a dream to return to Israel - Matthew 2:19-20 D. Ministered to Him After The Temptation. . .

1. After the devil had left Him - Matthew 4:11; Mark 1:13 2. May have included encouragement, perhaps even food - e.g., 1 Kings 19:5-7 E. Strengthened Him at Gethsemane. . .

1. As He struggled in prayer and agony - Luke 22:41-44 2. Perhaps similar to the way in which Daniel was strengthened - cf. Daniel 10:18-19 F. Rolled Away The Stone At The Tomb. . .

1. Sitting on the stone after doing so - Matthew 28:2 2. Terrifying the guards at the tomb by his appearance - Matthew 28:3-4 G. Following His Resurrection. . .

1. To the women sans Mary Magdalene (who had gone to tell Peter and John upon seeing the stone removed from the tomb) - Matthew 5:1-7; Mark 16:5-7; Luke 24:4-7; Luke 24:22-23; John 20:1-2 2. To Mary Magdalene who went into the tomb after Peter and John left - John 20:11-13 H. Attended His Ascension. . .

1. As two men in white apparel - Acts 1:9-10 2. Announcing the promise of His return - Acts 1:11

[With angels so prominent in the first coming of Christ, we should not be surprised with their role in His second coming...] II. Their Present And Future Ministry To Christ A. They Worshipped and Served Him. . .

1. They worship Him around the throne - Revelation 5:11-14

2. They revealed things to take place - Revelation 1:1; Revelation 22:16 (note also the many references to angels throughout Revelation) B. They Will Accompany His Second Coming. . .

1. When He comes in His glory - Matthew 16:27; Matthew 25:31; Mark 8:38
2. When He comes to raise the dead - 1 Thessalonians 4:16
3. When He comes to bring judgment and condemnation upon the wicked - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10

Conclusion 1. As previously mentioned, the ministry of angels emphasize the deity of Christ...
a. As we see them serving Him
b. As we see them praising Him
2. Hopefully, our study of angels will encourage us in the same direction...
a. To serve Christ, who was, is and will be served by angels
b. To praise Christ, who certainly deserves our praise both now and forever
Will we join with the angels by adding our service and praise to Jesus who has "obtained a more excellent name than they (angels)...", both now and in the world to come? - Hebrews 1:4

05.06. The Ministry Of Angels To Christians

Study 6: The Ministry Of Angels To Christians

Introduction 1. Our study of angels as "Ministering Spirits" has shown how they ministered to... a. The people of God in the Old Testament b. Jesus in the flesh, and continue to serve Him in heaven 2. It is understandable that Christians often wonder... a. Do angels minister in our behalf today? b. If so, in what way?

3. Christians have good reason to wonder about such things... a. By God's grace we have "become heirs according to the hope of eternal life" - Titus 3:7 b. Angels are said to be "sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation" - Hebrews 1:14 I. Angels And The Early Church A. Provided Deliverance From Prison. . .

1. In the case of the twelve apostles - Acts 5:17-20 2. In the case of Peter - Acts 12:7-11 B. Involved in Conversion. . .

1. Sending Philip to meet the Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:26-28 2. Appearing to Cornelius to send for Peter - Acts 10:1-8; Acts 10:21-22; Acts 11:12-13 C. An Instrument Of Judgement. . .

1. In the case of Herod, who delivered a great oration - Acts 12:21-22 2. He failed to give God glory, so an angel struck him with a terrible disease - Acts 12:23 D. Brought Reassurance. . .

1. Appearing to Paul, while on his journey to Rome - Acts 27:21-23 2. Assuring him that he and his fellow travelers would eventually arrive - Acts 27:24 E. Revealed The Lord's Will. . .

1. In the book of Revelation - Revelation 1:1; Revelation 22:16 2. Depicted throughout the Revelation as serving Christ a. Praising Him around the throne - Revelation 5:2; Revelation 2:11 b. Carrying out the Lord's warnings and judgments 1) E.g., sounding the seven trumpets - cf. Revelation 8:2; Revelation 8:6 2) E.g., pouring out the seven bowls of wrath - cf. Revelation 16:1

[There are many references to angels in Revelation, but their ministry takes place "behind the scenes". The visible activity of angels in the early church was very limited, as we have seen. Yet from the teachings of Christ and His apostles, what might we glean about the activity of angels today...?] II. Angels And Christians Today A. Concerned For Our Well-Being. . .

1. They rejoice when sinners repent - Luke 15:10

2. Little ones who believe are said to have "their" angels, who behold the face of God in heaven - cf. Matthew 18:10 3. Here is a sampling of opinions regarding "guardian angels"... a. "Disclosing the fact that the ministration of angels is not only general but special, certain angels being entrusted with the care of certain individuals, and all of them supplementing their own wisdom and power by direct access to the presence of God." - McGarvey b. "The doctrine of guardian angels is emphatically taught in the Scriptures. See 1 Kings 19:5-8; Psalms 91:11; Hebrews 1:13; Acts 27:23. Who can afford to despise the children who have representatives right at the throne of God?" - B. W. Johnson c. "Our Lord here not only alludes to, but, in my opinion, establishes the

notion received by almost all nations, viz. That every person has a guardian angel; and that these have always access to God, to receive orders relative to the management of their charge." - Clarke d. "He does not mean, I suppose, to state that every good man has his guardian angel, as many of the Jews believed; but that the angels were, in general, the guards of his followers, and aided them and watched over them." - Barnes e. "Does Jesus mean to teach here that each little child or child of faith had a special angel who appears in God's presence ('see the face of my Father') in special intimacy? Or does he simply mean that the angels do take an interest in the welfare of God's people (Hebrews 1:14)? There is comfort to us in that thought. Certainly Jesus means that the Father takes special care of his 'little ones' who believe in Him." - Robertson's Word Pictures f. "A difficult verse; but perhaps the following may be more than an illustration: Among men, those who nurse and rear the royal children, however humble in themselves, are allowed free entrance with their charge, and a degree of familiarity which even the highest state ministers dare not assume. Probably our Lord means that, in virtue of their charge over His disciples (Hebrews 1:13; John 1:51), the angels have errands to the throne, a welcome there, and a dear familiarity in dealing with 'His Father which is in heaven,' which on their own matters they could not assume." - JFB -- I doubt the issue can be resolved with the little evidence that we have.

B. Agents of God's Providence. . .

1. All Christians believe in the providence of God a. God's working in answer to prayer - e.g., Paul's prayer to visit Rome, Romans 1:9-10 b. In ways non-miraculous, but working nonetheless - e.g., Paul's journey to Rome 2. How God carries out His providence likely involves angels a. As it did in the affairs of nations according to the book of Daniel b. As it will in the affairs of nations according to the book of Revelation C. Companions For The Journey Home. . .

1. As Jesus illustrated in the story of the rich man and Lazarus

- Luke 16:22

2. "The Jews held the opinion that the spirits of the righteous were conveyed by angels to heaven at their death. Our Savior speaks in accordance with this opinion; and as he expressly affirms the fact, it seems as proper that it should be taken literally, as when it is said the rich man died and was buried. Angels are ministering spirits sent forth to minister to those who are heirs of salvation (Hebrews 1:14), and there is no more improbability in the supposition that they attend departing spirits to heaven, than that they attend them while on earth." - Barnes D. Guardians Of The Eternal City. . .

1. As depicted in John's vision of the New Jerusalem - Revelation 21:12

2. "Stationed there as guards to the New Jerusalem. Their business seems to have been to watch the gates that nothing improper should enter; that the great enemy should not make an insidious approach to this city as he did to the earthly paradise." - Barnes

3. "...an additional emblem of perfect security, while the gates being never shut (Revelation 21:25) imply perfect liberty and peace." - JFB 4. "Still waiting upon the heirs of salvation." - Wesley

Conclusion 1. Angels continue to minister for those who will inherit salvation b - cf. Hebrews 1:14 2. Their visible activity for Christians was limited even in the first century, perhaps for this reason:

"The visible activity of angels has come to an end, because their mediating work is done; Christ has founded the kingdom of the Spirit, and God's Spirit speaks directly to the spirit of man (via the Word of God, MAC). This new and living way has been opened up to us by Jesus Christ, upon whom faith can yet behold the angels of God ascending and descending. Still they watch the lot of man, and rejoice in his salvation; still they join in the praise and adoration of God, the Lord of hosts, still can they be regarded as 'ministering spirits sent forth to do service for the sake of them that shall inherit salvation.'" - ISBE

3. Due to the work of Christ and the Holy Spirit, the need for angels' visible activity has diminished, and we do well to heed the warnings about angels... a. Do not worship them 1) As the angels themselves warned John - Revelation 19:10; Revelation 22:8-9 2) As Paul warned the Colossians - Colossians 2:18-19 b. Do not heed new doctrines from them 1) As Paul warned the Galatians - Galatians 1:8 2) Remember what Satan is capable of! - cf. 2 Corinthians 11:14 With these warnings in mind, we can still praise God that among our many spiritual blessings in Christ in the heavenly places are His "Ministering Spirits" who serve us! - cf. Ephesians 1:3

06.00. Sermons on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

Sermons on the Death, Burial, and Resurrection of Christ

and related topics By Mark Copeland

Index The Significance of the Resurrection of Christ

The Celebration of Easter

Why Did Jesus Suffer?

Why did Jesus die on the Cross?

Series: The Problem of Suffering

Why does God allow it?

Who or What Causes it?

How can we Prepare for It?

Series: Life after Death

What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

What Is The Nature Of Man?

Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go At Death?

Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious?

Shall We Know Each Other There?

What Is The Condition Of The Wicked?

What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

What Do We Know Concerning The Judgment?

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed?

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked?

For Your Further Study

06.01. The Significance of the Resurrection of Christ

"THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESURRECTION OF CHRIST"

Mark Copeland

INTRODUCTION 1. "Easter Sunday" is an annual holiday celebrated by many... a. Millions of people commemorate the resurrection of Jesus on this day b. Many consider it as "the most holy" of religious holidays c. For some, it marks the only time they attend church services (Christmas runs a close second) 2. Christians in the first century did not have an annual observance of this event... a. The word "Easter" is found only once in the KJV Bible - cf. Acts 12:4 b. The word in the Greek is actually "Passover", and so translated elsewhere in the KJV c. "It is reasonably certain that the NT contains no reference to a yearly celebration of the resurrection of Christ" (ISBE) d. The annual observance is a human tradition, introduced in the second and third centuries 3. Churches today who follow the New Testament pattern do not celebrate "Easter" per se... a. Like the church in Jerusalem, they are content to abide in the apostles' doctrine - Acts 2:42 b. They note Paul's teaching regarding religious holidays - cf. Galatians 4:9-11 c. They value Jesus' warning regarding the traditions of men - cf. Matthew 15:9 4. This does not in any way demean the importance of the resurrection of Christ... a. It has great significance to the Christian b. It is something we should think about often (certainly more than once a year) 5. It is an appropriate subject even on "Easter Sunday", just as sermons... a. On thankfulness are around Thanksgiving b. On mothers are on Mother's Day -- Even though churches may not celebrate such holidays per se

[With that thought in mind, allow me to use this opportunity to review the significance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ for the Christian. It's significance can first be seen by considering...] I. IF CHRIST WAS NOT RAISED A. GOSPEL PREACHING IS VAIN... (1 Corinthians 15:14) 1. The preaching of the apostles is empty, meaningless 2. Because they proclaimed nothing more than a fairy tale, a story of fiction B. OUR FAITH IS VAIN... (1 Corinthians 15:14) 1. Our belief in Christ would also be empty, meaningless 2. For our faith would be in a lie, a story of make believe, not truth C. THE APOSTLES WERE FALSE WITNESSES... (1 Corinthians 15:15) 1. They swore that God raised Jesus from the dead - Acts 2:32 2. They claimed to spend 40 days with Him after the resurrection, eating and drinking with Him - Acts 10:39-41

3. There is no way they could have been deceived or mistaken; either they told the truth or they were deliberate liars, deceivers, and frauds!

D. WE ARE STILL IN OUR SINS... (1 Corinthians 15:17) 1. It would have been a liar or lunatic that died on the cross 2. No such person could have provided a sacrifice that was holy and without blemish E. BELIEVERS HAVE PERISHED AT DEATH... (1 Corinthians 15:18) 1. Their faith would have been in a false Messiah 2. They would have had no atonement for their sins 3. Dying in their sins, there would be no hope F. CHRISTIANS ARE TO BE PITIED... (1 Corinthians 15:19) 1. Because we believe in a false Messiah 2. Because our faith in Him leads us to refrain from much

worldly pleasure 3. Because we are often ridiculed or persecuted for our faith

[As Paul makes it clear, the resurrection of Christ is foundational to the Christian faith. If Jesus is not raised, then we should not be Christians! Now let's examine the significance from another angle...] II. IF CHRIST HAS BEEN RAISED A. IT VERIFIES OUR JUSTIFICATION... (Romans 4:24-25) 1. Jesus claimed His blood would be adequate - Matthew 26:28

2. By raising Jesus from the dead, God demonstrated His acceptance of Jesus as a sacrifice for our sins! - Romans 8:33-34 B. IT DEMONSTRATES THE POWER AVAILABLE TO THE CHRISTIAN... (Ephesians 1:18-20) 1. Power available at our conversion - Colossians 2:11-12; 1 Peter 3:21 2. Power available to live the Christian life - Romans 8:11-13; Php 2:12-13; Php 4:13; Ephesians 3:20; Ephesians 6:10 C. IT GIVES US HOPE CONCERNING OUR OWN RESURRECTION... (1 Peter 1:3) 1. His resurrection gives us a living hope! - 1 Peter 1:21 2. Especially concerning the resurrection of believers! - 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 D. IT DEMANDS OUR COMPLETE LOYALTY... (Romans 14:9) 1. He was raised and then exalted to become our Lord - Acts 2:32-36; Ephesians 1:20-23 2. Thus our lives and service belong to Him - Romans 14:7-8; 2 Corinthians 5:15

CONCLUSION 1. The impact of the resurrection of Jesus should not go unfelt in our lives... a. As a historical event it has everlasting implications b. For both the believer and the unbeliever 2. The believer must never lose sight of the significance of the resurrection... a. Do our lives demonstrate that we serve a risen Lord and Savior? b. Do we possess the hope, peace, and strength that the reality and power of His resurrection gives to the Christian?

3. The unbeliever also needs to examine the significance of the resurrection carefully... a. It verifies the deity of Jesus, that He has all authority - Romans 1:4; Matthew 28:19; Acts 2:36 b. It verifies the truthfulness of what He taught, such as...

1) No one can come to the Father but through Him - John 14:6 2) His blood was shed for the remission of sins - Matthew 26:28 3) He came to offer abundant life - John 10:10 4) He went to prepare a place for us - John 14:2 5) He shall come again - John 14:3 6) There will be a resurrection of the dead and ensuing judgment- John 5:28-29; John 12:48 c. If Jesus rose from the dead, then one must believe in Him! - cf. John 8:24 May we never forget "The Significance Of The Resurrection of Christ" in our lives!

06.02. The Celebration of Easter

"THE CELEBRATION OF EASTER" A Historical And Biblical Perspective

INTRODUCTION 1. "Easter Sunday" is an annual holiday celebrated by many... a. Millions of people commemorate the resurrection of Jesus on this day b. Many consider it as "the most holy" of religious holidays c. For some, it marks the only time they attend church services (although Christmas runs a close second) 2. But were you aware... a. That the church in the NT did not observe a YEARLY observance of the Lord's resurrection?

1) The word "Easter" is found only once in the KJV Bible - cf. Acts 12:4 2) The word in the Greek is actually "Passover", and so translated elsewhere in the KJV

3) "It is reasonably certain that the NT contains no reference to a YEARLY celebration of the resurrection of Christ" (ISBE) b. That the word "Easter" actually comes from "EASTRE", the Anglo-Saxon name of a Teutonic goddess of spring and fertility?

1) To her was dedicated a month corresponding to our April 2) Her festival was celebrated on the day of vernal equinox c. That many of the customs associated with Easter illustrate this and other pagan connections?

1) "The rabbit was sacred to the Germanic goddess 'Eastre', the goddess of fertility and springtime...And if you stop to think about it, rabbits are an extremely appropriate symbol for springtime, because of what they are famous for--having more rabbits." (William Heim, associate dean of the College of Arts and Letters at USF, Orlando Sentinel, 4/15/87) 2) "It appears there was a custom among ancient Egyptians and

Romans to give eggs as presents at this time of year. That was intended to insure that the recipient would have a very fertile or productive year." (Helms, *ibid.*)

3) Helms went on to say that hunting for Easter eggs may have begun as the search for gifts from the sacred animal, the rabbit, on the morning of the festival.

3. This ought to prompt some questions in the minds of Christians... a. How did the YEARLY observance of Jesus' resurrection get started? b. How did pagan names and traditions become associated with a "Christian" holiday (esp. one considered "the most holy")? c. What bearing should all this have on Christians today?

1) Should the Lord's church involve herself in such a holiday?

2) How about observing certain elements of it as individuals?

[Here are the results of my own study on these things. Beginningwith...] I. LOOKING AT EASTER FROM A "HISTORICAL" PERSPECTIVE A. THE YEARLY OBSERVANCE OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION...

1. The practice began early, in the form of a "Christian" Passover a. The Passover was already an important feast to the Jews 1) Instituted by Moses, commemorating their deliverance from Egypt 2) It was during this feast that Jesus instituted the "Lord's Supper" b. Many Jews continued to keep their Jewish customs and religious festivals after their conversion to Christ 1) Paul was not averse to observing such Jewish customs - Acts 18:18-21; Acts 21:17-26 2) John and Philip were said to observe the Passover every year (cf. Eusebius) -- But the Passover (and other Jewish festivals) was never bound upon the Gentiles (more on this later) c. Shortly after the death of the apostles, some of the "Jewish" festivals began to be observed as "Christian" festivals 1) I.e., the Passover was now observed in memory of Christ's death a) Who died during Passover week b) Who was offered as our Passover lamb for our sins - cf. 1 Corinthians 5:7-8 2) Thus began a YEARLY observance... a) Even though Christ instituted the Lord's Supper as the proper memorial to commemorate His death - cf. Luke 22:14-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26 b) Both biblical and historical evidence indicate that this was a WEEKLY observance - cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:20-22; 1 Corinthians 10:16-17 2. The yearly "Christian Passover" soon included other observances as well... a. Palm Sunday, the day Jesus made His triumphant entry into Jerusalem prior to His death b. Good Friday, the day He was crucified c. Resurrection Sunday, the day He arose and which came to be known as "Easter"

3. Celebrating these days was not without controversy... a. In the 2nd and 3rd century there was much dispute over the proper date 1) The churches in Asia Minor followed Jewish chronology a) So they celebrated the Passover when the Jews did, on the 14th of Nisan b) The Jewish calendar is a lunar calendar, which meant the day of the week would vary from year to year c) Thus the day of Passover would vary, and with it the day of celebrating Jesus' resurrection 2) Others observed the events on the day of the week in which they occurred a) So that the "Christian Passover" always fell on a Thursday b) The commemoration of Jesus' death would be on a Friday c) The celebration of the resurrection on a Sunday b. This created quite a stir... 1) While some were sorrowfully commemorating the death of Jesus, others were joyously celebrating His resurrection 2) Churches threatened to "excommunicate" one another c. Even after the Jewish calendar was dropped, and it was agreed to celebrate these holidays on the same days of the week, there was still a problem... 1) There was no agreement on which calendar to use (Gregorian or Julian) 2) Which explains the difference between the observances by the Roman and Greek orthodox churches today

-- So the YEARLY observance of the resurrection originated from human tradition, not the Bible itself, and proved to be a source of turmoil among the churches B. THE INTRODUCTION OF PAGAN CUSTOMS...

1. Assimilation of pagan ritual into "Christian" observances was a common practice a. When people took the gospel into a pagan area... 1) Many would not discourage the local residents to discard their pagan rituals 2) Instead, they would attempt to give such customs a "Christian" flavor b. As Helms, quoted earlier, went on to say: 1) "With the advent of Christianity, the egg, still taken as a symbol of life, was simply borrowed to be a symbol of the Christian holiday." 2) "The earliest Easter eggs were dyed red to represent the blood shed by Christ." 3) "Many cultures celebrated the advent of spring down through history. When Christianity came along about 2,000 years ago, there was already a number of pagan celebrations in place." 4) "People rarely discard a holiday. When a new system of beliefs comes along, you simply come up with a new mythic structure to

explain why you were celebrating that holiday in the first place."

2. The effect of such assimilation... a. It eventually "neutralized" the pagan rituals 1) Who would have ever thought of "Easter" as the name of a goddess? 2) Without the help of historical research, we would have forgotten the pagan origins b. But it also leaves many people with erroneous conceptions 1) E.g., having people believe that Christians have always observed a yearly regarding the death and resurrection of Jesus 2) E.g., in the case of Christmas, leading people to believe that Jesus was actually born on December 25th, not knowing that it was originally a Roman feast day

[But this has been looking at Easter from a "historical" perspective. As disciples of Christ, our primary concern should be the "biblical" perspective...] II. LOOKING AT EASTER FROM A "BIBLICAL" PERSPECTIVE A. PAUL GAVE WARNINGS REGARDING FEAST DAYS...

1. Paul expressed his concern for the churches in Galatia - Galatians 4:8-11 a. He does not say that their practice was wrong per se, only that he is concerned b. From the context, his concern pertained to "why" they were doing these things 1) If they believed it was necessary to be saved, then Paul's labor among them was in danger of being in vain 2) For seeking justification through the Law, religious feast days, etc., causes one to fall from grace and become estranged from Christ! - cf. Galatians 5:4 2. Paul admonished the Colossians not to let anyone "judge" them - Colossians 2:16-17 a. Some were seeking to bind the Law upon the Gentile believers - e.g., Acts 15:1, Acts 15:5 b. Gentile Christians were told not to let any one judge (condemn) them, for salvation is in Christ, not in the keeping of the religious feast days of the Law 3. But as we noted before, Paul was not averse to observing certain feast days himself a. He did not hesitate to keep Jewish customs when expedient - 1 Corinthians 9:19-20 1) He had Timothy circumcised - Acts 16:1-3 2) He took a vow - Acts 18:18 3) He sought to keep a Jewish feast in Jerusalem - Acts 18:19-21 4) He participated in purification ceremonies, which included animal sacrifices - Acts 21:17-26; Numbers 6:13-20 b. However, in his teaching it was made clear: 1) It should be kept on an individual basis - cf. Romans 14:5-6 2) It should not be bound on others - cf. Galatians 2:3-5 3) It had nothing to do with our justification in Christ - cf. Galatians 5:4-6 -- Where Paul drew the line was in making such matters church doctrine or practice, where people were compelled to do them B. JESUS WARNED OF THE DANGER OF HUMAN TRADITIONS...

1. He rebuked the scribes Pharisees for their use of traditions - Mark 7:1-13 a. They made their traditions necessary for all to observe - Mark 7:7 b. In keeping their traditions, they laid aside the commands of God - Mark 7:8-9 2. Traditions of men are wrong, then, when they: a. Become matters of doctrine or required practice, bound upon all b. Displace the commands of God by the very keeping of the traditions

-- Traditions are therefore like the feast days; in certain situations they can be matters of expediency, but if we are not careful they can become a stumbling block to us!

C. MAKING APPLICATION IN REGARDS TO EASTER...

1. The Bible is silent regarding any YEARLY observance of Christ's resurrection a. God and Jesus evidently did not deem it necessary for the church b. Any yearly observance is based upon human tradition, not God's Word 2. As a human tradition, we must be very careful - cf. Mark 7:7-9 a. It cannot become a matter of doctrine, which is bound upon others b. It cannot displace the keeping

of God's commandments (do those who come only on Easter believe that it renders the command in Hebrews 10:25 of no effect?) 3. An annual observance by the church is unwise, if not wrong a. It intertwines human traditions with God's commands for His church b. It forces people to observe what is a human tradition 4. On an individual basis, however, if one wishes to esteem one day above another: a. It is between him and the Lord - Romans 14:5-6 b. Be careful not to condemn those who differ - Romans 14:4, Romans 14:10-12 c. Be sensitive to the convictions of others - Romans 14:13-19 5. As for the pagan elements... a. Again, perhaps this is best left on an individual basis b. My own understanding is that we are free in Christ to change what may have been a religious practice at one time for personal use as an expediency 1) E.g., using circumcision for personal hygiene 2) E.g., using colored eggs and hiding them for family entertainment

CONCLUSION 1. My view of Easter is similar to how I view Thanksgiving... a. I know that the idea of an annual observance is foreign to the Scriptures b. As Christians we should give thanks and celebrate Christ's resurrection year around c. But seeking to "continue steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine" (Acts 2:42), the Lord's church should refrain from adding human traditions to its work and worship d. Yet I am grateful that I live in a country where at least once a year people think about God's blessings, especially in the gift of His Dear Son 2. My prayer is that people will do more than think about God's Son once a year... a. That we be thankful in every thing and on every day b. That we live in the power of the resurrected Life which is in Christ Jesus our Lord 1) Which comes by being in Christ 2) Which comes by living daily in service to Him who died for us, and rose again!

"For though He was crucified in weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." - 2 Corinthians 13:4

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." - Galatians 2:20 "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." - Php 4:13 Are you living daily for Christ, serving Him by the power of His resurrected life?

06.03. Why Did Jesus Suffer?

"WHY DID JESUS SUFFER?"

INTRODUCTION 1. The gospel message is that Jesus died and shed his blood for our sins... a. According to the Jewish Scriptures - 1 Corinthians 15:3; Isaiah 53:4-6 b. Without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins - Hebrews 9:22; Ephesians 1:7 2. Yet it is not unusual to wonder: why couldn't Jesus have simply died a quick death...? a. Animal sacrifices were killed with a quick slice of the knife b. Why did Jesus have to endure the scourging, mocking, and crucifixion?

[Why, then, did Jesus suffer? Before we consider the Biblical response to our question, let's first note that His suffering actually included much more than commonly thought...] I. THE THINGS THAT HE SUFFERED A. BEFORE HIS PASSION...

1. For thirty-three years He suffered temptation, the daily struggles against sin we endure - Hebrews 4:15; Hebrews 2:18 2. He experienced rejection by His own hometown - Luke 4:16, Luke 4:28-30 3. There were blasphemous accusations when He was doing good - Luke 11:14-15 4. There was derision by the Pharisees - Luke 16:14 5. There were deceitful questions seeking to ensnare Him - Luke 20:20 6. There was defection by many disciples - John 6:60-61, John 6:66 7. He endured ridicule by members of his own family - John 7:3-5 8. He had to put up with ignorance among the multitudes - John 7:1-53 9. There was the anticipation that likely produced anxiety a. He knew what was coming, told His disciples on three occasions - e.g., Luke 18:31-33 b. The disciples' lack of comprehension prevented them from being any source of comfort - Luke 18:34 10. At the Passover meal a. There were petty quarrels among His disciples - Luke 22:24 b. There were announcements of betrayal, abandonment, denial - Matthew 26:21, Matthew 26:31, Matthew 26:34

-- The indignity of such things was magnified by knowing who He was, yet He humbly "made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant" - Php 2:7 B. DURING HIS PASSION...

1. In the Garden of Gethsemane a. There was the great agony as He prayed - Luke 22:44 b. There was His disciples' laziness who could not watch with Him - Mark 14:37-41 c. There followed the betrayal with a kiss by Judas - Mark 14:1-72 d. Then He was forsaken by all His disciples - Mark 14:50 e. He was arrested and bound - John 18:13 2. Before Annas, father-in-law to Caiaphas the high priest a. Here Jesus was denied by Peter - John 18:17, John 18:25-27 b. Jesus was struck with a blow - John 18:22 c. He was sent away bound - John 18:24 3. Before Caiaphas, in an illegal night assembly of the council a. Jesus was falsely accused - Matthew 26:59-61 b. The physical abuse intensified - Matthew 26:67-68; Mark 14:65 1) They spit on His face 2) He was blindfolded 3) Some of the council beat Him 4) The officers struck Him with their palms 5) They mocked Him to prophesy who struck Him c. With many words they blasphemed Him - Luke 22:65 4. Before the council, in the morning a. After consulting, they bound Jesus - Mark 15:1 b. He was led away, delivered to Pilate - Mark 15:1 5. Before Pilate the Roman governor a. Unaccompanied by His accusers who wouldn't enter the Praetorium - John 18:28-29 b. False charges were made against

Him - Luke 23:2 6. Before Herod the puppet king a. The chief priests and scribes vehemently accused Him - Luke 23:10 b. Abused by Herod with his men of war 1) Treated with contempt and mocked - Luke 23:11 2) Arrayed in a gorgeous robe and sent back to Pilate - Luke 23:11 7. Before Pilate the second time a. Barabbas, a murderer, robber, and rebel is released in His stead - Luke 23:13-25 b. Demanded that He be crucified, Jesus is delivered to be scourged - Mark 15:15 8. Abused by the Roman soldiers a. Surrounded by the whole garrison - Mark 15:16 b. They stripped Him and put on a scarlet robe - Matthew 27:28 c. They put on a crown of thorns on his head, a reed in His right hand - Matthew 27:29 d. They bow the knee and mock Him, "Hail, King of the Jews!" - Matthew 27:29 e. They spat on Him, struck Him on the head with the reed - Matthew 27:30 f. They mocked Him further, then stripped Him of the robe and put His own clothes back on Him - Matthew 27:31 g. They led Him away to be crucified - Matthew 27:31 9. The journey to Golgotha a. At first, He bore His own cross - John 19:17 b. A great crowd followed, including women who mourned and lamented Him; yet He mourned for them - Luke 23:27-31 10. At the crucifixion a. He refused sour wine mixed with gall (an anesthetic) - Matthew 27:33-34 b. They crucified Him, as He cried out for God to forgive them - Luke 23:33-34 c. The soldiers divided His garments, casting lots for them - Luke 23:34 d. People stood looking on, some blasphemed - Mark 15:29-30 e. The chief priests with the scribes mocked and sneered - Mark 15:31-32; Luke 23:35 f. The soldiers mocked - Luke 23:36-37 g. The two thieves reviled Him, one persisted in blasphemy - Mark 15:32; Luke 23:39 h. For six hours He hung on the cross - Mark 15:25, Mark 15:33 i. Finally He cried "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" - Mark 15:34 1) Perhaps indicating the burden of bearing the sins of the world - cf. 2 Corinthians 5:21 2) Perhaps indicating the greatest suffering He endured was the spiritual agony j. Then He died, possibly of a ruptured heart - Luke 23:46; cf. John 19:34

-- As prophesied, Jesus was stricken, smitten, afflicted, wounded, bruised, chastised, endured stripes, oppressed, led to the slaughter, cut off from the land of the living - cf. Isaiah 53:4-8

[Again we ask "Why?" Why did it please the Lord to bruise Him, to put Jesus to grief (Isaiah 53:10)? Why could His death for our sins have not been more merciful? Why did Jesus suffer...?]

II. THE REASONS THAT HE SUFFERED A. TO BRING US TO GOD...

1. Thus Peter explained in his epistle - 1 Peter 3:18 2. God seeks to reconcile us back to Him - Isaiah 53:6; 2 Corinthians 5:18-21 3. Motivated by love, God sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins - 1 John 4:9-10 4. The suffering reveals the terribleness of sin a. The universality of sin - Romans 3:23 b. The consequence of sin - Romans 6:23 5. The suffering reveals the greatness of God's love a. The love of the Father - John 3:16; Romans 5:8 b. The love of the Son - John 15:13; 1 John 3:16 -- Yes, He was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities B. TO BE OUR HIGH PRIEST...

1. A good high priest must be compassionate - Hebrews 5:1-2 2. His suffering prepared Jesus to be the perfect high priest - He 2:10 a. To aid those who are tempted - Hebrews 2:17-18 b. To sympathize with our weaknesses - Hebrews 4:14-16 c. To appreciate the challenge of obedience in the flesh - Hebrews 5:7-9 3. Thus He lives ever ready to intercede for us - Hebrews 7:25 a. To provide mercy and grace in time of need - Romans 8:34 b. To provide strength to conquer in time of trial - Romans 8:35-39 -- His suffering makes Jesus the perfect high priest and intercessor on our behalf C. TO BE OUR EXAMPLE...

1. Of suffering for the sake of righteousness - 1 Peter 2:20-24 a. When we are mistreated for doing good b. How we should trust in God to judge rightly 2. Of persevering in our battle against sin - 1 Peter 4:1-4 a. As we seek to live for the will of God, not the lusts of the flesh b. As we endure the ridicule of those in the world 3. Of loving one another, and loving our enemies - John 13:34-35; Ephesians 5:1-2; Matthew 5:44-45 a. Loving one another as He loved us b. Blessing those who curse us, doing good to those who hate us, praying for those who persecute us -- His suffering illustrates how far we must go for the sake of love and righteousness

CONCLUSION 1. Perhaps we can now appreciate more fully why our Savior suffered... a. To pay the terrible price of sin b. To be our perfect Advocate (1 John 2:1) in our struggle against sin c. To motivate us to reach a higher plane in striving for love and righteousness 2. May contemplation on the suffering of Jesus ever serve as the inspiration for those... a. Who have yet to obey the gospel - cf. Acts 2:36-38; Acts 22:16 b. Who have obeyed the gospel, but have fallen back into sin - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9 c. Who desire to live for Christ in an unfriendly world - 1 Peter 4:1-19 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: - 1 Peter 2:21

Therefore let those who suffer according to the will of God commit their souls to Him in doing good, as to a faithful Creator. - 1 Peter 4:19

06.04. Why Did Jesus Die on the Cross?

"WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS?"

INTRODUCTION 1. Movies like Mel Gibson's "The Passion Of The Christ" generate much controversy... a. Regarding possible anti-Semitism b. Regarding graphic depiction of scourging and crucifixion 2. Sometimes the controversy centers around the reason Jesus died... a. Was His death accidental, an unintended consequence of His teachings? b. Was it God's will, recognized and accepted by Jesus in advance?

[The gospel message is quite clear as to why Jesus died for us, yet there is a reason that is often overlooked. So let's review the Biblical answer to the question...] I. WHY DID JESUS DIE ON THE CROSS?

A. HE DIED TO ATONE FOR OUR SINS...

1. This is the fundamental theme of the Gospel - 1 Corinthians 15:1-3 2. His suffering for our sins was foretold - Isaiah 53:4-6, Isaiah 53:10-12 3. He was the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world - John 1:29 4. In love, God offered Him as the propitiation for our sins - 1 John 4:9-10 5. Through such suffering, to reconcile us back to God - 1 Peter 3:18 6. Providing redemption from sin through His precious blood - 1 Peter 1:18-19 -- His death was no accident, but part of God's predetermined plan - Acts 2:22-23 B. HE DIED THAT WE MIGHT DIE TO SIN...

1. This reason for His death is often overlooked 2. Yet it is clearly stated by Peter - 1 Peter 2:24 a. He died for our sins that we might die to sin (cf. ESV) b. He died for our sins that we might live for righteousness 3. He died that we might die! And so we read such statements as: a. "if we died with Him..." - 2 Timothy 2:11 b. "If with Christ you died..." - Colossians 2:20 c. "For you have died..." - Colossians 3:3 d. "I have been crucified with Christ..." - Galatians 2:20

-- Jesus died, not only to atone for sin, but to provide a means whereby we can die with Him to sin, and thereby live for righteousness - 1 Peter 2:24

[Unless we also 'die to sin', has Jesus' death on the cross fully accomplished its purpose? He died for our sins, but have we died to sin? In other words...] II. HAS JESUS DIED FOR YOU IN VAIN?

A. HAVE YOU DIED TO SIN...?

1. When does God view you as... a. Dying with Christ? b. Being crucified with Christ? c. Being united with Christ in His death? c. Dead to sin?

2. Paul makes it very clear: when we are baptized! a. Writing to Christians who had died to sin - Romans 6:1-2 b. Reminding them concerning their baptism into Christ... 1) They were baptized into His death - Romans 6:3 2) They were buried with Him through baptism into death - Romans 6:4 3) Their old man was crucified with Him - Romans 6:6 4) Their death freed them from sin, enabling them to live with Christ - Romans 6:7-8 5) They should therefore consider themselves dead to sin - Romans 6:11 -- If we have not yet been baptized into Christ, then we have not yet

died to sin!

B. ARE YOU LIVING FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS...?

1. That is why you died to sin - cf. 1 Peter 2:24 a. That you might be alive to God - Romans 6:11 b. That you might not let sin reign anymore - Romans 6:12 c. That you might present your members as instruments of righteousness - Romans 6:13 d. That you might become slaves of righteousness - Romans 6:16-18 2. Having died to sin, we are to mortify (kill) the flesh a. Aided by the Spirit of God - Romans 8:13; cf. Ephesians 3:16 b. Seeking to bring the flesh under subjection - 1 Corinthians 9:27 c. Abstaining from fleshly lusts - 1 Peter 2:11 d. Putting to death (i.e., putting off) the sinful deeds of the flesh - Colossians 3:5-9 3. Having died to sin, we are to live for righteousness a. Putting on the new man, renewed in the image of Christ - Colossians 3:10-14; Ephesians 4:22-32 b. Growing in the true knowledge of Christ - cf. 2 Peter 1:5-9 4. How serious are we in this effort? As evidenced by: a. Our willingness to learn and grow in the knowledge of Christ? - 2 Peter 3:18 b. Our efforts to put off sin and put on Christ in our lives? - Romans 13:13-14 -- If we are not diligent in putting off sin and putting on Christ, then His death for us was in vain!

CONCLUSION 1. When we consider the death of Jesus on the cross... a. We should not just think of His death as an atonement for our sins b. But also providing the means whereby we might die to sin and live for righteousness 2. The grace of God in Jesus is not complete until we are living as we should... a. Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, living soberly, righteously, and godly - Titus 2:11-12 b. Redeemed from every lawless deed, purified and zealous for good works - Titus 2:13-14 Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh (Galatians 5:24; cf. Romans 6:6). Are you Christ's...?

06.05. The Problem of Suffering

The Problem of Suffering 1. Why does God allow it?

2. Who or What Causes it?

3. How Can We Prapare For it?

06.05.01. Why Does God Allow It?

"THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING"

Why Does God Allow It?

INTRODUCTION 1. There is a question which is as old as the first tear, and as recent as the latest newscast:

"Why? Why does God allow suffering, sorrow, heartache, and death, even among His own children?"

2. This question was asked by Job, and has been asked by every person who has walked upon the face of the earth and who believes in God 3. It was asked by a Christian whose wife... a. Received in a car wreck a broken arm, ribs, back, pelvis, leg, and over 200 fractures in her skull b. Required over a month in ICU, and more than a year for complete recovery!

4. The answer he received from the Word of God were such an encouragement to me that I would like to share them with you...

[Our purpose in this lesson is not to determine the ORIGIN or CAUSE of suffering (that we will do later), but to better understand:

* Why God allows it * Why Christians can even rejoice in the midst of trials! The first reason suggested by this Christian was...] I. SUFFERING KEEPS THIS WORLD FROM BECOMING TOO ATTRACTIVE A. THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT WE ARE "PILGRIMS" AND "SOJOURNERS"...

1. This world is not truly our home 2. God has prepared something better for us 3. Consider the following passages: 1 Peter 2:11; Hebrews 13:14; 2 Corinthians 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:5 B. IF THERE WAS NO SUFFERING...

1. No one would want to leave this temporary world 2. No one would desire the "eternal" home, and therefore prepare themselves for it C. BUT THE AFFAIRS OF THIS LIFE ARE SO ORDERED...

1. That the world soon loses its attraction 2. Most young people may want to live forever... a. But by the time a man reaches his "three score and ten" b. He begins to desire something better II. SUFFERING CAN BRING OUT OUR BEST A. THE MAN WHOSE WIFE WAS SERIOUSLY INJURED SAW THIS...

1. In the constant support by friends 2. In the preparation of food 3. In the financial support B. WE SEE THIS OCCURRING QUITE FREQUENTLY...

1. In times of natural disaster 2. When someone loses a house to fire, tornado, etc.

3. In times of terminal illness C. THIS MAY BE ONE REASON WHY EARLY CHRISTIANS REJOICED IN THEIR TRIALS...

1. They understood that tribulations could develop character 2. As Paul wrote in Romans 5:3-4 III. SUFFERING GIVES AN OCCASION TO SILENCE THE ENEMIES OF GOD A. REMEMBER THE STORY OF JOB?

1. Satan wanted to prove God wrong about Job, that he served God only because God had blessed him 2. But Job's patience under suffering silenced Satan!

B. LIKEWISE, GOD DESIRES THAT WE SILENCE "FOOLISH MEN" - 1 Peter 2:15 1. Who ridicule the teachings of Christ as foolishness 2. Who say we are Christians only for what good we can get out of it C. BY PATIENTLY ENDURING, OR DOING GOOD IN TIMES OF SUFFERING...

1. The value of being Christians really shines through 2. In the faith we have that sustains us in suffering, and in the love we show towards those who suffer IV. SUFFERING MAKES US APPRECIATIVE A. WE ALL RECEIVE SO MANY GOOD THINGS IN THIS LIFE...

1. It is easy for us to become prone to take them for granted 2. Instead of receiving them with gratitude toward God B. SUFFERING CAN HELP US APPRECIATE MORE FULLY...

1. Good health 2. Good friends, and a loving family 3. A good example of how suffering can make one appreciative is the apostle Paul when he was in prison - cf. Php 1:3-8 V. SUFFERING MAKES US MORE DEPENDENT UPON GOD A. TOO OFTEN, WE THINK OURSELVES SELF-SUFFICIENT...

1. "But when a dozen of the most skilled men in their profession tell you they have done all they can and it is completely out of their hands..."

2. "...you suddenly realize how much you depend on God."

B. AT NO OTHER TIME...

1. Is one more likely to realize that we depend upon God for our very breath!

2. As Paul proclaimed: "in Him we live and move and have our being" - Acts 17:28 VI. SUFFERING HELPS PURIFY US A. CONSIDER THE IMPORT OF TWO PASSAGES...

1. 1 Peter 1:6-7 - Suffering can be like fire purifying gold 2. James 1:2-5 - Maturity can be developed through trials B. TO ILLUSTRATE HOW, CONSIDER THE MAN WHOSE WIFE WAS INJURED...

1. "Many times I searched my own life during these past six weeks in order to confess my every failure and shortcoming to God..."

2. "I surely did not want my own sins to stand in the way of God hearing my prayers for Jane..."

3. "It was absolutely necessary to be truthful with God and myself, and I am a better man today than before."

VII. SUFFERING MAKES US SYMPATHETIC A. PAUL WROTE OF THIS VALUE OF AFFLICTION...

1. To the church at Corinth, in his second epistle - 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 2. It helps us to be better able to comfort others in their affliction B. WE MAY THINK WE CAN SYMPATHIZE WITH SOMEONE...

1. But until we have been there personally, there is no true understanding of their hurt 2. Experiencing suffering... a. Makes us more likely to "weep with those who weep" - Romans 12:15 b. Better enables us to serve others VIII. SUFFERING TEACHES US HOW TO PRAY A. WE ALL MAY BE A PRAYING PEOPLE...

1. We pray at the right times 2. We pray for the right things B. BUT IN THE MIDST OF SUFFERING WE LEARN HOW TO PRAY...

1. "Earnestly"

2. "Perseveringly"

3. "With groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26) C. AS OUR FRIEND SAID:

1. "I have been a praying man since I became a Christian. But never like this."

2. "I have learned more about prayer in the past six weeks than in the previous twenty years. My prayers will be different for the rest of my life."

CONCLUSION 1. Can we begin to see why a RIGHTEOUS and MERCIFUL God would allow suffering, even to the innocent?

2. If we look at suffering purely from MAN'S point of view, we will not understand why suffering is permitted 3. But remember what God said through the prophet Isaiah: For my thoughts [are] not your thoughts, neither [are] your ways my ways, saith the LORD. For [as] the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:1-13)

4. When we look at suffering from GOD'S point of view, from the viewpoint of His plans for us in preparation of eternity, then we can begin to appreciate why He would allow suffering to occur...

5. And never forget those words of Paul, which reminds us of God's never failing love: Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? [shall] tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written, For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, Nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:1-39) May God be praised!

06.05.02. Who or What Causes It?

"THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING" Who Or What Causes It?

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous lesson, we saw through the eyes of one suffering Christian that SUFFERING can often bring about very positive results: a. It keeps the world from becoming too attractive b. It can bring out our best c. It gives an occasion to silence the enemies of God d. It makes us appreciative for things often taken for granted e. It makes us depend on God f. It can purify us g. It makes us sympathetic h. It teaches us how to pray -- In light of these, perhaps we can begin to understand why God would allow suffering to exist

2. In this lesson, we shall cover an even more difficult question: "Who or what is responsible for the suffering which God allows to exist?" a. Is it the work of God Himself? b. Is it Satan? c. Or is it simply natural consequences in a world of cause and effect?

3. In dealing with this, I do not propose to have all the answers; but I share with you those thoughts which I believe are in harmony with the Word of God...

I. SUFFERING MAY BE "THE RESULT OF OUR OWN ACTIONS"

A. GOD HAS CREATED A WORLD GOVERNED BY NATURAL LAWS...

1. Laws of cause and effect 2. Laws of action and reaction 3. Laws of sowing and reaping B. IF WE VIOLATE THESE LAWS, THE CONSEQUENCES ARE OFTEN GRAVE...

1. Like stepping off a ten story building 2. Or running out in front of a truck 3. Or feeding one's body constantly with "junk" food 4. Or exposing oneself to contagious diseases, dangerous chemicals, pollution, etc.

C. IN SUCH CASES, SUFFERING IS EXPERIENCED...

1. Because, whether knowingly or unknowingly, some natural law has been violated 2. It is not because we are evil or because we are good (i.e., there is no moral significance to this suffering)

D. WHAT REALLY HURTS, HOWEVER...

1. Is when we suffer because SOMEONE ELSE violates a natural law 2. E.g., a car wreck caused by someone else's carelessness 2. E.g., child abuse by an alcoholic parent

[This explains much of the suffering endured in our lives. Some would say that ALL suffering is the result of violating natural laws, and that God or Satan have absolutely no hand in suffering whatsoever.

I believe the Bible teaches otherwise...] II. SUFFERING MAY BE "THE WORK OF SATAN"

A. THE BIBLE PRESENTS SATAN AS A CAUSE OF SUFFERING...

1. As in the case of Job - Job 1:6-12; Job 2:1-6 2. As in the case of persecuted Christians - 1 Peter 5:8-9 3. Satan's objective: that we might curse God (as some do when they experience suffering)
B. BUT WHY DOES GOD ALLOW SATAN TO TEST US SO?

1. Because God is able to use such suffering to make us better! a. E.g., Paul & his "thorn in the flesh" - 2 Corinthians 12:7-10 b. Remember James 1:2-4, that the trying of our faith can produce good results

2. Also, consider God will do for those who endure Satan's "shenanigans": "But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle [you]." (1 Peter 5:10) C. WE CAN ALSO TAKE CONSOLATION IN KNOWING THAT SATAN HAS HIS LIMITS...

1. As in the case of Job, God will let Satan go only so far

2. As promised in Paul's letter to the Corinthians: "...but God [is] faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear [it]." (1 Corinthians 10:13)

[So Satan is often permitted to bring suffering upon the righteous. His purpose: to devour us, to get us to curse God. But by the grace of God we are able to use that suffering to perfect, establish, strengthen and settle ourselves as the children of God! Is there ever a time when God Himself may bring suffering upon His children? I believe the Bible teaches there is...] III. SUFFERING MAY BE "THE CHASTISEMENT OF GOD"

A. THAT GOD CHASTENS HIS CHILDREN IS TAUGHT IN BOTH TESTAMENTS...

1. In the Old Testament: a. "Thou shalt also consider in thine heart, that, as a man chasteneth his son, [so] the LORD thy God chasteneth thee." (Deuteronomy 8:5) b. "My son, despise not the chastening of the LORD; neither be weary of his correction: For whom the LORD loveth he correcteth; even as a father the son [in whom] he delighteth." (Proverbs 3:11-12) 2. In the New Testament: a. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent." (Revelation 3:19) b. "And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him: For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons." (Hebrews 12:5-8) B. WHAT WOULD BE GOD'S PURPOSE IN CHASTISING HIS CHILDREN?

1. Certainly not because He delights in doing so - cf. Lamentations 3:31-33 2. But because it may be necessary... a. To correct - Hebrews 12:9 b. That we may be partakers of His Holiness - Hebrews 12:10 c. That we may yield the peaceable fruit of righteousness - Hebrews 12:11 3. Only so we will not be condemned with the world - 1 Corinthians 11:32 C. WHEN WOULD GOD CHASTEN US?

1. Only when we do not correct ourselves! - 1 Corinthians 11:31 2. Only when we are in danger of being condemned with the world! - 1 Corinthians 11:32 D. HOW DOES GOD CHASTEN HIS CHILDREN?

1. Consider how God tried to correct the erring nation of Israel - cf. Amos 4:6-12 a. These were not miraculous or supernatural events b. But acts of nature brought on by the providential working of God!

2. If God would use His Providence in an attempt to get the nation of Israel to repent before it was too late... a. Would not the same loving God use His providential workings to chastise His erring children today? b. Does He love us any less? - cf. 1 Corinthians 11:30-32; Revelation 2:20-23

3. I know of no scriptural reason why God could not or would not use His Providence to bring about events in our lives which can hopefully serve to: a. Wake us up b. Cause us to reflect on our lives and our relationship to God c. Encourage us to repent and turn back to Him if we are straying

CONCLUSION 1. The gist of what I am saying is this: When we experience suffering in our lives... a. IT MAY BE WE HAVE VIOLATED SOME LAW OF NATURE 1) In this case, there is no moral significance involved 2) It is not because one is good or bad b. IT MAY BE THE WORK OF SATAN 1) In this case, it is because we are righteous in God's sight 2) And Satan is trying to devour us, to get us to rebel against God c. IT MAY BE THE CHASTISEMENT OF GOD 1) If so, it is ONLY because... a) He loves us b) He sees that we are heading in a direction which if left unchecked would result in the damnation of our souls!

2) God won't stop us from sinning, but through His providential workings in the affairs of this world He might try to get us to reflect upon what we are doing!

2. CAN WE DETERMINE when any particular suffering is from God, Satan or neither? a. I don't believe we can b. Unless, of course, one's sin is so blatant...

3. HOW THEN SHALL WE REACT TO SUFFERING? a. IF in every case of suffering we approach it from the viewpoint that it MIGHT be God in love chastening us... b. And IF we use the occasion of suffering to:

1) Examine our lives and our relationship with God 2) Draw closer to God... c. THEN...

1) If it is from God, it FULFILLS His purpose!

2) If it is from Satan, it FRUSTRATES his purpose!

3) If it is neither, it still brings us closer to God! Our final study will consider how we can best prepare for suffering...

06.05.03. How Can We Prepare For It?

"THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING"

How Can We Prepare For It?

INTRODUCTION 1. In our study of the problem of suffering thus far... a. We have looked at why God allows it to exist b. Also, we have examined some of the possible causes of suffering 2. Even so, I still admit there is much we may not understand a. But perhaps we are closer to being able to use suffering in our lives for good... b. To use suffering to the glory of God, and for the betterment of ourselves!

3. In this final lesson, I wish to suggest some ways we can prepare ourselves for suffering that might come our way

[There are several things that we can develop in our lives which will help us to deal with the problem of suffering. The first is...] I. DEVELOP TRUST IN GOD THROUGH AN ACTIVE "BIBLE LIFE"

A. SCRIPTURES ABOUND WITH PROMISES THAT GOD IS WITH HIS CHILDREN IN THEIR TROUBLES...

1. In the Old Testament, cf. Psalms 46:1-3; Psalms 55:22 2. In the New Testament, cf. Romans 8:35-39; 1 Peter 5:6-7 B. TO RECEIVE THIS WONDERFUL HELP OF GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE...

1. We must TRUST in Him!

2. As the prophet Nahum implied in Nahum 1:7 3. As promised in the song written by Isaiah in Isaiah 26:3-4 C. HOW DO WE DEVELOP SUCH TRUST?

1. Faith (a synonym for trust) comes through the Word of God! - Romans 10:17

2. Those who read and meditate upon the Word develop that sort of TRUST which sustains them in all things - cf. Psalms 119:165 3. This is just another reason why we need to be diligent in our daily reading of the Bible!

4. Then we can be like that "blessed" man described in the first three verses of the Psalms - Psalms 1:1-3 [At the same time, we need to...] II. DEVELOP COMMUNION WITH GOD THROUGH AN ACTIVE "PRAYER LIFE"

A. THE BIBLE TEACHES US TO PRAY IN TIMES OF SUFFERING - James 5:13 1. Jesus certainly did during His greatest trials a. In the garden of Gethsemane - Matthew 26:36-44 b. While on the cross at Calvary - Luke 23:34, Luke 23:46 2. We find the early church fervent in prayer when their leaders were being persecuted - Acts 12:1-5, Acts 12:12 B. THIS IS BECAUSE IN PRAYER...

1. We receive the inner peace necessary to sustain us in our trials - Php 4:6-7 2. But the TIME to develop our "prayer life" is NOW! a. BEFORE suffering comes - cf. Jeremiah 12:5 1) If our strength is small when dealing with the MINOR frustrations of life... 2) ...then how will we be able to be strong when faced with MAJOR difficulties that suffering often brings? b. So God will already be a FRIEND with Whom we are close, and not a stranger!

[We also need to...] III. DEVELOP CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIPS THROUGH AN ACTIVE "CHURCH LIFE"

A. THE "PREACHER" IN ECCLESIASTES WROTE OF THE VALUE OF HAVING FRIENDS - Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 1. They can help each other in their troubles 2. But "woe" to those who must face suffering alone!

B. GOD INTENDED FOR THE CHURCH TO PROVIDE THIS KIND OF MUTUAL ENCOURAGEMENT...

1. As members together in the body of Christ, we are to have the same care for one another - 1 Corinthians 12:24-27 2. Those who are strong are exhorted to help those who are weak - 1 Thessalonians 5:14 C. THE BEST WAY TO DEVELOP SUCH HELPFUL RELATIONSHIPS...

1. TAKE AN ACTIVE PART in the "family life" of the local church a. Become involved b. Make your presence felt 1) By frequent and consistent assembling with the church 2) By voluntary participation in the work of the church c. Visit the sick, help the needy, encourage the weak, assimilate the new members 1) Helping others in their time of suffering can "soften" the shock of suffering in your own life 2) E.g., visiting the sick in hospitals, or the bereaved at funerals will make it easier for you when it comes your turn d. So become more than just a "pew-warmer"!

2. Those who such things WILL NEVER LACK SUPPORT in THEIR time of trouble! a. I.e., if you are not diligent to visit others in their time of need... b. ...don't be surprised if others are not quick to come to YOUR side when the need is there (not that they shouldn't, but it can be difficult to effectively assist those who chosen to remain aloof in their relationship with others)

CONCLUSION 1. By developing... a. Trust in God through an active "Bible life" b. Communion with God through an active "prayer life" c. And Christian friendships through an active "church life"

...we can go a long way in preparing ourselves to deal with adversity 2. Burdens can either shatter or strengthen our faith... a. Which it will be for us depends upon how well we have prepared ourselves b. Jesus taught us that the key to overcoming the "storms" of life lies in laying the proper foundation, one created by both HEARING and DOING His Word - Matthew 7:24-27 Are we preparing ourselves for the days of suffering that most of us will likely face...? To every [thing there is] a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven: A time to be born, and a time to die; A time to plant, and a time to pluck up [that which is] planted; A time to kill, and a time to heal; A time to break down, and a time to build up; A time to weep, and a time to laugh; A time to mourn, and a time to dance; A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together; A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing; A time to get, and a time to lose; A time to keep, and a time to cast away; A time to rend, and a time to sew; A time to keep silence, and a time to speak; A time to love, and a time to hate; A time of war, and a time of peace. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8) Though this may be true, let's remember the encouraging words of the writer to the Hebrews:

Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin.

Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

(Hebrews 4:14-16) May we all find that wonderful "MERCY" and "GRACE" in our times of need!

06.06. Life After Death

Series: Life after Death What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

What Is The Nature Of Man? Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go At Death? Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious? Shall We Know Each Other There?

What Is The Condition Of The Wicked?

What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

What Do We Know Concerning The Judgment?

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed?

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked? For Your Further Study

06.06.01. What Is The Value of Such A Study?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Is The Value Of Such A Study?

INTRODUCTION 1. Mankind has long been fascinated with the subject of life after death 2. Such fascination has given rise to such things as: a. Interest in the occult b. Speculation concerning the timing and events surrounding the return of Jesus Christ

3. It has also created much confusion among those who are Christians, who have every reason to look forward to the future with certainty and great expectation

4. Though the Bible has much to say about what will occur after death and in the future, many have not studied the Bible CAREFULLY on this subject a. Their knowledge may be limited to what they have heard or seen on religious TV and radio programs b. Or their understanding may be based upon a point of view that is taught by their religion's creed, rather than the Bible itself

5. It is my prayer that this series of lessons on "Life After Death" may help increase our understanding on what the Bible itself actually teaches on the subject

[In this lesson, I wish to answer the question, "What is the value of such a study?" But first, it may help to define a couple of terms...] I. DEFINITION OF TERMS A. ESCHATOLOGY...

1. The systematic study of that which the Bible has revealed regarding the future is called "eschatology"

2. The term comes from two words... a. ESCHATOS - meaning "last things" b. LOGOS - meaning "word" or "discourse"

3. Therefore, eschatology is a discourse or study about the last things B. INDIVIDUAL ESCHATOLOGY vs. GENERAL ESCHATOLOGY...

1. The field of "eschatology" can be divided into two general areas 2. INDIVIDUAL eschatology... a. Pertains to what happens to the individual between death and the final return of Christ b. Otherwise known as the "intermediate state"

3. GENERAL eschatology... a. Pertains to what will happen when and after Christ's final coming b. This relates to what we might call our "eternal destiny"

4. In this series of lessons, we will consider both fields of eschatology... a. Beginning with "individual" eschatology b. Because for much of mankind, their death precedes the coming of Christ

[But what is the value of such a study, besides answering our curiosity? Is such a study really practical? Consider, then...] II. THE VALUE OF SUCH A STUDY A. IT ENCOURAGES US TO SO LIVE THAT THE BLESSINGS WILL BE OURS...

1. The Lord has promised wonderful blessing to those who endure - James 1:12

2. It is entirely proper for the believer to seek whatever blessings God has prepared for the righteous - 1 Peter 3:8-12 B. IT FURNISHES A STIMULUS AND A THEME FOR EVANGELISM...

1. Knowing what lay ahead for sinful mankind motivated Paul to preach - 2 Corinthians 5:10-11 2. It should also motivate sinners to obey - Acts 17:30; Matthew 16:24-27 C. IT HELPS ONE TO ANSWER INQUIRERS, AND TO QUIET DECEIVERS...

1. Many are sincerely interested, and we should be able to give them the correct teaching - 1 Peter 3:15 2. But there are many bent on teaching their false doctrine, and we should be able to refute them - Titus 1:9-11 D. IT HELPS TO STIMULATE PRAYER...

1. The importance of prayer to the Christian can never be over-emphasized - cf. Luke 18:1-8 2. Meditating upon the "end times" can stimulate serious and watchful prayer - 1 Peter 4:7 E. IT CAN STRENGTHEN LOVE FOR ONE ANOTHER...

1. Read carefully 1 Peter 4:7-10

2. Increasing our understanding for what awaits the faithful can spur greater devotion and service to one another (cf. Matthew 25:1-46) 3. That service in turn strengthens our love for one another!

F. IT CAN CAUSE MORE GLORY TO BE GIVEN TO GOD...

1. Note carefully Romans 2:4, where we learn the goodness of God leads men to repent

2. The more we learn of God's goodness which He has prepared for those who love and obey Him, the more we (and others) will repent...resulting in the glory of God - cf. 1 Peter 4:11 G. IT CAN INCREASE INCENTIVE TO BE STEADFAST IN THE FAITH...

1. Consider 1 Peter 5:8-9 2. The more we strengthen the inner conviction... a. That hell is real b. That it is Satan's sinister purpose to devour as many people as possible ...the more incentive we will have to remain steadfast in the faith!

CONCLUSION

1. Far from being an impractical subject of study, the truths concerning the "last things" can be of inestimable value to our present life

2. As John wrote, our hope in the One Who is coming, and what that means for us, can help to "purify" ourselves - cf. 1 John 3:2-3 In our next study, we shall begin looking at "individual" eschatology by examining different attitudes held towards death itself...

06.06.02. What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Should Be Our Attitude Towards Death?

INTRODUCTION

1. Our previous lesson examined the value of such a study as "Life After Death", in which we suggested that it could... a. Encourage us to so live as to inherit blessings b. Furnish us a stimulus and theme for evangelism c. Help us to answer inquirers, and quiet deceivers d. Stimulate us to more fervent prayers e. Strengthen our love for one another f. Cause more glory to be given to God g. Increase incentive to be steadfast in the faith

2. Understanding the value of such a study, it may be proper to begin this study in earnest by stressing what our ATTITUDE as Christians should be towards death itself a. This will help us get started in the right direction b. For whatever "conclusions" or "convictions" we may reach in future studies must be in harmony with the proper ATTITUDE as taught in the Bible 1) Some views of life after death seem totally out of harmony with a Biblical attitude toward death

2) E.g., if after death the soul "sleeps" or ceases to exist, I find it difficult to understand why the Bible says what it does about the death of the righteous [Let's notice first, then, some...] I. WRONG ATTITUDES TOWARD DEATH A. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "CHRISTIAN SCIENTIST"...

1. Who believes that "matter, sin, sickness, and death have no reality"

2. I.e., who in essence denies the reality of death

3. Who might to read Genesis 5:5, Genesis 5:8, Genesis 5:11, Genesis 5:14, Genesis 5:17, Genesis 5:20, Genesis 5:27, Genesis 5:31 and observe how often the Scriptures records "and he died"

B. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "ESCAPIST"...

1. Who fears death, and so tries to avoid all mention of it a. Louis XV forbade his servants to mention the word "death" in his presence b. Some Chinese are afraid that the mention of "death" invites it 2. But that approach cannot provide any true comfort C. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "FATALIST" OR "STOIC"...

1. This person appears to accept it without any emotion, one way or the other 2. E.g., saying "When I die, I rot...and what of it?"

D. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "BLATANT INFIDEL"...

1. This individual curses death and the God (if there is one) who allows it 2. Who might say, "This is a dirty trick!"

E. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "DESPAIRING PESSIMIST"...

1. Tired of life, and in despair commits suicide
2. But there is at least one passage that teaches us to have more respect for our physical body - cf. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

F. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "SENTIMENTALIST"...

1. This person gushes over death-bed scenes, grows very sentimental, but actually enjoys it!
2. Just like there are those who enjoy "thrillers", there are those who delight in "tear-jerkers"
3. Why? You will have to ask a psychologist for that one...

G. THE ATTITUDE OF THE "RELIGIOUS FANATIC WITH A MARTYR-COMPLEX"...

1. Not to be confused with true martyrs who faced inevitable death with great courage
2. This person actually looks for opportunity to die for the Lord
3. Who should probably study such verses like 1 Corinthians 13:3 b; Php 1:1-30

[Such attitudes toward death are harmful or otherwise wrong. How then should the Christian view death? The same way the Bible views it...] II. BIBLICAL ATTITUDES TOWARD THE DEATH OF THE RIGHTEOUS A. PRECIOUS IN THE SIGHT OF GOD...

1. Cf. Psalms 116:15
2. Viewed from God's perspective, death simply means that one of His children is finally "coming home"

B. REMOVED FROM EVIL, AND AT PEACE...

1. Cf. Isaiah 57:1-2
2. In times of general turmoil, the righteous and merciful are often caught up in the loss of life
3. But we can consider it from a positive perspective, that such no longer have to endure the evil, and are now in peace!

C. A BEING CARRIED AWAY BY ANGELS TO BLISS...

1. Cf. Luke 16:22
2. Those righteous who have suffered are immediately released from that suffering, and are carried away by the angels to a place of comfort

D. A GOING AWAY TO PARADISE...

1. Cf. Luke 23:43
2. So Jesus promised the thief on the cross

E. A DEPARTURE, AN "EXODUS"...

1. Paul viewed his impending death as a "departure", using "a metaphor drawn from loosing from moorings preparatory to setting sail" - 2 Timothy 4:6

2. Peter used the Greek word "exodos" {ex'-od-os} (translated "decease"), meaning "exit", the same word used to describe the Exodus of Israel from Egyptian bondage - 2 Peter 1:15

F. A "GAIN", SOMETHING FAR BETTER THAN LIVING...

1. Cf. Php 1:21, Php 1:23
2. This was another way Paul viewed his death

G. TO BE WITH CHRIST, AT HOME WITH THE LORD...

1. Cf. Php 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8 2. This is why death was considered by Paul to be a "gain", rather than a loss H. "ASLEEP" IN JESUS, YET LIVING WITH HIM...

1. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-11 2. Those who have died "in Christ", are said to "sleep in Jesus"

3. Whether this phrase ("sleep in Jesus") supports what some teach as "soul sleeping" will be examined more carefully later, but Paul does say that those who sleep in Jesus still "live together with Him" implying awareness - 1 Thessalonians 5:10

I. A BLESSED REST FROM THEIR LABORS...

1. Cf. Revelation 14:13

2. One of the many blessings promised to those who patiently keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus (Revelation 14:12)

CONCLUSION 1. This should suffice to convince the faithful Christian that death... a. Is NOT to be denied or feared b. But can be something precious and even longed for, for the blessings it brings!

2. As said in the beginning of this lesson, whatever conclusions or convictions we reach concerning the death of the righteous must somehow fit in with these attitudes towards death as found in the Bible 3. May God give us more grace and greater faith to so view the death of those in Christ, and our own death as well!

4. And may we also ever give praise and glory to God, who through His Son has freed us from the "fear of death" - Hebrews 2:14-15 Have you been freed from the fear of death, by being made righteous in the blood of the Lamb?

06.06.03. What Is The Nature of Man?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Is The Nature of Man?

INTRODUCTION 1. Our previous lessons have simply served as an introduction to our study... a. We have seen that such a study can be of value b. We have also seen that death for the righteous is spoken of as a blessed thing in the sight of God, and something even desired, not feared, by some early Christians

-- Hopefully, this will have peaked our interest in what the Bible actually teaches concerning "Life After Death"

2. A study like this must necessarily include a discussion of the "nature" of man... a. For our view of man's "nature" will have a bearing upon our views concerning what happens when man dies b. I.e., those who believe that man's nature is wholly MATERIAL (like those who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses") have completely different views than those who hold that man possesses a soul or spirit which survives death 3. This is a difficult subject, and in this lesson I hope to... a. Illustrate the difficulty, so that we may ever be cautious and humble in dealing with the subject b. Look at those passages which I believe clearly teach that man possesses a "soul" (or "spirit") which continues to exist after death [With these goals in mind, consider first, then...] I. THE DIFFICULT NATURE OF THIS SUBJECT A. IT REVOLVES AROUND THE USE OF THE WORDS "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT"...

1. Many try to make it sound simpler that it is a. By suggesting there is one definition for each word which applies every time that word is found b. "JW's" are notorious for doing this, but it is a mistake we all make at times 2. We might wish it was that simple, but we must bear in mind that one word often has many different meanings a. E.g., consider the word "RUN" 1) As an intransitive verb, it has at least FIFTEEN (15) different meanings! 2) As a transitive verb, FIFTEEN (15) more! 3) As a noun, ELEVEN (11) more 4) As an adjective, THREE (3) more 5) In all, "RUN" can have at least FORTY-FOUR (44) different definitions! b. Such varied use of a single word is quite common in all languages, including Hebrew and Greek 3. The words translated "soul" and "spirit" likewise have many different meanings B. CONSIDER THE WORD "SOUL"...

1. The HEBREW word is "nephesh", and at times it may refer to: a. Animal life - Genesis 1:20-21 ("living") b. The person - Numbers 31:19 ("killed any person") c. The body - Numbers 6:6 ("a dead body") d. Something distinguished from the body - Is 10:18 ("soul and body") e. Breath - Job 41:21 (referring to Leviathan) 2. The GREEK word is "psuche", and at times it may refer to: a. The person - 1 Peter 3:20 ("eight souls saved by water") b. Life itself - John 13:38 ("lay down your life") c. Something distinguished from the spirit - Hebrews 4:12 ("soul and spirit") d. Something distinguished from the body - 1 Thessalonians 5:23 ("spirit and soul and body") e. That which exists after the body is dissolved - Matthew 10:28 ("kill the body but not the soul") C. CONSIDER THE WORD "SPIRIT"...

1. The HEBREW word is "ruach", and at times it may refer to: a. Storms and wind - Genesis 8:1 ("wind") b. The life principle - Genesis 6:17 ("breath of life") c. Breath itself - Job 9:18 ("catch my breath") d. Something distinct from breath - Job 34:15 ("spirit and breath") e. A disposition or attitude - Ecclesiastes 7:8-9 ("patient in spirit better than proud in spirit") f. Non-fleshly beings with intelligence - 1 Kings 22:21-22 ("a spirit came forward...") g. That which is interchangeable with "nephesh" - Isaiah 26:9 h. That which is distinct from the flesh 1) Numbers 16:22 ("spirits of all flesh") 2) Isaiah 31:3 ("are flesh, and not spirit") i. The inner man 1) Isaiah 26:9 ("by my spirit within me I will seek You") 2) Zechariah 12:1 ("forms the spirit of man within him") 2. The GREEK word is "pneuma", and at times it may refer to: a. The wind - John 3:8 ("the wind blows...") b. Breath - 2 Thessalonians 2:8 ("will consume with the breath of His mouth") c. The Holy Spirit - John 1:32 ("I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove") d. Unclean spirits or demons 1) Matthew 8:16 ("He cast out the spirits with a word") 2) Luke 4:33 ("a spirit of an unclean demon") e. Angels - Hebrews 1:13-14 ("ministering spirits sent forth") f. Character and moral qualities - 1 Peter 3:4 ("a gentle and quiet spirit") g. Purpose, or aim 1) 2 Corinthians 12:18 ("Did we not walk in the same spirit?") 2) Php 1:27 ("stand fast in one spirit") h. Perception, desires, feelings, etc. - 1 Corinthians 5:3 ("absent in body but present in spirit") i. Part of man distinct from the flesh 1) 1 Corinthians 5:5 ("for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved") 2) Hebrews 12:23 ("to the spirits of just men made perfect") D. WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS PROVE?

1. Simply that "soul" and "spirit" have many different meanings and applications a. Therefore we cannot just take one definition which may be true in one context and apply it to all others! b. Yet many do this very thing 2. We must be cautious, and humbly consider the CONTEXT of each passage to determine HOW the words are being used

[With that thought in mind, we are ready to consider the "nature" of man: Does man possess a spirit or soul that continues to exist after death?

Consider those...] II. SCRIPTURES WHICH INDICATE THAT MAN HAS A SOUL OR SPIRIT WHICH CONTINUES AFTER DEATH A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. An interesting phrase is "gathered to thy people", implying existence after death, and is made in regards to the death of... a. Abraham - Genesis 25:8 b. Isaac - Genesis 35:29 c. Jacob - Genesis 49:29, Genesis 49:33 d. Aaron - Numbers 20:24 e. Moses - Numbers 27:13; Deuteronomy 32:50 f. Josiah - 2 Kings 22:20; 2 Chronicles 34:28 2. There is the case of Samuel, who was brought back after his death - 1 Samuel 28:7-19 3. David could look forward to one day joining his infant son - 2 Samuel 12:22-23 4. The spirit will return to God at death - Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 5. The lament against the king of Babylon speaks of life after death - Isaiah 14:9-11

6. Likewise the lament against Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc., who are all consigned to the "Pit" - Ezekiel 32:17-32 B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. In the teaching of Jesus a. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by a fellow man - cf. Matthew 10:28 b. The story of Lazarus and the rich man - cf. Luke 16:22-23 1) Some say this is only a parable 2) Even if it was (which is highly unlikely), parables were "true to life" stories, not fantasy! c. His promise to the thief on the cross - Luke 23:42-43 2. In the teaching of Paul a. There is "the inner man" that can be ever renewed, even while "the outer man" decays - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 b. One can be with the Lord, while absent from the body - 2 Corinthians

5:6-8 c. There is a part of man that can be "out of the body" - 2 Corinthians 12:3 d. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - Php 1:23 e. Reference is made to the "spirits of just men" - Hebrews 12:22-23 3. The teaching of Peter a. He spoke of the "spirits in prison" - 1 Peter 3:18-20 b. He wrote of those who are "dead, but live in the spirit" - 1 Peter 4:6 c. He described the body as a tabernacle to be put off...if the body is a tabernacle (dwelling place), what dwells in it? - 2 Peter 1:13-14 d. The unjust are under punishment, just like some angels - 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Peter 2:9-10

4. John, in the Revelation given to him, saw "souls of those slain", and they were capable of crying out with loud voices, and being comforted - Revelation 6:9-11

CONCLUSION

1. Passages such these certainly lead me to believe that man is of a "two-fold" nature... a. There is the OUTWARD man; the body of flesh which grows old and eventually dies b. There is the INWARD man; called at times the "soul" or "spirit", which can be renewed daily and continues to exist past death 2. Bearing in mind that "soul" and "spirit" can have many different meanings... a. I suggest that in passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12...

1) Either "soul" or "spirit" is being used in one of the many senses other than what we commonly think of it

2) I.e., man is still basically "two-fold" and not "three-fold" in nature (as these two passages seem to imply) b. Whenever MATERIALISTS use passages which might indicate that man's "soul" or "spirit" does not continue after death...

1) They are using a passage which utilizes one of the many different meanings of the words

2) And these passages should not cause us to completely throw out other passages which clearly teach there is something to man that does continue on after death! In our next study, we will consider more closely where the spirits of believers go at death...

06.06.04. Where Do The Spirits of Believers Go At Death?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH" Where Do The Spirits Of Believers Go At Death?

INTRODUCTION

1. Having determined from the Scriptures that man possesses a soul or spirit which continues after death, the question now before us is this: "Where do the spirits of believers go at death?"

2. In this lesson, I will be examining two different views: a. One that I will call the "traditional" view, which is held by many Christians b. Another that I will propose as the "scriptural" view, which I believe is more in harmony with what is revealed in the New Testament

-- PLEASE NOTE: The use of the terms "traditional" and "scriptural" is rather arbitrary, used only to distinguish between the two views [Beginning, then, with...] I. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXPLAINED A. STATED BRIEFLY, THIS VIEW TEACHES THE FOLLOWING...

1. When we die... a. Our body return to the dust b. Our spirits go to HADES, the realm of the "unseen"

2. This realm of departed spirits (i.e., Hades) is divided into three parts... a. PARADISE, the place of rest for the righteous b. TARTARUS, the place of torment for the wicked c. And a GULF, separating the two 3. During this interim period between death and the resurrection, the righteous... a. Are separated from God and Christ b. For God and Christ are "in heaven", and Paradise is in Hades, not heaven 4. Such is the state of the "disembodied spirits" until the Resurrection a. At which time the spirits of both the wicked and the righteous will be united with their resurrected bodies b. At this time will occur the Judgment, after which... 1) The RIGHTEOUS will spend eternity with God 2) The WICKED will spend eternity in "HELL" (Grk., gehenna) B. THE SCRIPTURAL JUSTIFICATION FOR THIS VIEW...

1. Is based heavily upon what we read in Luke 16:16-31 a. I.e., the story of the rich man and Lazarus b. Notice especially Luke 16:22-26 2. Luke 23:43 is also offered as support a. Where we read of the account of Jesus and the thief on the cross b. Both of whom would be in PARADISE that very day following their deaths 3. That this PARADISE was not in HEAVEN where God dwells is based upon Jesus' statement in John 20:17 a. These words of Jesus were made three days after promising the thief they would BOTH be in PARADISE b. Yet Jesus had not YET ascended to the Father! c. Suggesting, therefore, that PARADISE was not HEAVEN (or IN heaven)!

4. As further evidence that PARADISE is not in HEAVEN, appeal is made to Acts 2:29-35 a. Concerning CHRIST... 1) His soul was not to be left in HADES (the realm of the dead, which included PARADISE) 2) But after His resurrection Jesus ascended to the right hand of God (i.e., HEAVEN) b. Concerning DAVID... 1) Surely he went to PARADISE (in HADES) when he died, as did Abraham, Lazarus, and the thief on the cross 2) But note that Peter said "David did not ascend into the heavens" (Acts 2:34) a) Suggesting the one could die, be in HADES (Paradise), and yet not be in heaven with the Father b) Just as Christ implied to Mary in John 20:17 [Such is the

"traditional" view as I understand it. Now let's take a closer look...] II. THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW EXAMINED A. THE EVIDENCE FOR THIS VIEW IS CONVINCING, TO A POINT...

1. This explanation for what happens after death appears to be consistent with all the information we have PRIOR to the ASCENSION OF CHRIST!

2. But in light of what is revealed in the Scriptures AFTER Jesus' ascension into heaven... a. This "traditional" view may need some revision b. But only concerning what now happens to the spirits of the RIGHTEOUS between death and the resurrection B. REASONS TO SUGGEST A REVISION OF THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW...

1. After Jesus ascended to heaven... a. PARADISE (the resting place of the righteous) is now spoken of as being in heaven! 1) We saw earlier that when Jesus spoke to Mary He had not yet ascended to the Father (i.e., heaven), though He had been in "Paradise" prior to His resurrection 2) But note carefully that "Paradise" is used synonymously with the "third heaven" (i.e., God's dwelling place) by Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:2, 2 Corinthians 12:4 3) Whereas Paradise was once distinct from heaven, now it is not! b. The expectation of the righteous is to be with Christ upon death - Php 1:23; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 c. The book of Revelation speaks of the righteous dead being in heaven while much is still going on here on earth - Revelation 6:1-17; Romans 7:9-17 d. The Scriptures speak of Jesus bringing the righteous with Him at His Final Coming - 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14 1) I understand this to refer to the "spirits" of those who were righteous, and who are coming to be united with their resurrected bodies - cf. 1 Thessalonians 4:16 2) Of course, I suppose Jesus could "pick up" these saints in HADES on His way, but in view of other passages I believe they are already with Him

2. Such passages as these found AFTER Christ's ascension into heaven I have a hard time reconciling with those made BEFORE Christ's ascension (unless something has changed, of course) [Therefore, as an alternative to the "traditional" view, I propose a more "scriptural" view...] III. THE "SCRIPTURAL" VIEW EXPLAINED

A. FIRST, EVERYTHING ABOUT THE "TRADITIONAL" VIEW REMAINS THE SAME FOR THE PERIOD "PRIOR" TO JESUS' ASCENSION...

1. All who died went to HADES a. The wicked went to torment, awaiting judgment b. The righteous went to Paradise to await the Judgment 2. Even Jesus, with the thief on the cross, went to Paradise, which was in Hades B. BUT NOW, AFTER JESUS' ASCENSION, THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS IS DIFFERENT...

1. Paradise is now in HEAVEN, not HADES

2. The hope of the righteous is to spend the "intermediate state" in the presence of the Lord, awaiting the resurrection and the Judgment C. IF THE "INTERMEDIATE STATE" OF THE RIGHTEOUS CHANGED, WHY?

1. That the change did occur appears to be clear 2. The "why" may be speculation on my part, but here is one suggestion... a. God is holy, and sin cannot be tolerated in His presence 1) The righteous who died before the cross of Christ, were forgiven in view of Christ's coming death 2) But prior to the death of Christ, the true price for sin had not been paid 3) So until their spirits were actually "redeemed from sin by the blood of Christ", they were not permitted in God's presence,

and Paradise remained in Hades b. After the cross, and when He ascended, Jesus offered His blood as the "eternal redemption price" to God to appease for sin - cf. Hebrews 9:11-15; Hebrews 9:23-26 1) With such an offering, the spirits of just men were now "made perfect" (Hebrews 12:23), and now in a position to be with God and Christ in heaven, awaiting the resurrection and Day of Judgment - cf. Revelation 6:9-11 2) Thus Paradise (the intermediate dwelling place of the righteous) can now be in heaven! c. And therefore the Christian, whose spirit is also made perfect by the blood of Christ, can have the hope to be with Christ and God in heaven, during the "intermediate state" prior to the bodily resurrection at the Last Day!

CONCLUSION

1. Again, the WHY may be purely speculation, but I do believe there is sufficient evidence to re-examine a view many have traditionally held a. A view that was true prior to the ascension of Christ b. But one that now fails to adequately explain many statements made after Christ's ascension 2. Our next study will look more closely at the condition of the righteous during the "intermediate state"

06.06.05. Are The Souls of the Redeemed Conscious?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH" Are The Souls Of The Redeemed Conscious?

INTRODUCTION

1. In the previous study, I suggested that the spirits of believers go to be with the Lord during the "intermediate state" between death and the resurrection a. Implied was the idea that the souls of the redeemed are conscious during this interim b. But are they?

2. In this lesson, we shall consider the doctrine of "soul-sleeping", and make some observations concerning it I. THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING"

A. THE THEORY...

1. That the souls of the departed continue to exist, but are in an unconscious state until the resurrection

2. This is not to be confused with the doctrine held by JW's, who believe there is no consciousness until the resurrection because until then there is no existence at all B. THE ARGUMENTS...

1. The Scriptures often represent death as a "sleep" a. Matthew 27:52 - ...bodies of the saints who had "fallen asleep" b. John 11:11-14 - Jesus says of dead Lazarus, "our friend sleeps" c. Acts 7:60 - As Stephen is stoned to death, it is said "he fell asleep" d. 1 Corinthians 15:6, 1 Corinthians 15:18 - Those who were dead are spoken of as "fallen asleep" e. 1 Thessalonians 4:13-15 - Brethren who were dead "sleep in Jesus"

2. Other passages come very near to saying that the dead have no consciousness a. Psalms 30:9 - The psalmist asks, "...when I go down to the pit? Will the dust praise you?" b. Psalms 115:17 - The psalmist declares, "The dead do not praise the Lord, nor any who go down into silence." c. Ecclesiastes 9:5, Ecclesiastes 9:10 - Solomon, in his search for meaning, observes: 1) "...the dead know nothing..." 2) "there is no work or device or knowledge or wisdom in the grave where you are going." d. Isaiah 38:18-19 - King Hezekiah says concerning God that "Sheol cannot thank You, Death cannot praise You, those who go down to the pit cannot hope for Your truth."

[Such is the theory and the arguments presented by those who believe in "soul sleeping." At face value, the doctrine appears very convincing. But let's take a closer look at it...] II. EXAMINING THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING"

A. ARGUMENT #1: DEATH IS CALLED "SLEEP"...

1. Nowhere do the Scriptures say that the SOUL of the departed one fell asleep a. It was the PERSON who "fell asleep" b. Thus it can have reference to the body, not the SOUL 2. The term "SLEEP" can be a figurative reference, and a very appropriate one: a. For sleep implies REST... 1) When one sleeps literally, there is rest from one's labor 2) So it is that the dead also "rest from their labors", cf. Revelation 14:13 b. For sleep implies a CEASING OF PARTICIPATION... 1) In

literal sleep, one ceases in the activities pertaining to the sphere in which one has been busy during the hours of wakefulness 2) So it is with the dead, they are no longer active in the world which they left c. For sleep is generally a PRELUDE TO AN AWAKENING... 1) In literal sleep, it is followed by an "awakening" 2) So it is with death: a) Though the souls may be conscious during the intermediate state... b) ...at the resurrection there will be the "awakening" of the glorified and transformed bodies in which to house our souls

3. Perhaps it can also be said that the term "sleep" became a euphemism for death because of the sleep-like appearance of the body

B. ARGUMENT #2: PASSAGES WHICH SUGGEST THE DEAD HAVE NO CONSCIOUSNESS AFTER DEATH...

1. Notice first that these passages are in the OLD TESTAMENT, when revelation of God's truth was not yet complete a. The passages in Psalms and Isaiah are the expressions of faith and understanding by those who knowledge of God's revelation was incomplete b. I.e., their concept of "life after death" was not as complete and developed as that found in the New Testament c. We should be cautious, therefore, against developing a doctrine of life after death which does not take into account what is ultimately revealed when revelation is complete 2. In some cases, the statements are made solely from an earthly perspective a. This is especially true in Ecclesiastes b. Where the theme is "Life Under The Sun" c. When one looks at things purely from an earthly perspective... 1) It does not appear the dead know anything 2) It does not appear the dead praise God d. Thus, Ecclesiastes 9:10 is saying nothing more than that when we die, we are no longer conscious of things in THIS life

C. FINALLY, THE DOCTRINE OF "SOUL SLEEPING" IS OUT OF HARMONY WITH PASSAGES THAT CLEARLY TEACH CONSCIOUSNESS OF SOULS AFTER DEATH...

1. Luke 16:22-26 - Abraham, the rich man, and Lazarus a. Some believe that this is only a "parable" b. Highly unlikely in my opinion, but even if so, parables used "true to life" experiences as a basis for comparison, not science fiction or fantasy!

2. Luke 23:43 - How can Paradise be a state of unconsciousness?

3. Revelation 6:9-11 - Can souls cry out if they are not conscious?

4. Revelation 7:9-17 - Can souls praise God and serve Him if they are not conscious?

5. Revelation 20:4-6 - Can souls reign with Christ if they are not aware of what is going on?

CONCLUSION 1. In view of such passages... a. Describing the condition of souls during the "intermediate" state b. Where they are very much awake, praising and serving God, reigning with Christ ...The doctrine of "soul sleeping" does not hold up 2. We can best harmonize the Scriptures if we view the term SLEEP in reference to death as only a figure of speech... a. Naturally drawn from how the body appears at death b. Pertaining to our relationship to this earthly realm 1) We are at rest from labors IN THIS LIFE 2) We are not aware of what goes on IN THIS LIFE

3) But one day, there will be an "awakening" (the resurrection), in which we will be rejoined with those who are still IN THIS LIFE (of course, they too will be changed) 3. In the next study, we shall

consider the question: "Shall we know each other in the life after death?"

06.06.06. Shall We Know Each Other There?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH" Shall We Know Each Other There?

INTRODUCTION 1. Our studies in "Life After Death" so far have endeavored to show that: a. Such a study is profitable b. Death should be thought of as a positive thing for Christians c. The nature of man is two-fold: soul and body d. The departed spirits of believers go to be with Christ at death e. The souls of the redeemed are in a conscious state during this "intermediate" state 2. The question we will focus on in this lesson pertains to the idea of recognition after death: a. I.e., shall we know each other after death? b. For one may agree with all that has been said so far, yet believe that we shall NOT know one another...

1) Either in the "intermediate" state 2) Or in the "final" state 3. But what does the Bible reveal about this question?

[We begin by observing...] I. SCRIPTURES WHICH SUGGEST RECOGNITION AFTER DEATH A. Isaiah 14:3-4, Isaiah 14:9-11, Isaiah 14:16 1. This passage refers to the king of Babylon 2. Who is recognize by those in Hades upon his death B. Ezekiel 32:17-32 1. This passage speaks of Pharaoh and his army 2. Who is recognized by others in Hades - Ezekiel 32:21 3. Who in turn recognizes those of Assyria, Elam, Edom, etc. - Ezekiel 32:22-31 C. Luke 16:19-31 1. This is the familiar story of Lazarus and the rich man 2. In which the rich man recognizes both Lazarus and Abraham - Luke 16:23-24 D. 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20; 2 Corinthians 4:14 1. Both of these passages reveal Paul's expectation of being with His converts at Christ's coming 2. Recognizing them would be a source of great joy for Paul E. Matthew 8:11-12 1. Reference is made to Abraham, Isaac, & Jacob in the kingdom of heaven

2. The recognition of which would increase the joys of those present (and the dismay of those "cast out into outer darkness")

[To these examples we could add Samuel (who after his death was recognized by Saul - 1 Samuel 28:3-19), plus Moses and Elijah (recognized on the Mount of Transfiguration - Matthew 17:1-5). All clearly indicating that we will indeed know one another after death! But what are some objections commonly made about this view? And how might one answer them?] II. SOME OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

A. OBJECTION #1

1. STATED... a. Some of these passages speak of conditions after the resurrection b. At that time we will have bodies by which recognition may be possible c. But that does not prove that "disembodied" souls in heaven now recognize each other

2. ANSWERED... a. Most of these passages are definitely speaking of the "intermediate" state 1) Those referring to the King of Babylon, Pharaoh and his army 2) The rich man and Lazarus 3) Samuel, Elijah, and Moses b. Angels have no "bodies", yet recognize one another - e.g., Daniel 10:13

B. OBJECTION #2

1. STATED... a. If we can actually recognize one another, then we can miss those not there b. This would cause unhappiness in heaven

2. ANSWERED... a. What about Jesus? 1) Does He not miss many that He sincerely admonished (as in the case of the rich young ruler - Mark 10:21)? 2) Would one then say that Jesus is unhappy? b. Perhaps the answer to this question lies in the following direction: 1) That when we die, all earthly ties that were not in Christ (including family ties) will lose their meaning! 2) Do not passages like Matthew 12:46-50 and Matthew 10:37 point in that direction? a) Our spiritual family becomes our true family, as it was with Jesus b) Our love for Jesus will far surpass the love we have for others c. Or does not God... 1) Who has the power to take away death, sorrow, crying, pain (cf. Revelation 7:17; Revelation 21:4) 2) Also have the power to remove any unpleasant awareness of loved ones lost while still permitting blessed awareness of loved ones saved?

C. OBJECTION #3

1. STATED... a. According to Matthew 22:23-33, all earthly ties will lose their meaning b. Hence, any recognition of those whom we have known on earth would be meaningless

2. ANSWERED... a. The passage simply teaches that there will be no "marriage" relationships in the resurrection b. In this sense, we will be like the angels in heaven c. This does NOT say "all" relationships will be abolished!

CONCLUSION 1. There is good reason, therefore, to believe that we shall know one another after this life 2. And that can serve as a powerful motive... a. To live our lives pleasing in the sight of God b. To try and take those we love with us by encouraging them to live likewise! In our next study, we shall take a look at the condition of the wicked during the "intermediate" state...

06.06.07. What Is The Condition of the Wicked?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Is The Nature of Man?

INTRODUCTION 1. Our previous lessons have simply served as an introduction to our study... a. We have seen that such a study can be of value b. We have also seen that death for the righteous is spoken of as a blessed thing in the sight of God, and something even desired, not feared, by some early Christians

-- Hopefully, this will have peaked our interest in what the Bible actually teaches concerning "Life After Death"

2. A study like this must necessarily include a discussion of the "nature" of man... a. For our view of man's "nature" will have a bearing upon our views concerning what happens when man dies b. I.e., those who believe that man's nature is wholly MATERIAL (like those who call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses") have completely different views than those who hold that man possesses a soul or spirit which survives death 3. This is a difficult subject, and in this lesson I hope to... a. Illustrate the difficulty, so that we may ever be cautious and humble in dealing with the subject b. Look at those passages which I believe clearly teach that man possesses a "soul" (or "spirit") which continues to exist after death [With these goals in mind, consider first, then...] I. THE DIFFICULT NATURE OF THIS SUBJECT A. IT REVOLVES AROUND THE USE OF THE WORDS "SOUL" AND "SPIRIT"...

1. Many try to make it sound simpler that it is a. By suggesting there is one definition for each word which applies every time that word is found b. "JW's" are notorious for doing this, but it is a mistake we all make at times 2. We might wish it was that simple, but we must bear in mind that one word often has many different meanings a. E.g., consider the word "RUN" 1) As an intransitive verb, it has at least FIFTEEN (15) different meanings! 2) As a transitive verb, FIFTEEN (15) more! 3) As a noun, ELEVEN (11) more 4) As an adjective, THREE (3) more 5) In all, "RUN" can have at least FORTY-FOUR (44) different definitions! b. Such varied use of a single word is quite common in all languages, including Hebrew and Greek 3. The words translated "soul" and "spirit" likewise have many different meanings B. CONSIDER THE WORD "SOUL"...

1. The HEBREW word is "nephesh", and at times it may refer to: a. Animal life - Genesis 1:20-21 ("living") b. The person - Numbers 31:19 ("killed any person") c. The body - Numbers 6:6 ("a dead body") d. Something distinguished from the body - Isaiah 10:18 ("soul and body") e. Breath - Job 41:21 (referring to Leviathan) 2. The GREEK word is "psuche", and at times it may refer to: a. The person - 1 Peter 3:20 ("eight souls saved by water") b. Life itself - John 13:38 ("lay down your life") c. Something distinguished from the spirit - Hebrews 4:12 ("soul and spirit") d. Something distinguished from the body - 1 Thessalonians 5:23 ("spirit and soul and body") e. That which exists after the body is dissolved - Matthew 10:28 ("kill the body but not the soul") C. CONSIDER THE WORD "SPIRIT"...

1. The HEBREW word is "ruach", and at times it may refer to: a. Storms and wind - Genesis 8:1 ("wind") b. The life principle - Genesis 6:17 ("breath of life") c. Breath itself - Job 9:18 ("catch my breath") d. Something distinct from breath - Job 34:15 ("spirit and breath") e. A disposition or attitude - Ecclesiastes 7:8-9 ("patient in spirit better than proud in spirit") f. Non-fleshly beings with intelligence - 1 Kings 22:21-22 ("a spirit came forward...") g. That which is interchangeable with "nephesh" - Isaiah 26:9 h. That which is distinct from the flesh 1) Numbers 16:22 ("spirits of all flesh") 2) Isaiah 31:3 ("are flesh, and not spirit") i. The inner man 1) Isaiah 26:9 ("by my spirit within me I will seek You") 2) Zechariah 12:1 ("forms the spirit of man within him") 2. The GREEK word is "pneuma", and at times it may refer to: a. The wind - John 3:8 ("the wind blows...") b. Breath - 2 Thessalonians 2:8 ("will consume with the breath of His mouth") c. The Holy Spirit - John 1:32 ("I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove") d. Unclean spirits or demons 1) Matthew 8:16 ("He cast out the spirits with a word") 2) Luke 4:33 ("a spirit of an unclean demon") e. Angels - Hebrews 1:13-14 ("ministering spirits sent forth") f. Character and moral qualities - 1 Peter 3:4 ("a gentle and quiet spirit") g. Purpose, or aim 1) 2 Corinthians 12:18 ("Did we not walk in the same spirit?") 2) Php 1:27 ("stand fast in one spirit") h. Perception, desires, feelings, etc. - 1 Corinthians 5:3 ("absent in body but present in spirit") i. Part of man distinct from the flesh 1) 1 Corinthians 5:5 ("for the destruction of his flesh, that his spirit may be saved") 2) Hebrews 12:23 ("to the spirits of just men made perfect") D. WHAT DOES ALL OF THIS PROVE?

1. Simply that "soul" and "spirit" have many different meanings and applications a. Therefore we cannot just take one definition which may be true in one context and apply it to all others! b. Yet many do this very thing 2. We must be cautious, and humbly consider the CONTEXT of each passage to determine HOW the words are being used

[With that thought in mind, we are ready to consider the "nature" of man: Does man possess a spirit or soul that continues to exist after death?

Consider those...] II. SCRIPTURES WHICH INDICATE THAT MAN HAS A SOUL OR SPIRIT WHICH CONTINUES AFTER DEATH A. IN THE OLD TESTAMENT...

1. An interesting phrase is "gathered to thy people", implying existence after death, and is made in regards to the death of... a. Abraham - Genesis 25:8 b. Isaac - Genesis 35:29 c. Jacob - Genesis 49:29, Genesis 49:33 d. Aaron - Numbers 20:24 e. Moses - Numbers 27:13; Deuteronomy 32:50 f. Josiah - 2 Kings 22:20; 2 Chronicles 34:28 2. There is the case of Samuel, who was brought back after his death - 1 Samuel 28:7-19 3. David could look forward to one day joining his infant son - 2 Samuel 12:22-23 4. The spirit will return to God at death - Ecclesiastes 12:6-7 5. The lament against the king of Babylon speaks of life after death - Isaiah 14:9-11

6. Likewise the lament against Egypt, Assyria, Elam, etc., who are all consigned to the "Pit" - Ezekiel 32:17-32 B. IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. In the teaching of Jesus a. Man is both body and soul, and the soul can survive murder by a fellow man - cf. Matthew 10:28 b. The story of Lazarus and the rich man - cf. Luke 16:22-23 1) Some say this is only a parable 2) Even if it was (which is highly unlikely), parables were "true to life" stories, not fantasy! c. His promise to the thief on the cross - Luke 23:42-43 2. In the teaching of Paul a. There is "the inner man" that can be ever renewed, even while "the outer man" decays - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18 b. One can be with the Lord, while absent from the body - 2 Corinthians

5:6-8 c. There is a part of man that can be "out of the body" - 2 Corinthians 12:3 d. One can be dead, yet still be with Christ - Php 1:23 e. Reference is made to the "spirits of just men" - Hebrews 12:22-23 3. The teaching of Peter a. He spoke of the "spirits in prison" - 1 Peter 3:18-20 b. He wrote of those who are "dead, but live in the spirit" - 1 Peter 4:6 c. He described the body as a tabernacle to be put off...if the body is a tabernacle (dwelling place), what dwells in it? - 2 Peter 1:13-14 d. The unjust are under punishment, just like some angels - 2 Peter 2:4, 2 Peter 2:9-10

4. John, in the Revelation given to him, saw "souls of those slain", and they were capable of crying out with loud voices, and being comforted - Revelation 6:9-11

CONCLUSION

1. Passages such these certainly lead me to believe that man is of a "two-fold" nature... a. There is the OUTWARD man; the body of flesh which grows old and eventually dies b. There is the INWARD man; called at times the "soul" or "spirit", which can be renewed daily and continues to exist past death 2. Bearing in mind that "soul" and "spirit" can have many different meanings... a. I suggest that in passages like 1 Thessalonians 5:23 and Hebrews 4:12...

1) Either "soul" or "spirit" is being used in one of the many senses other than what we commonly think of it

2) I.e., man is still basically "two-fold" and not "three-fold" in nature (as these two passages seem to imply) b. Whenever MATERIALISTS use passages which might indicate that man's "soul" or "spirit" does not continue after death...

1) They are using a passage which utilizes one of the many different meanings of the words

2) And these passages should not cause us to completely throw out other passages which clearly teach there is something to man that does continue on after death! In our next study, we will consider more closely where the spirits of believers go at death...

06.06.08. What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Do We Know About The Lord's Second Coming?

INTRODUCTION

1. Everything we have examined up to this point in this series on "Life After Death" has pertained to the "intermediate state"

2. Though Christians can look forward to experiencing bliss during the "intermediate state", there are even greater blessings for us to look forward to... a. The "resurrection of the dead", in which our spirits will obtain glorified and immortal bodies b. The "Day of Judgment", which for the Christian will be a day of glory and vindication c. The "new heavens and new earth", in which God and Christ will dwell with us for eternity -- All of these blessings will be ushered in with the LORD'S "SECOND COMING"

3. While most professing Christians look for the Lord to return, they often differ greatly over the details surrounding His "second coming" a. The "premillennial" view looks for Christ to come in order to establish a literal kingdom on the earth, over which He will reign for a 1000 years b. The "postmillennial" view understands that Christ will at some point begin a thousand year reign from heaven, at the end of which He will come to judge the world c. The "amillennial" view believes that Christ has been reigning as "King of kings, and Lord of lords" ever since His ascension to heaven, and that His coming will be to raise the dead, judge the world, and usher in the "new heavens and new earth"

4. In this lesson, the "amillennial" view will be presented, which I believe most accurately teaches what the Bible reveals about the "Second Coming" of our Lord [We begin, therefore, with...] I. THE "CERTAINTY" OF HIS COMING A. PROCLAIMED BY ANGELS AT HIS ASCENSION...

1. Cf. Acts 1:9-11, the "two men . . . in white apparel"

2. Who said that "This same Jesus, who was taken up from into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."

B. PROCLAIMED BY THE APOSTLES...

1. Peter, in his second recorded sermon - Acts 3:19-21 2. Paul, in writing to... a. The Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Corinthians 15:22-23 b. The Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 1:9-10; 1 Thessalonians 2:19; 1 Thessalonians 3:13 c. The young evangelist, Timothy - 2 Timothy 4:1 3. The writer to the Hebrews - Hebrews 9:27-28

[Just as throughout the Old Testament one finds the recurring theme "The Messiah is coming!", so in the New Testament we find not only "He has come!" but also "He is coming again!" To the certainty of His coming, we can add...] II. THE "MANNER" OF HIS COMING A. HE WILL COME

IN PERSON...

1. "This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come..." - Acts 1:11 2. "the Lord himself will descend from heaven..." - 1 Thessalonians 4:15-17 B. HE WILL COME "WITH THE CLOUDS"...

1. "This same Jesus...will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" - Acts 1:11 (referring to Acts 1:9 : "He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight") 2. "...in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air." - 1 Thessalonians 4:17 3. "Behold, He is coming with clouds..." - Revelation 1:7 C. HE WILL COME WITHOUT WARNING...

1. "...the day of the Lord so comes as a thief in the night." - 1 Thessalonians 5:2

2. "For when they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes..." - 1 Thessalonians 5:3 3. "...the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night" - 2 Peter 3:10

[Of course, this unexpected coming of the Lord will not surprise the faithful, who seriously watch for the Lord's coming (cf. 1 Thessalonians 5:4-11). With joyful anticipation, they await the personal return of their Savior.

What will happen when the Lord returns? To answer this question we now consider...] III. THE "PURPOSE" OF HIS COMING A. TO RAISE THE DEAD...

1. "...for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth..." - John 5:28-29 a. Note that there is but one resurrection, including both the good and evil, that will occur at one time ("the hour") b. As Paul said, "...there will be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and the unjust." - Acts 24:15 2. Those who are alive at the Lord's coming . . . a. Will be "changed" in "the twinkling of an eye", being clothed with immortality and incorruption - 1 Corinthians 15:50-54 b. Then "caught up...to meet the Lord in the air." - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18 B. TO DELIVER UP THE KINGDOM TO GOD...

1. Contrary to the view that Jesus has yet to establish His kingdom on earth, He has been ruling over His kingdom since He first ascended to heaven! a. In fulfillment of the prophecy that God would raise up the Christ to sit on the "throne of David", Jesus was raised from the dead and made "Lord" - Acts 2:30-36 b. All authority in heaven and earth has been given unto Him - Matthew 28:18 1) He is far above all principality, power, might, and dominion, with all things placed under His feet - Ephesians 1:1-23 2) At the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers are made subject to Him - 1 Peter 3:22 c. Christians are said to be "in" His kingdom 1) Having been "delivered...from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of the Son of His love" - Colossians 1:13 2) They are "in the kingdom...of Jesus Christ" - Revelation 1:9 d. Christ will continue to reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - 1 Corinthians 15:25 1) Note that His reign will be concurrent with the fact enemies are still present 2) As prophesied by the Psalmist: "Rule in the midst of Your enemies!" - Psalms 110:1-2 e. Thus Christ is NOW "the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings and Lord of Lords" - 1 Timothy 6:15; cf. Revelation 19:16 f. And He will reign "till He has put all enemies under His feet" - 1 Corinthians 15:25 1) The last enemy that will be destroyed is death itself - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:26 2) Which we have seen will be destroyed at the coming of the Lord when He will raise the dead - 1 Corinthians 15:51-54 2. So when Jesus comes, it will not be to "set up" His kingdom, but to "deliver up" His kingdom! a. As

Paul clearly told the Corinthians - 1 Corinthians 15:23-26 b. As taught by Jesus in His Parable of the Tares, His kingdom will last until "the end of this age", after which "the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (i.e., the heavenly kingdom) - cf. Matthew 13:36-43

[As suggested by The Parable of the Tares, delivering up the kingdom to the Father requires some "weeding". This leads us to consider another purpose of our Lord's coming...] C. TO JUDGE THE WORLD AND PUNISH EVIL...

1. God has appointed "a day" in which He will judge the world - 2 Peter 3:7 a. The one appointed to be the Judge is Jesus Christ - Acts 17:1-34; 2 Corinthians 5:10 b. The standard by which He will judge will be the words He has spoken - John 12:48 2. It will be a day of perdition (utter destruction) of ungodly men - 2 Peter 3:7 a. Those who know not God and have not obeyed the gospel will be punished with "everlasting destruction" - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 b. Those whose names are not in the "Book of Life" will be cast into the "lake of fire" - Revelation 20:11-15 3. More about the "judgment" will be considered in a future lesson D. TO USHER IN THE "NEW HEAVENS AND NEW EARTH"...

1. As taught by Peter - 2 Peter 3:10-14 a. This will follow the "passing away" of the present heavens and earth (2 Peter 3:10-12) b. It is in fulfillment of God's promise (2 Peter 3:13; cf. Isaiah 65:1-25; Isaiah 66:22-23) c. It is something we are to "look for" (2 Peter 3:13-14) d. It will be a realm where righteousness dwells, therefore the need for us to be found "in peace, without spot and blameless" when Christ returns (2 Peter 3:13-14) 2. As taught by John - Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-5 a. It will follow after the first heaven and first earth have "passed away" (Revelation 22:1; cf. Revelation 20:11) b. It will be the place where the "New Jerusalem" will abide when it "comes down out of heaven" (Revelation 21:2; cf. Revelation 3:10 c; Revelation 21:10) c. God will dwell with us in this "New Jerusalem" that has "come down out of heaven" (Revelation 21:3-27; Revelation 22:1-5)

CONCLUSION 1. The "purpose" of Jesus' second coming can be summed up by His statement in Revelation 22:12...

"And behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to give to every one according to his work."

2. That Jesus has not yet come is only an indication of God's long-suffering (2 Peter 3:8-9), but rest assured that "day" will one day come!

3. In succeeding lessons, I intend to examine more closely several of the subjects mentioned in this lesson 4. In the meantime, what should be our attitude be toward the coming of our Lord? a. One of PRAYERFUL PREPARATION - Luke 21:34-36; 2 Peter 3:14 b. One of JOYFUL EXPECTATION - Php 3:20-21 c. One of PATIENT ENDURANCE - Hebrews 10:35-39

06.06.09. What Do We Know About the Resurrection?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Do We Know About The Resurrection?

INTRODUCTION

1. As noted in the previous study, the "Second Coming" of our Lord will usher in a series of wonderful events... a. The resurrection of the dead b. Deliverance of the kingdom to the Father c. The day of judgment d. The new heavens and new earth

2. In this study, we shall concentrate our attention to just one of these events: "the resurrection of the dead" a. As with many other things pertaining to "Life After Death", there can be a great deal of speculation about the resurrection b. But what can we KNOW about the resurrection? c. I.e., what has been clearly revealed in the Scriptures about this subject, that can give the Christian assurance and hope for the future?

[First of all, we can know...] I. THE "FACT" OF THE RESURRECTION A. JESUS TAUGHT THERE WILL BE A RESURRECTION...

1. A time is coming in which both those good and evil will come forth from the grave - John 5:28-29

2. Jesus assures those who believe in Him will be raised at "the last day" - John 6:39-40, John 6:44, John 6:54 B. HIS APOSTLES PROCLAIMED A RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD...

1. Peter and John "preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" - Acts 4:1-2 2. In his defenses before the Sanhedrin and Felix, Paul confessed his hope in the resurrection - Acts 23:6; Acts 24:15 3. To the church at Corinth, Paul asserted the necessity of the resurrection - 1 Corinthians 15:12-23

4. To the church at Thessalonica, he taught the doctrine of the resurrection as a source of comfort - 1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

[Unless one questions the authority of Christ and His apostles, the "fact" of the resurrection is undeniable. But how can such a thing happen? It helps to remember...] II. THE "AGENT" OF THE RESURRECTION A. CHRIST ATTRIBUTED IT TO "THE POWER OF GOD"...

1. As He reminded the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection - Matthew 22:29 2. And of course, "with God nothing will be impossible" - cf. Luke 1:37 B. PAUL ALSO EMPHASIZED "THE POWER OF GOD"...

1. The same power that raised Jesus from the dead - 1 Corinthians 6:14 2. He who can raise Jesus from the dead can certainly raise us up at the last day - 2 Corinthians 4:14

[While it may be difficult for us to comprehend "how" the dead can be raised, it is not difficult for God to do it (unless "your" God is too small)!]

Another question to be addressed concerning the resurrection pertains to "who" will be raised. Therefore we note...] III. THE "UNIVERSALITY" OF THE RESURRECTION A. AS TAUGHT BY JESUS - John 5:28-29 1. "ALL who are in the graves will...come forth"

2. Both "those who have done good" and "those who have done evil" a. One to experience a "resurrection of life" b. The other a "resurrection of condemnation"

B. PAUL TAUGHT ALL WOULD BE RAISED...

1. "both of the just and the unjust" - Acts 24:15 2. "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive" - 1 Corinthians 15:21-22

[While there may be a difference in the nature of the resurrected bodies experienced (see later under the comments on "the body of the resurrection"), in some way EVERYONE will be raised from the dead!

What about the timing of the resurrection?] IV. THE "TIME" OF THE RESURRECTION A. AT THE "LAST DAY", WHEN THE LORD COMES AGAIN...

1. Jesus spoke again and again of raising the dead at "the last day" - John 6:39-40, John 6:44, John 6:54

2. Paul wrote of it occurring when Jesus comes again, to deliver the kingdom to the Father, having destroyed the last enemy, death itself - 1 Corinthians 15:22-26 3. He later says that it will occur at "the last trumpet" - 1 Corinthians 15:52 B. WHAT ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF SEPARATE RESURRECTIONS?

1. The "premillennialists" (and perhaps others) teach that there will be more than just one resurrection a. E.g., all premillennialists teach at least two resurrections: 1) The resurrection of believers at the BEGINNING of the millennium 2) The resurrection of unbelievers at the END of the millennium b. Dispensational premillennialists add even two more: 1) The resurrection of tribulation saints at the end of the seven-year tribulation 2) The resurrection of millennial saints at the end of the millennium 2. There are several reasons why the doctrine of several resurrections is found wanting... a. The Bible presents the resurrection of believers and unbelievers as occurring together - Daniel 12:2; John 5:28-29; Acts 24:14-15; Revelation 20:11-15 b. The Bible teaches that believers will be raised at "the last day", not several times (and therefore several days, years, or a millennium) before "the last day"! - John 6:39-40, John 6:44, John 6:54 c. Passages offered in support of several resurrections do not necessarily teach what premillennialists say they do 1) E.g., 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 concerns itself with the resurrection of the righteous, but that does not demand that the wicked are not being raised at the same time 2) E.g., Revelation 20:4-6 describes a resurrection of "souls", not bodies, and the reigning with Christ is likely to be occurring in heaven, not on earth - cf. Revelation 2:26-27; Revelation 3:21 [One more subject to be considered in this study, and that pertains to...] V. THE "BODY" OF THE RESURRECTION A. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE RIGHTEOUS...

1. Will be our physical bodies, but gloriously changed and different! - 1 Corinthians 15:35-55 a. By the power of God (cf. Matthew 22:29), our physical bodies will serve as the "kernel" from which comes incorruptible and immortal bodies in which to house our souls - 1 Corinthians 15:1-58 b. Our physical bodies... 1) Sown in corruption, will be raised in incorruption! - 1 Corinthians 15:42 2)

Sown in dishonor, will be raised in glory! - 1 Corinthians 15:43 a 3) Sown in weakness, will be raised in power! - 1 Corinthians 15:43 b 4) Sown as natural bodies, will be raised as spiritual bodies! - 1 Corinthians 15:44-49 c. Even those who are alive at Christ's coming will undergo this "change", in which that which is corruptible and mortal will "put on" incorruption and immortality - 1 Corinthians 15:50-55 2. Will conformed to the glorious body of our Lord! - Php 3:20-21 a. That which is "lowly" will be transformed to be like that which "glorious" b. How? "...according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself"; i.e., by the power of God!

B. THE RESURRECTION BODY OF THE WICKED...

1. Very little is actually revealed, other than the wicked will indeed be raised from the dead
2. Though the Scriptures only apply the terms "incorruption" and "immortality" to the resurrection bodies of the righteous, most interpreters hold that the resurrection body of the wicked... a. Is not subject again to death b. Is capable of experiencing eternal suffering 3. There are some, however, who understand that the "second death" will be literal... a. I.e., after the resurrection and judgment, the wicked will "die" again (a separation of resurrected "body" and spirit) b. Not that the wicked will be annihilated, but that they will spend eternity as "disembodied spirits" in the lake of fire c. This is not to be confused with those either don't believe in a resurrection of the wicked, or who believe the wicked will be annihilated
4. Since the Bible is relatively silent on this subject perhaps "...the best course seems to be simply leave the problem where it was left by the writers of the New Testament." (Ray Summers, *The Life Beyond*, p. 93)

CONCLUSION 1. There is probably much more about the resurrection that we would like to know 2. But certainly enough is revealed to motivate those who desire whatever God has prepared to love and obey Him! Are you making it your aim to be ready for whatever God has prepared...? So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

"O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?" The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 15:54-58

06.06.10. What Do We Know Concerning the Judgment?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Do We Know Concerning The Judgment?

INTRODUCTION

1. In his sermon at the "Areopagus" (Mar's Hill) in Athens, Paul concluded with a reference to the day of judgment - Acts 17:31

2. While in one sense people are judged in this present life by the response they make to Jesus Christ (cf. John 3:18), the Bible clearly speaks of a day in which God will judge the world

[The focus of this study will be to ascertain from the Scriptures what we can know about the "Final Judgment". Beginning with...] I. THE "NECESSITY" OF THE JUDGMENT A. WHY HAVE A JUDGMENT?

1. From the story of the rich man and Lazarus, it is apparent that one's "destiny" is determined by the time of one's death - cf. Luke 16:22-23

2. If the "destiny" of each person is determined by the time of his or her death, why the need for a day of judgment at the end of time?

B. THE PURPOSE OF THE FINAL JUDGMENT...

1. Bear in mind that there is a difference between a "human trial" and the "Divine trial" of which we speak... a. A "human trial" is primarily a process of INVESTIGATION, in which the judge and jury are trying to learn the truth b. The "Divine trial" is presided by an omniscient Judge with perfect knowledge, so the purpose of this judgment is one of PUBLICATION and EXECUTION of the sentence - cf. 2 Corinthians 5:10 ("that each one may receive...") 2. Another purpose is to "glorify" God for His grace, and to "vindicate" God for His justice! a. Why is it that some sinners are lost, and other sinners are saved? b. How can God be just in condemning lost persons who never heard the gospel of Christ? c. At the judgment, those currently ignorant of the answers to such questions... 1) Will be made aware and come to see that God has been both just and gracious in His efforts throughout the history of mankind 2) Those condemned will come to fully realize they can blame no one but themselves!

[So it will be a time in which all will be made known, and the sentences executed. Exactly when will this occur?] II. THE "TIME" OF THE JUDGMENT A. SOME BELIEVE IN A SERIES OF SEPARATE JUDGMENTS...

1. Dispensational premillennialists, for example, believe there will be... a. A judgment of the believer's works at the time of the "rapture" b. A judgment of individual Gentiles just before the millennium c. A judgment of Israel just before the millennium d. A judgment of the wicked dead after the millennium 2. But just as we saw in the previous lesson concerning the resurrection, the

same may be said about the judgment a. There will be but one bodily resurrection, and that at the "last day" b. So there will be just one "day of judgment".

B. THE FINAL JUDGMENT WILL OCCUR...

1. At the end of the present age, at which time the "heavens and earth" will be no more - 2 Peter 3:7, 2 Peter 3:10-14; cf. Revelation 20:11-12; Revelation 21:1 2. At the end of "this age", as Jesus taught in His parable of the tares - Matthew 13:36-43

3. At the coming of Jesus "in that Day", who will give "rest" to His disciples and "vengeance" to unbelievers - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10 [We turn next to consider...] III. THE "CIRCUMSTANCES" OF THE JUDGMENT A. WHO WILL BE THE JUDGE?

1. The New Testament clearly reveals that CHRIST will be the Judge a. As claimed by Jesus Himself - John 5:22, John 5:26-27 b. As proclaimed by Paul in Athens - Acts 17:31 c. And as written by Paul to the church at Corinth - 2 Corinthians 5:10

2. In some way not fully revealed, even the "saints" (i.e., Christians) will have a part in the judgment - 1 Corinthians 6:2-3 B. WHO WILL BE JUDGED?

1. The "angels" will be judged, as is clear from 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; 2 Peter 2:4; Jude 1:6

2. All "human beings" will be judged, as evident from passages like Romans 2:4-6; Romans 3:6; Revelation 20:12-13 3. Even Christians will be judged - 2 Corinthians 5:10; Romans 14:10; cf. 1 Peter 4:17; 1 John 4:17 C. WHAT WILL BE JUDGED?

1. All "deeds" done during this present life - 2 Corinthians 5:10 2. All "words" spoken in this life - Matthew 12:36-37 3. Even our "thoughts"! - 1 Corinthians 4:5 4. Indeed, there is nothing "hidden" that will not then be "known" - cf. 1 Timothy 5:24-25 D. WHAT WILL BE THE STANDARD WHEREBY MEN WILL BE JUDGED?

1. Jesus said, "the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day" - John 12:48 a. As He will be the Judge, so it will be by His "words" that we will be judged! b. I.e., it will be the words of the New Testament 2. And that "standard" is a strict one! a. One sin makes one guilty of all! - cf. James 2:10 b. And it declares that all are sinners! - cf. Romans 3:23 E. WHAT HOPE IS THERE TO SURVIVE THE JUDGMENT?

1. The only hope one can have is made clear in the judgment scene of Revelation 20:11-15 2. That hope pertains to having one's name "written in the Book of life" a. It is called the "Lamb's Book of Life" in Revelation 21:27 b. Those Christians who persevere have their names in this Book of Life - Revelation 3:5

3. Indeed, only those who have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb are in the "Book of Life", but only if they persevere to the end!

CONCLUSION

1. Contemplating the reality and circumstances of the coming Day of Judgment ought to cause every person to humbly consider their relationship to God and His Son Jesus Christ 2. There is no way we can hope to "pass the test" based upon ignorance, or on good works... a. God now

commands all men everywhere to repent - cf. Acts 17:30-31 b. But only by the mercy of God can we be saved, and that "through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" - cf. Titus 3:4-7 c. Only by being justified by His blood, shall we be saved from the wrath of God to come - cf. Romans 5:8-9

3. For those who will respond to the saving gospel of Jesus Christ, they can have their names in the Lamb's Book of Life, and not fear the day of judgment! IS YOUR NAME WRITTEN THERE?

06.06.11. What Is The Eternal Destiny of the Redeemed?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed?

INTRODUCTION 1. As we rapidly near the end of this series, we have considered what the Bible says about... a. The "intermediate state", i.e., the condition of man between death and the resurrection b. The second coming of Christ c. The resurrection of the dead d. The day of judgment 2. In the last two studies, we shall examine what the Bible reveals about the FINAL state of man... a. What is the eternal destiny of the redeemed? b. What is the eternal destiny of the wicked?

[With this lesson we shall look first at "The Eternal Destiny Of The Redeemed"...] I. THE "HOPE" OF THE REDEEMED A. WONDERFUL PROMISES ARE GIVEN BY CHRIST AND HIS APOSTLES...

1. Jesus speaks of the righteous as being in "the kingdom of their Father", and inheriting "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" a. In explaining the "parable of the tares" - Matthew 13:43 b. In describing the judgment scene in Matthew 25:31-34 c. Compare this with statements by His apostles... 1) Paul speaks of the "heavenly kingdom" - 2 Timothy 4:18 2) Peter speaks of the "everlasting kingdom" - 2 Peter 1:10-11 2. Jesus speaks of the redeemed being with Him a. In the "parable of the talents" ("Enter into the joy of your lord") - Matthew 25:21 b. In praying to the Father in John 17:24 (cf. John 14:1-3) c. Paul also alludes to this continued fellowship with the Lord - 1 Thessalonians 4:17-18

3. Indeed, promises such as these are comforting for the Christian, for they speak of unhindered and uninterrupted fellowship with our Lord!

4. Is this not our ultimate hope? To be with the Lord for eternity?

B. BUT WHERE WILL WE EXPERIENCE THIS "HOPE"?

1. In other words... a. Where will this fellowship with the Lord be experienced? b. Where will the "abode" of the righteous be?

2. Will the "abode" of the redeemed... a. Be heaven itself? b. Or is it something "reserved" for us in heaven now, but when experienced it will actually be somewhere else?

[Previously I have suggested that when Christians die they will spend the "intermediate state" in heaven. While most Christians automatically assume they will spend the "eternal state" in heaven, it appears the Biblical evidence concerning the eternal "abode" may state otherwise! Consider carefully, then, as we examine what the Bible says about...] II. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" OF THE REDEEMED A. TWO PASSAGES ARE OFTEN QUOTED TO SAY THAT IT WILL BE HEAVEN...

1. The first is Colossians 1:5 a. Which speaks "the hope which is laid up for you in heaven" b. Note carefully: this verse does not say that our hope IS heaven, but rather that our hope is "laid up for you IN heaven" c. Whether our hope, when experienced, will be IN heaven, cannot be determined with certainty in this verse d. Only that for "now", heaven is where our hope is stored 2. The second is 1 Peter 1:3-4 a. This passage speaks of our hope and inheritance, "reserved in heaven for you" b. Again: this does not say that our hope (or inheritance) IS heaven, but rather that it is "reserved IN heaven" c. As before, we cannot determine from this passage alone whether our hope and inheritance, when realized, will be in heaven ITSELF d. Only that for "now" our hope and inheritance are presently secured in heaven B. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED IN HEBREWS...

1. First, we find the author speaking of having "a better and enduring possession for yourselves in heaven" - Hebrews 10:34 a. Here the same point can be made as before b. I.e., at the present, our "possession" is IN heaven; but when we receive it, will it be in heaven then?

2. In describing the hope of Abraham and the faithful, the author speaks of a CITY (or dwelling place)... a. "...the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" - Hebrews 11:10 b. "...for He has prepared a city for them" - Hebrews 11:13-16

3. Speaking of himself and his fellow Christians, the author writes: "For here we have no continuing city, but we seek the one to come" - Hebrews 13:14 4. Here, then, is one way of speaking of the hope of the righteous, as it relates to their eternal abode: a. It is a "city", whose builder and maker is God b. It is a "heavenly city", in the sense of its NATURE c. This "enduring possession" is PRESENTLY "prepared...laid up ...reserved" for us in heaven!

5. But we have yet to answer the question: "Where will this city (abode) of the righteous actually be when they experience it?"

C. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY PETER...

1. After describing the "day of the Lord" in which the present universe will be dissolved, Peter speaks of looking for "new heavens and a new earth" - 2 Peter 3:7-13 2. For Peter, this is what "we" (himself and all Christians) should be looking for!

3. Some questions: a. Is the "new heavens and a new earth" just a figurative reference to heaven, or is it something different from heaven? b. How do we reconcile looking for the "new heavens and a new earth" (Peter), and looking for "the city whose builder is God" (Hebrews)? -- The answer to these questions is found as we now look at...

D. THE "ETERNAL ABODE" AS DESCRIBED BY JOHN...

1. After describing the judgment scene (Revelation 20:11-15), John says that he saw: a. "a new heaven and a new earth" - Revelation 21:1 (cf. Peter) b. "the holy City, New Jerusalem" - Revelation 21:2 (cf. Hebrews) -- In this way, John brings together both the "hope" of the author of Hebrews and the apostle Peter!

2. But where is this "city" at this point? Note carefully how three times in the Book of Revelation, it is stated that the city is NOT in heaven at this time... a. "...the New Jerusalem, which comes down OUT OF heaven from my God." - Revelation 3:12 b. "...the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down

OUT OF heaven from God..." - Revelation 21:2 c. "...the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending OUT OF heaven from God..." - Revelation 21:10

3. Rather than being IN heaven (the present dwelling place of God), this "eternal abode" is described as being in "the new heavens and a new earth"! a. A realm where there is the absence of death, sorrow, and pain - Revelation 21:4 b. A realm in which there is complete fellowship with God and Christ - Revelation 21:3, Revelation 21:22-27 c. A place of perpetual life and good health - Revelation 22:1-2 d. A place where God's servants both serve and reign! - Revelation 22:3-5 E. TO SUMMARIZE AND PERHAPS CLARIFY...

1. The redeemed have a wonderful hope concerning their "eternal destiny"

2. It pertains to a "city", built by God and PRESENTLY reserved for us in heaven... a. However, when experienced, this "city" (abode) will not be IN heaven b. But having come down OUT OF heaven, it will be in the "new heavens and new earth" (i.e., a totally new order of things) 3. This is NOT to say that we will not be with God and Christ... a. For as one considers the experience of the righteous as described in Revelation 21:1-27; Revelation 22:1-21, we see that we will be with God and Christ forever! b. To be exact, however... 1) It is not that we will be with God and Christ in heaven... 2) But that They will be with us in the "new heavens and new earth"! c. Consider... 1) "Behold the tabernacle of God IS WITH MEN, and HE WILL DWELL WITH THEM...and GOD HIMSELF WILL BE WITH THEM" - Revelation 21:3 a) Note that in each phrase the direction is one in which God is with us; He dwells with us in this "city" which comes down out of heaven b) Contrary to the idea that we are in heaven with God! 2) "...the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be IN IT" - Revelation 22:3 a) In the "eternal state", the throne is in this "holy city" which comes down out of heaven b) Whereas earlier in the Revelation, the throne of God was in heaven - Revelation 4:2; Revelation 7:9-17 1) The latter passage (Revelation 7:9-17) I take to describe the "intermediate state" 2) It is during this interim that the righteous are with God in heaven 3) "But I saw NO TEMPLE in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple." - Revelation 21:22 a) John saw no temple in this "holy city" b) Whereas he saw the temple of God in heaven when describing the "intermediate state" - cf. Revelation 7:15 d. Again, the indication is that God will dwell with us for eternity in this "new heavens and new earth" (in the "New Jerusalem"), not that we will be with Him in heaven

CONCLUSION

1. Admittedly, in a book like Revelation we are dealing with very symbolic language, and must be careful not to strain a point too far...

2. But the terminology used by John is the same as that used by Peter and the author of Hebrews as they wrote plainly of our "hope" (i.e., such terms as "city", "new heavens and new earth") 3. And these terms are used consistently in such a way as to make a clear distinction between... a. What is currently the dwelling place of God (i.e., "heaven") b. And where God will spend eternity with the redeemed (i.e., in the "holy city" that comes down "out of heaven" into the "new heavens and new earth") 4. Should we not be careful to make the same distinction? Do we, "according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells" (2 Peter 3:13)? If so, then be sure to heed the admonition of Peter...

"Therefore, beloved, looking forward to these things, be diligent to be found by Him in peace, without spot and blameless; and account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation..." - 2 Peter 3:14-15 a And remember the words of John:

"Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city." - Revelation 22:14

06.06.12. What Is The Eternal Destiny of the Wicked?

"LIFE AFTER DEATH"

What Is The Eternal Destiny Of The Wicked?

INTRODUCTION 1. We now come to the last lesson in this series... a. In which we will examine that which is the last thing any Christian would ever want to consider b. I.e., "the eternal destiny of the wicked"

2. Yet, if we are to faithfully proclaim "the whole counsel of God", it is necessary to speak of... a. The righteous indignation of God b. The place that is prepared for those who reject the gospel of grace offered through His Son Jesus Christ 3. As we begin, consider this quotation by Ray Summers in his book, "The Life Beyond"...

"We would do well to remember that we are dealing with terms in an attempt to describe a condition that almost defies description."

[First of all, then, consider what we know about...] I. THE "ABODE" OF THE WICKED A. WE KNOW THEY WILL BE "SEPARATED FROM GOD"...

1. Jesus spoke of such separation on several occasions a. In His sermon on the mount - Matthew 7:21-23 b. In describing the judgment scene - Matthew 25:41-46 c. These passages describe separation from the blessings and fellowship of the Lord's presence 2. Other passages speak of similar separation... a. No inheritance in the kingdom of God for some - Ephesians 5:5 b. Shut out of the "eternal city" where there are blessings and fellowship with God - Revelation 21:27; Revelation 22:15 B. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "HELL"...

1. The Greek word is "geenna" {gheh'-en-nah} a. It represents the Hebrew word "Ge-Hinnom" b. B. W. Johnson comments: "The term Gehenna arose from the valley of Hinnom, south of Jerusalem, where the Canaanites burned human sacrifices to Moloch. After the return of the Jews from the Captivity they made it a place of defilement, where the refuse of the city was thrown and burned. The name was applied to the place of future punishment by the Jews. The word is often used in the New Testament, and always denotes a place of future punishment."

2. Jesus used the term to describe the final place of punishment... a. In His sermon on the mount - Matthew 5:21-22, Matthew 5:29-30 b. When sending His apostles on the "limited" commission - Matthew 10:28 c. In warning against personal stumblingblocks - Matthew 18:8-9 d. Perhaps the most vivid use of this term is in Mark 9:43-48 -- Jesus evidently used this word which spoke to His contemporaries the horror and abomination of the eternal destiny awaiting the wicked

3. This place called "hell" was originally prepared for the devil and his angels (Matthew 25:41), but will serve as the place of punishment for the wicked as well C. THE ETERNAL DWELLING PLACE IS CALLED "THE LAKE OF FIRE"...

1. Where the "beast" and "false prophet" of Revelation are thrown - Revelation 19:20 2. Where the devil (Satan) himself will one day be cast - Revelation 20:1-15

3. The same is said for "death" and "Hades", and all whose names are not written in "the Lamb's book of life" - Revelation 20:14-15 4. The future residents of this place are also described in Revelation 21:8

[Such is the place that God has prepared for the eternal destiny of the wicked! To appreciate further the horror of this place, consider...] II. THE "EXPERIENCE" OF THE WICKED A. WE HAVE SEEN THAT THE IDEA OF "SEPARATION" IS INVOLVED...

1. What such separation from God can be like, no one in this life can really know a. For everyone in this life experiences a degree of God's presence - cf. Acts 17:28 b. E.g., the physical blessings of the sun, rain, etc. are all manifestations of God's presence in our lives - cf. Matthew 5:45

2. But perhaps those who drift farthest away from God in this life have an "inkling" of what it must be like... a. Those in this life who drift away from God ultimately experience "despair" b. Even as Jesus experienced a sense of being "forsaken", when He suffered that momentary separation from God while bearing the sins of the world on the cross - cf. Matthew 27:46; Psalms 22:1

3. If we have ever experienced separation from a loved one, perhaps we can begin to understand what eternal separation from God must be like B. A TERM COMMONLY USED TO DESCRIBE THE EXPERIENCE IS "DEATH"...

1. The wages of sin is death - Romans 6:23

2. In Revelation 2:11; Revelation 20:14; it is called the "second death", so we know that the experience of the wicked is not simply physical death (which is the "first death")

3. Since physical death is a "separation" of body and spirit, it is natural to conclude that the second death is a "separation" of one's soul from His God!

C. THE ETERNAL DESTINY IS DESCRIBED AS "DESTRUCTION"...

1. An everlasting "destruction" from the presence of the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 1:9 2. "whose end is destruction" - Php 3:19 3. The idea of destruction... a. Does NOT require the idea of "annihilation" b. It can just as easily describe the condition of existing in a state of "total ruin" -- The next description would confirm that "annihilation" is not under consideration here...

D. IT IS ALSO DESCRIBED AS "EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT"...

1. The punishment for the wicked is as "everlasting" as the life given the righteous - Matthew 25:46

2. The wicked will be "punished" with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord - 2 Thessalonians 1:9 E. IT IS FURTHER SPOKEN OF IN TERMS OF "OUTER DARKNESS"...

1. As in the punishment of the unfaithful servant - Matthew 25:30 2. And the punishment reserved for false teachers - 2 Peter 2:17;

Jude 1:13 F. OTHER TERMS INCLUDE "WEEPING AND GNASHING OF TEETH"...

1. Jesus used these expressions several times - Matthew 25:30; Matthew 24:51; Matthew 22:13

2. When such terms as these are used, it is difficult to accept any view that suggests the wicked will simply cease to exist at death, or be raised for judgment and then annihilated!

G. FINALLY, IT IS DESCRIBED IN TERMS OF "FIRE"...

1. The "fire" of Gehenna 2. The "lake of fire"

3. A fire that is never quenched - Mark 9:43-48 4. A fire of indignation which "devours" (but does not destroy out of existence) - Hebrews 10:26-27

CONCLUSION 1. To some degree we must take these terms that describe the destiny of the wicked as "figurative" a. How could you have darkness where there is fire? b. How could you have worms where there is fire?

2. But they are terms anyone can relate to, which describe... a. Something we cannot possibly comprehend with our finite minds b. A place of punishment reserved for those who "do not know God, and...who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" - 2 Thessalonians 1:8-9 3. It is natural to "revolt" against any idea such as "hell"... a. Unfortunately, many have revolted by trying to deny the reality of hell, and sought to offer some other destiny of the wicked beyond this life b. But one cannot define away "hell" without belittling...

1) Either the terribleness of sin 2) Or the holiness and justice of God A much better way to react to the truth concerning hell is to accept God's saving grace offered through His Son Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save us from hell!

06.06.13. For Your Further Study

"LIFE AFTER DEATH" For Your Further Study For a much more indepth study of the issues relating to life after death, I recommend the books listed below. While I do not necessarily agree with every conclusion drawn by the authors, they certainly provide food for thought (you can purchase the book online by clicking on the title)...

1) The Bible & The Future (Anthony A. Hoekema, Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1989) 2) The Bible On The Life Hereafter (William Hendriksen, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1995, 224 pages)

07.00. Shepherds Of The Flock

Shepherds Of The Flock By Mark Copeland A study of elders in the Lord's church

CONTENTS Introduction To The Office Their Work And Responsibility Their Qualifications - Preliminary Considerations Their Qualifications - Familial Qualities Their Qualifications - Positive Qualities Their Qualifications - Negative Qualities Our Duties Toward Them Their Selection And Appointment

07.01. Introduction To The Office

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK"

Introduction To The Office

INTRODUCTION 1. In Acts 14:21-23, we read of Paul appointing elders while on his first missionary journey 2. Later, Paul instructed Titus to do the same thing on the island of Crete - Titus 1:5.

3. The Bible reveals God intended for Christians to have the benefit of elders in each congregation... a. Yet many congregations today do not enjoy this blessing b. Reasons for why this is so vary, some scriptural and some unscriptural 3. Whatever the reason a church does not have elders... a. It should be a temporary situation b. The congregation should not be content without elders c. The congregation should be prayerfully working toward the day when it has men qualified to serve as elders

4. This lesson is the first of several that will hopefully hasten the day when a congregation without elders will be blessed to have them [For the benefit of those not familiar with the New Testament pattern of church organization...] I. A REVIEW OF CHURCH ORGANIZATION A. LOCAL CHURCHES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT...

1. Began wherever the gospel was preached and received a. E. g., the church in Jerusalem - Acts 2:36-47. b. E. g., the church in Antioch of Syria - Acts 11:19-26. c. E. g., the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch of Pisidia - Acts 14:21-23.

2. Consisted of disciples who assembled together frequently a. E. g., the church in Jerusalem - Acts 2:42. b. E. g., the church in Troas - Acts 20:7. c. E. g., the admonition given to the Hebrew Christians - Hebrews 10:1-39.

-- These congregations were independent and autonomous, each answering directly to Christ as their Head, through the word of His apostles B. WHEN COMPLETELY AND SCRIPTURALLY ORGANIZED...

1. A congregation had a plurality of specially qualified men serving as elders (also called by other terms as we will see, such as bishops) - e. g., Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17.

2. Elders (bishops) in the church were assisted by qualified men designated as deacons 3. A church might also have in their midst: a. Prophets (though this work, like that of apostles, was temporary) - e. g., Acts 13:1. b. Teachers (those specially gifted toward this task) - e. g., Acts 13:1; 1 Corinthians 12:28; James 3:1. c. Evangelists (preachers of the gospel) - e. g., Acts 21:8; Ephesians 4:11; 2 Timothy 4:5.

4. Filling out the congregation would be the rest of the disciples, called Christians or saints - cf. Acts 11:26; 1 Corinthians 1:2.

-- An example of a scripturally organized church is seen in Php 1:1.

C. THERE WERE "SCRIPTURALLY UNORGANIZED" CHURCHES...

1. This was the condition of the churches in Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch prior to the appointment of elders - Acts 14:21-23.

2. It should be noted that such a condition was evidently temporary -- No church should ever be satisfied to remain permanently in such a condition [To appreciate the need for qualified elders in each church, it helps to understand...] II. DESCRIPTIVE TERMS IN REFERENCE TO ELDERS A. THEY WERE CALLED ELDERS, OR PRESBYTERS...

1. As noted in Acts 14:23; Acts 20:17.

2. From the Greek word presbuteros, meaning "older"

3. Indicating "maturity of spiritual experience" - Vine's 4. Note the qualification ("not a novice") - 1 Timothy 3:6.

B. THEY WERE ALSO CALLED BISHOPS, OR OVERSEERS...

1. Note that the elders were called "overseers" (bishops) - Acts 20:17, Acts 20:28.

2. The elders were to serve as "overseers" (bishops) - 1 Peter 5:1-2.

3. From the Greek word episkopos, meaning "one who oversees, takes care of"

4. This is reference to the work they do (take care of the church of God) - cf. 1 Timothy 3:4-5.

C. THEY WERE ALSO CALLED PASTORS, OR SHEPHERDS...

1. The English word "pastor" is found but once in the New Testament - Ephesians 4:11.

2. It comes from the Greek word poimen, meaning "shepherd"

3. Elders were charged to "shepherd the church of God" - cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-2.

D. THESE TERMS ILLUSTRATE THE IMPORTANCE OF ELDERS...

1. As Christians try to live godly lives, it is a blessing to have: a. Spiritually experienced men (elders, presbyters) to guide us along b. Qualified men watching over us (bishops, overseers) to see that we grow c. Capable men feeding us (pastors, shepherds), protecting us from "grievous wolves"

2. Without elders, Christians in a congregation: a. Must grow without the guidance and leadership God intended for His flock b. Fail to have the benefit of spiritual encouragement God intended for His church [Why then, would any congregation be content without elders? Yet there are several reasons...] III. WHY CHURCHES DON'T HAVE ELDERS A. SOME DON'T BELIEVE THEY ARE FOR TODAY...

1. They believe this office or function was only for first century churches 2. Has the need provided for by elders changed?

3. Or could the real reason for believing this be what we consider next?

B. SOME DON'T WANT TO HAVE ELDERS...

1. Perhaps because of bad experiences with unqualified elders in the past a. Should we throw away the blessing because someone abused it? b. Shall we discard marriage and family, because of the many bad ones?

2. Perhaps because some want to have preeminence - e. g., 3 John 1:9. a. Without elders, it is easy for power hungry individuals to run a congregation b. Many young men and unqualified older men like that kind of authority c. Others have a problem submitting to elders (or to anyone, for that matter) C. SOME DON'T MAKE THE EFFORT TO DEVELOP ELDERS...

1. Many men give little thought to one day serving as elders 2. Therefore they make little effort to develop their abilities 3. Is this not rather selfish? a. God needs godly men to serve Him and His church in this capacity b. But many are too busy in their jobs and planning their retirement 4. Certainly not all men have the potential to serve as elders a. But how many did, but buried their talent under a pile of selfish interests in this life? b. How might Christ judge them if such be the case? - cf. Matthew 25:14-30.

CONCLUSION 1. There is a crying need for qualified men to serve as elders in churches today! a. Churches often struggle without the benefit of elders b. Evangelists and preachers are often burdened with doing what elders should be doing -- In such cases, the growth of the gospel is hindered!

2. Everyone needs to be involved in fulfilling this need... a. Men need to examine themselves 1) To see if they are qualified to serve 2) To diligently work toward meeting the qualifications if the potential is there 3) To encourage others who one day may be qualified, even if they themselves are not b. All should be praying for this work 1) That God raise up men who are qualified 2) That men will be able to provide the leadership and care God desires for His children -- What are you doing to expedite the development of men qualified to serve? In our next study, we look more closely as the work of elders. For now, have we fully utilized the blessing of Jesus as the Shepherd and Overseer of our souls...? - cf. 1 Peter 2:24-25.

07.02. Their Work And Responsibility

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Their Work And Responsibility

INTRODUCTION 1. In our previous study we... a. Reviewed the New Testament pattern of church organization b. Defined the words used to describe those who serve as elders c. Emphasized the importance of developing and having elders in a local congregation 2. In this study, we direct our attention to the work and responsibility of elders... a. That we might we appreciate those who serve b. That we might better understand the need for certain qualifications

[In 1 Timothy 3:1; we are told that the work of an elder (bishop) is "good". What that work entails can be gleaned by turning to Paul's comments to the Ephesian elders in Acts 20:28-32...] I. TO BE SHEPHERDS OF THE CHURCH A. TAKING HEED TO THEMSELVES...

1. Their example and faithfulness - Acts 20:28 a 2. Elders need to be as concerned about their own spiritual development as they are for those under their care B. TAKING HEED TO THE FLOCK...

1. By watching over them (as overseers, i. e., bishops) - Acts 20:28 b a. The flock is precious in God's sight b. Having been purchased by the blood of His Son!

2. By feeding them (as shepherds, i. e., pastors) - Acts 20:28 c a. To shepherd means to feed, to nourish b. Thus the qualification to be able to teach - 1 Timothy 3:2.

3. By watching out for trouble - Acts 20:29-31. a. Trouble from without ("savage wolves") b. Trouble from within ("among yourselves") C. DEPENDING UPON GOD AND HIS WORD...

1. The first implies much prayer - Acts 20:32.

2. The latter implies much study - Acts 20:32.

[We turn next to Paul's instructions to the church at Thessalonica in 1 Thessalonians 5:12-14...] II. TO BE IN CHARGE AND GIVE INSTRUCTION A. THEIR LABOR INVOLVES AUTHORITY...

1. Though not mentioned by name, elders are the only ones who are "over" us (serving as overseers) - Acts 20:28.

2. Their authority is limited to that which is "in the Lord" - 1 Thessalonians 5:12 a 3. Their authority pertains to the Lord's will and work a. Contrast with the "discipling" concept of some b. Where the "discipler" assumes authority in all matters B. THEIR LABOR INVOLVES ADMONITION...

1. Warning those who are unruly - 1 Thessalonians 5:12 b 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

2. Comforting the fainthearted, upholding the weak, with patience - 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

3. Such labor requires knowledge of God's will, and wisdom to use it properly!

[Then we note what Paul wrote to Timothy...] III. TO BE A TEACHER AND RULER A. ABLE TO TEACH...

1. One of the qualifications of a bishop (elder) - 1 Timothy 3:2.
2. Such is necessary if he is going to be able to fulfill his tasks 3. This may not require eloquence, but certainly knowledge - cf. 2 Corinthians 11:6.

B. ABLE TO RULE OTHERS WELL...

1. Not just to rule, but to rule well - 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Thessalonians 5:17.
2. To rule in a way that others submit with reverence a. Implies an example inspiring others to follow b. Implies an example which instills confidence in others [To Titus, another evangelist, we find Paul requiring elders...] IV. TO BE A STUDENT AND TEACHER A. A DILIGENT STUDENT...

1. He "holds fast" what he has been taught - Titus 1:9.
2. He retains it, does not forget it, and properly applies it 3. Not possible, unless he continues with diligent study B. AN EFFECTIVE TEACHER...

1. Able to use the Word to exhort and encourage the brethren - Titus 1:9.
2. Able to use the Word to convict those who contradict, to show the error where it exists [We find similar responsibilities described in the epistle to the Hebrews...] V. TO BE A RULER AND SOUL WATCHER A. ONE WHO RULES OVER OTHERS...

1. Though elders are not mentioned by name, they are the ones who rule - Hebrews 13:17; cf. 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:17.

2. They must do so properly, as we shall see shortly B. ONE WHO WATCHES OUT FOR OUR SOULS...

1. A clear reference to the elders who oversee the flock - cf. Acts 20:28.
2. An awesome responsibility, for they must give an account - Hebrews 13:17. a. This may shy some men away from serving as elders b. But don't forget the parable of the talents!

[Finally, we note what Peter, himself an elder, had to say about the work and responsibility of elders...] VI. TO BE A SHEPHERD WHO OVERSEES AND LEADS A. SHEPHERDING THE FLOCK...

1. By overseeing - 1 Peter 5:2.
2. Doing so willingly, eagerly - 1 Peter 5:2.

B. LEADING BY EXAMPLE...

1. Not as "lords", i. e., lording their authority over the flock - 1 Peter 5:3.
2. But by being examples that inspire those they lead and feed - 1 Peter 5:3.

CONCLUSION 1. We might summarize by concluding... a. The responsibility of elders is to oversee the flock, both leading and guarding the sheep b. The work of elders is accomplished by

teaching and providing examples for the sheep to follow 2. Hopefully, this helps us to understand...
a. Why Paul calls it "a good work" b. Why the qualifications in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are what they are c. Why we should highly esteem those who serve as elders Our next study will begin examining the qualifications of elders...

07.03. Their Qualifications - Preliminary Considerations

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Their Qualifications - Preliminary Considerations

INTRODUCTION 1. In this study we have considered... a. The terms used to describe elders (presbyters, bishops, overseers, pastors, shepherds) b. The importance of having elders, or working toward having them c. The work and responsibility of elders 2. We now begin to examine the qualifications for elders (bishops)... a. As Paul instructed Timothy - 1 Timothy 3:1-6. b. As Paul commanded Titus - Titus 1:5-9.

[Let's start with some preliminary considerations regarding their qualifications...] I. MUST ONE DESIRE THE POSITION?

A. MANY UNDERSTAND ONE MUST DESIRE THE POSITION...

1. So they understand Paul's beginning words - cf. 1 Timothy 3:1.
2. Yet the passage simply states: a. "If a man desires the position of a bishop..." b. "...he desires a good work."
3. Note that Paul says "if a man...", not "a man must..."
4. There is certainly nothing wrong with having such a desire
5. But to say this passage requires a man to desire the office prior to becoming an elder is to read into the passage something that is not there B. CERTAINLY ONE MUST SERVE WILLINGLY AND EAGERLY...

1. This we learn from 1 Peter 5:1-2.

2. But the following scenario is possible: a. A man might not seek ("desire") the position, perhaps because of humility b. Yet having met the qualifications, is selected and duly appointed c. Humbly accepting the position as God's will, then serves willingly and eagerly 3. Having the "desire" is fine, but what one "must be"... a. Before they are selected and appointed b. Begins in 1 Peter 5:2, not 1 Peter 5:1!

[Another preliminary consideration, one that will help answer many difficult questions later on...] II. MUST ONE BE, OR HAVE BEEN?

A. THE CRITERIA IS FOR WHAT AN ELDER MUST BE...

1. What we shall consider are criteria for what an elder must be (not have been) 2. Note the present tense ("must be", "is") - 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6-7. a. I. e., to be an elder, not just to become one b. I. e., what an elder must be, not just what a man must have been to become one B. THE QUALIFICATIONS MUST EVER BE PRESENT...

1. They are present requirements, not past requirements

2. When one ceases to meet any of these criteria, he no longer meets the requirement of what an elder "must be"

3. An extreme illustration to prove the point: a. What if an elder has a sex-change operation? b. According to reasoning applied by some to other questions often raised, this would not disqualify him c. But if the qualifications are what an elder "must be", the answer is simple (the person no longer meets the requirements) [An important consideration, in the light of cultural trends, is this one...] III. MUST ONE BE A MAN?

A. YES, BASED ON CONTEXT...

1. In the context, Paul is clearly talking about a man serving as an elder - 1 Timothy 3:1; Titus 1:6.

2. Also evident from the fact that one must be a husband - 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6.

B. YES, BASED ON REMOTE TEXT...

1. Elsewhere, Paul limits the role of women related to teaching - 1 Timothy 2:11-12.

2. Elsewhere, Paul limits the conduct of women in the assembly - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.

[This is not the view of a misogynist, but a commandment of the Lord (cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37). Those who respect the authority of the Lord will not appoint women as elders (bishops, pastors, etc.). Finally, we note this preliminary consideration...] IV. MUST ONE BE BLAMELESS?

A. THE REQUIREMENT...

1. "A bishop then must be blameless (anepileptos) - 1 Timothy 3:2. a. Lit., not apprehended, that cannot be laid hold of; that cannot be reprehended, not open to censure, irreproachable - Thayer b. One against whom no evil charge can be sustained c. One who is above an established charge of evil 2. "For a bishop must be blameless (anegkletos) - Titus 1:7. a. Lit., that cannot be called into account, unreprouvable, unaccused - Thayer b. That which cannot rightfully be caused to answer evil and criminal action B. THE APPLICATION...

1. To be blameless means: a. To live in such a way that no charge of guilt can be proved against one b. Not free from accusation, but accusations that can be rightly proven - cf. 1 Timothy 5:19-20.

2. To be blameless does not mean: a. One has led a perfect life b. One has never sinned publicly 1) Consider Peter a) He denied Christ, yet was restored b) He sinned publicly in Galatians 2:11-13. c) Yet he later served as an elder - 1 Peter 5:1.

2) Even if guilty of a charge that can be proven a) True repentance would render such a person "blameless" b) Therefore suitable to serve as an elder as far as "blameless" is concerned 3. Remember, that an elder must be (not have been) blameless a. I. e., presently free from any provable charge b. Having repented of any sin brought to his attention in the past

CONCLUSION 1. In succeeding lessons we will examine qualifications related to... a. Marriage and family b. Personal conduct c. Church and community 2. With the aid of the preliminary considerations in this lesson, hopefully we are in position... a. To understand what an elder must be b. To see how the qualifications render one "blameless"

Speaking of being blameless, do not forget that this is God's desire for us all, for which we should diligently strive - Php 2:14-15; 2 Peter 3:14.

07.04. Their Qualifications - Familial Qualities

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Their Qualifications - Familial Qualities

INTRODUCTION 1. In examining the qualifications of elders, we began with some preliminary considerations... a. Whether a desire for the office is a necessary qualification b. The qualifications describe what an elder must be, not have been c. An elder (i. e., bishop, pastor) must be a man, not a woman d. An elder must be blameless; not perfect, but free from any provable charge

2. A quick perusal of the qualifications (cf. 1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), reveal that elders must possess certain qualities related to several areas... a. Marriage and family b. Personal conduct c. Church and community

[In this lesson, we'll examine an elder's "Familial Qualities", qualifications that pertain to his family...] I. THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE A. THE REQUIREMENT...

1. He "must be" the husband of one wife - 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6. a. This rules out a polygamist b. It also rules out a single man 2. Some interpret Paul to say "if one is married, he must be husband of one wife" a. Yet Paul does not say "if" b. He says an elder "must be" - 1 Timothy 3:2.

3. Disregard what Paul says, and we can teach anything a. Some say the bishop must be single (e. g., Roman Catholicism) b. Some say the bishop (pastor) can be single (e. g., many Protestant churches) 4. Yet the scriptures say the bishop (pastor, elder) must be the husband of one wife! a. Shall we follow the commandments of God, or the traditions of men? b. Consider carefully the warnings of Mark 7:6-13; 2 John 1:9.

B. SOME QUESTIONS...

1. What about a widower? a. If his wife passes while he serves as an elder, should he resign? b. Remember that Paul describes what an elder "must be" (not have been) c. If a man is no longer the husband of one wife...

1) He does not meet the qualifications laid down to become an elder 2) If an elder, he no longer meets the qualifications of what an elder "must be"

2. What about a digamist (a widower who has remarried)? a. He is certainly not a bigamist (husband of two wives) b. He has a right to remarry - cf. Romans 7:1-3. c. He is presently the husband of one wife, which is what an elder must be 3. What about one divorced and remarried? a. Presuming that he has been scripturally divorced and remarried - cf. Matthew 19:9. b. He is presently the husband of one wife, which is what an elder must be

[Such questions might not be answerable with certainty. If one is to error, then let it be on the side of literalness, rather than looseness, when it comes to handling the Scriptures. Now let's consider...] II. THE ELDER AND HIS CHILDREN A. THE REQUIREMENTS...

1. Ruling his own house well - 1 Timothy 3:4-5. a. What this means 1) "having his children in submission with all reverence"

2) His children submit to his rule with respect b. Why this is necessary 1) "if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?"

2) It is indicative of one's potential to rule as an elder - cf. 1 Timothy 5:17; Hebrews 13:17.

2. Having faithful children - Titus 1:6. a. What this means 1) Either children who believe, or children who are faithful (trustworthy) 2) Whether it means they must be Christians is discussed below b. Why this is necessary 1) It reflects his ability to rule the house of God 2) It reflects his fitness to oversee the children of God 3. Not accused of dissipation or insubordination - Titus 1:6.

a. What this means 1) dissipation (Gr., asotia) - an abandoned, dissolute life; profligacy, prodigality; indulgence in sensual pleasure 2) insubordination (Gr., anupotaktos) - disobedient, unruly b. Why this is necessary 1) Children so accused brings shame on their father - cf. Proverbs 28:7.

2) Such children bring doubt on a father's ability to rule his house - cf. 1 Timothy 3:5.

B. SOME QUESTIONS...

1. Must the children be Christians? a. Consider the following translations:

1) "having children that believe" (ASV) 2) "whose children are believers" (NRSV) 3) "having children who believe" (NASB) 4) "whose children believe" (NIV) 5) "whose children are well-trained and believers" (Amplified New Testament) 6) "having children who are believers" (Wuest's Expanded Translation) 7) "with children who believe" (Moffat) b. Consider the following Greek authorities:

1) "one who has become convinced that Jesus is the Messiah and the author of salvation (a believer)" - Thayer 2) "believing (in Christ), a (Christian) believer" - Arndt & Gingrich 3) "believing children, or children that believe" - Vincent 4) "believing children, or children who are believers" - Wuest 5) "a believer, Christian" - Robinson c. Consider the following commentators:

1) "brought up in the true Christian faith" - Henry

2) "Believers, adorning the doctrine of the gospel by purity and obedience. There must be evidence that they have been brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." - Croskey, Pulpit Commentary

3) "Paul wants only men who believing children, not men whose sons and whose daughters are still pagans. A handicap such as that would be too great for an elder." - Lenski

4) "The apostle required that the children of him who was to be ordained a bishop should be Christians, and of a sober behavior; because the infidelity and vices of children, at least in the eyes of the vulgar, bring some blame on heir parents. And therefore it is added, in the next verse, 'for a bishop must be blameless.'" - MacKnight

5) "having children who share the Christian faith of their fathers and who adorn that faith with a godly conduct. A man whose children are still pagans or behave as pagans must not be appointed

elder." - Hendriksen

6) "It is not right or healthy for the elder to have pagan children. If the prospective elder accepted Christ late in life, he might not be at fault for the belief of his children, but he cannot ignore his relationship to them. If his children are pagan in their attitude and conduct, it will reflect on him and his service to Christ." - Dewelt

7) If an officer should have unbelieving children, it might indicate that he was either careless as a Christian, or a recent convert; and if his children were insubordinate, it might indicate that the 'elder' lacked the ability to rule the 'household of God', the congregation of believers." - Erdman d. In summary, here are reasons to hold that "faithful children" means Christians:

1) The testimony of translations, scholars, and commentators overwhelmingly favor it 2) When a man's children are faithful Christians, there is good reason to believe that he has experience in... a) Raising others in the training and admonition of the Lord - cf. Ephesians 6:4. b) Ruling in such a way that inspires both obedience and emulation 3) When a man's children are not faithful Christians, there are lingering questions... a) Is he at fault, not having been careful to watch over his children? b) Has he had experience in raising others in the faith? c) Has he had experience in inspiring others to follow his example?

2. Must there be a plurality of children? a. "Children" (Gr., tekna) literally means more than one child b. The plural (children) can sometimes be used to refer to the singular (child) 1) This is known as plural of class, or the plural containing the singular 2) Examples of this include Luke 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:4.

3) Paul appears to use it this way in 1 Timothy 5:10; Titus 2:4.

4) Leading some to conclude that an elder can have only one child c. Yet there are clear advantages to having more than one child 1) Children are different, to which parents with multiple children can attest

2) Raising multiple children requires dealing with diverse personalities, with challenging relationships and conflicts between them

3) Having a plurality of children better qualifies a man for the challenge of leading a plurality of members in the church

4) Having more than one child certainly removes any doubt that one has met the qualification of having "children"

3. Must all of the children be Christians? a. Some argue an elder must have faithful children, but not all have to be Christians 1) Literally, you could still say that he has "faithful children"

2) Yet questions may remain as to why there are unfaithful children b. Some scenarios might be less troubling; for example:

1) A man has four children 2) The two older children are Christians 3) The two younger haven't attained the age of accountability, but do have a childlike faith in God and Jesus 4) To the degree the latter are accountable, are they not "faithful" as well (though not yet Christians)?

4. What if a child becomes unfaithful away from home? a. To be consistent with the premise that the qualifications are those which must be present in an elder, an unfaithful child would disqualify an elder b. Can one reason that the father is no longer accountable when the child no longer lives under the same roof? My own thoughts:

1) Does not the father-child relationship continue through life? a) I must still honor my parents - Ephesians 6:4. b) I still bear responsibilities toward my parents - cf. 1 Timothy 5:4, 1 Timothy 5:8.

2) There would be the problem of demonstrating one's ability to watch over souls a) How do we know he is able, if his children are not faithful? b) The father may not be at fault, but who can know for sure?

3) The only way an elder can serve free from distracting questions is if he continues to have "faithful children"

CONCLUSION 1. Some questions may not be answerable to the degree of certainty; yet let it be clear... a. An elder must be the husband of one wife b. An elder must have faithful children c. An elder must rule his own house well, with children under subjection 2. Where questions linger and doubts remain... a. Each congregation should strive resolve the issues to the satisfaction of all its members b. It does not hurt to err on the side of safety c. If possible, elders should be free from any doubts that would hinder their ability to serve

07.05. Their Qualifications - Positive Qualities

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Their Qualifications - Positive Qualities

INTRODUCTION 1. In our study of the qualifications of elders, we have seen so far that one must be... a. Blameless b. The husband of one wife c. One who rules his own house well, having children in submission with all reverence d. One with faithful children not accused of dissipation or insubordination 2. In the two lists provided by Paul (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), the qualifications contain both... a. Positive qualities (what an elder must be) b. Negative qualities (what an elder must not be) [We now turn our attention to "Positive Qualities" we have to yet to consider, beginning with...] I. TEMPERATE (1 Timothy 3:2)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., nephaleos - "it means, properly, sober, temperate, abstinent, especially in respect to wine; then sober-minded, watchful, circumspect" - Robinson 2. Translated as: a. Vigilant (KJV) b. Temperate (NKJV, NASB) 3. Used elsewhere: a. To describe women - 1 Timothy 3:11. b. To describe what older men should be - Titus 2:2.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Elders are to be "ever on the watch, as sober men alone can be; keenly alive, so as to foresee what ought to be done" - Jamieson, Fausset, Brown
2. "Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge. A bishop has to watch over the Church, and watch for it; and this will require all his care and circumspection." - Clarke II. SOBER-MINDED (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., sophrona - "prudent or, according to the etymology of the word, from sos, sound, and phren, mind, a man of a sound mind; lit., a sound mind" - Clarke 2. Translated as: a. Sober (KJV), sober-minded (NKJV, ASV) b. Prudent (NASB), sensible (NRSV) 3. Used elsewhere: a. To describe what older men should be - Titus 2:2. b. To describe what young women should be - Titus 2:5 (discreet, NKJV) B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "The idea is, that he should have his desires and passions well regulated. Perhaps the word 'prudent' would come nearer to the meaning of the apostle than any single word which we have." - Barnes

2. "a man of a sound mind; having a good understanding, and the complete government of all his passions. A bishop should be a man of learning, of an extensive and well cultivated mind, dispassionate, prudent, and sedate." - Clarke III. OF GOOD BEHAVIOR (1 Timothy 3:2)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., kosmion - "Seemly, decent conduct" - Robertson's Word Pictures 2. Translated as: a. Of good behavior (KJV, NKJV) b. Orderly (ASV), respectable (NASB, NRSV) 3. Used elsewhere: a. Of women regarding their apparel - 1 Timothy 2:9. b. Where it is translated "modest" (orderly) B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "The preceding term, sophrona, refers to the mind; this latter, kosmion, to the external manners. A clownish, rude, or boorish man should never have the rule of the Church of God; the sour, the sullen, and the boisterous should never be invested with a dignity which they would most infallibly disgrace." - Clarke

2. "The most correct rendering, according to the modern use of language, would be, that he should be 'a gentleman.' He should not be slovenly in his appearance, or rough and boorish in his manners." - Barnes IV. HOSPITABLE (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., philoxenos - "literally, a lover of strangers; one who is ready to receive into his house and relieve every necessitous stranger." - Clarke 2. Translated as: a. Given to hospitality (KJV) b. Hospitable (NKJV, NASB) 3. Used elsewhere: a. Proscribed for all Christians to practice - Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2. b. Even toward one another - 1 Peter 4:9.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "Ancient inns were usually of ill repute. Then, too, Christian travelers were often poor, and hesitated to place themselves under obligation to unbelievers. Thus, by entertaining such travelers, particularly such as were missionaries of the cross, the influence of the church could be extended, while at the same time the spirit of love and sympathy could be shown." - Erdman

2. "Often saints by persecution were made homeless. The bishops must set the example of receiving such." - B. W. Johnson V. ABLE TO TEACH, EXHORT, CONVICT (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:9)

A. THE WORDS...

1. Gr., didaktikos - "one qualified to teach" - Robertson's Word

Pictures a. Translated as:

1) Apt to teach (KJV, ASV) 2) Able to teach (NKJV, NASB), an apt teacher (NRSV) b. Used elsewhere:

1) Of servants of the Lord - 2 Timothy 2:24.

2) Such would include preachers, evangelists, as well as elders

2. Gr., parakaleo - "to address, speak to, (call to, call upon), which may be done in the way of exhortation, entreaty, comfort, instruction, etc." - Thayer a. Translated as:

1) "exhort" (NKJV, KJV, NASB), "preach" (NRSV) 2) "give instruction" (RSV), "comfort" (New Testament In Basic English) b. Used elsewhere:

1) Paul exhorting the Thessalonians - 1 Thessalonians 4:10; 1 Thessalonians 5:14.

2) What Paul instructed Titus to do - Titus 2:6, Titus 2:15.

3. Gr., elegcho - "to convict, refute, confute; generally with a suggestion of shame of the person convicted; to find fault with, correct" - Thayer a. Translated as:

1) "convince" (KJV), "refute" (NASB, NRSV) 2) "convict" (NKJV, ASV) b. Used elsewhere:

1) When confronting a brother who has sinned against you - Matthew 18:15.

2) When rebuking an elder who has sinned - 1 Timothy 5:20.

3) What Timothy was to do when he preached the Word - 2 Timothy 4:2.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "A shepherd must feed his flock; a pastor must break the bread of life for his people and must rightly divide the word of truth. Ability for this sacred task is the supreme requirement for those to whom is entrusted the care of souls." - Erdman

2. "The true 'elder' must also be a guardian of the faith. He must hold fast the sacred tradition, according to the gospel as taught by the apostles, and he must be thus qualified because of his twofold duty as a teacher, first, to encourage and instruct believers, 'to exhort in the sound doctrine,' and second, 'to convict the gainsayers,' that is, to withstand unbelieving opponents, to reply to them successfully, to 'convict' them of fault." - Erdman VI. GENTLE (1 Timothy 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., epieikes - "equitable, fair, mild, gentle" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "patient" (KJV) b. "gentle" (NKJV, ASV, NASB) 3. As used elsewhere: a. Of moderation to be shown by all - Php 4:5. b. Of which Titus was to remind all - Titus 3:1-2.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder is "one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and strike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on those that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his censures, reproofs, and admonitions" - Gill

2. "A Christian minister must be 'gentle,' sweetly reasonable, eager to show forbearance and kindly consideration;" - Erdman VII. GOOD TESTIMONY FROM WITHOUT (1 Timothy 3:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., marturia - "record, report, testimony, witness" - Strong 2. Translated as: a. "testimony" (NKJV, ASV), "report" (KJV) b. "reputation" (NASB), "well thought of" (NRSV) 3. As used elsewhere: a. What was reported of the Cretans - Titus 1:12-13. b. What was said about Demetrius - 3 John 1:12.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must "have an established character which speaks well for the church among the unconverted" - B. W. Johnson

2. "He must not only be favorably known by his fellow Christians, but he must also have a good reputation in the community where the church is located; otherwise his ill repute may bring obloquy (a state of disgrace, a malicious attack) upon the church, and the very fact that he is under suspicion and reproach may prove a temptation to recklessness and sin;" - Erdman VIII. LOVER OF WHAT IS GOOD (Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., philagathos - "fond of good, that is, a promoter off virtue" - Strong 2. Translated as: a. "a lover of what is good" (NKJV), "a lover of good men" (KJV) b. "loving what is good" (NASB), "a lover of goodness" (NRSV) 3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. Php 4:8.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "of good things; as prayer, preaching, reading, meditation, spiritual conversation, and every religious exercise: or of good men; for such an elder or bishop has chiefly to do and converse with; and if he is not a lover of them, their company will be disagreeable to him, and he will be of no advantage to them; and if he does not love the souls of men, he will not naturally care for their state, or be concerned for their good." - Gill

2. "The appellation points here to that large heart which finds room for sympathy with all that is good and noble and generous." - J. W. Shepherd IX. JUST (Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., dikaios - "in a wide sense, upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God; in a narrower sense, rendering to each his due and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others, whether expressed in words or shown by the manner of dealing with them" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "just" (KJV, ASV, NKJV, NASB) b. "upright" (NRSV) 3. As used elsewhere: a. Of Joseph, husband of Mary - Matthew 1:19. b. Of Zacharias and Elizabeth, parents of John the Baptist - Luke 1:6. c. Of Simeon who waited for the consolation of Israel - Luke 2:25. d. Of Joseph of Arimathea - Luke 23:50. e. Of Cornelius the centurion - Acts 10:32. f. Of Jesus Christ, our advocate - 1 John 2:1.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must be "righteous in his dealings with men, giving to everyone their due; upright and sincere in his conversation with the saints; and faithful in his counsel, admonitions, and reproofs." - Gill

2. "The one who is just is one who tries strictly to perform his duties toward men - the duties which integrity and justice seem imperatively to ask of him in his relation with his neighbor." - Lipscomb X. HOLY (Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., hosios - "undefiled by sin, free from wickedness, religiously observing every moral obligation, pure, holy, pious" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "holy" (KJV, ASV, NKJV) b. "devout" (NASB, NRSV) 3. As Used elsewhere: a. Pertaining to hands lifted in prayer - 1 Timothy 2:8. b. Applied to Jesus, our High Priest - Hebrews 7:26.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must be "devout towards God, constant in all religious exercises in the closet, family, and church; and living soberly, righteously, and godly in the world." - Gill 2. He must be "one who reverences and worships God, and is of a spiritual and heavenly conversation." - Henry XI. SELF-CONTROLLED (Titus 1:8)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., egkrates - "Originally, having power over; possessed of; hence, controlling, keeping in hand." - Vincent 2. Translated as: a. "self-controlled" (NKJV, ASV, NASB) b. "temperate" (KJV) 3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures, though a similar word (egkrateia) is enjoined: a. As part of the fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:21-22. b. As necessary to growing in the knowledge of Christ - 2 Peter 1:5-8.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. Temperate "in eating and drinking; continent from the lusts of the flesh; and even abstaining from those things which might be lawfully used, though inexpedient, for the sake of the weak, the peace of the church, and the glory of God." - Gill

2. "Holding all his desires and appetites in restraint so moderate in their gratification. The bishop not only must be able to control his tongue, his eyes, and his hands, but must show a just and wise moderation." - Lipscomb

CONCLUSION 1. Too often, people focus on a man's family life when selecting an elder... a. Is he the husband of one wife? b. Does he have faithful children?

2. Just as important is that we consider his personality and abilities... a. What kind of person is he? b. Will he be able to fulfill the task of shepherding the flock?

Noting the positive qualifications help us do that, as do the negative qualifications which we shall examine in the next lesson...

07.06. Their Qualifications - Negative Qualities

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Their Qualifications - Negative Qualities

INTRODUCTION 1. This is our sixth lesson on the subject of elders... a. We began with an introduction to the office, focusing on terms used to describe them b. We considered their work and responsibility as ordained by God c. We noted some preliminary considerations regarding their qualifications d. We examined the familial qualifications of an elder e. We canvassed the positive qualifications of an elder 2. Remember that in the two lists (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), the qualifications contain both... a. Positive qualities (what an elder must be) b. Negative qualities (what an elder must not be) [We now turn our attention to the "Negative Qualities" required of elders, the first being...] I. NOT GIVEN TO WINE (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., paroinos - "This word not only signifies one who is inordinately attached to wine, a winebibber or tippler, but also one who is imperious, abusive, insolent, whether through wine or otherwise." - Clarke 2. Translated as: a. "not given to wine" (KJV, NKJV) b. "not addicted to wine" (NASB) c. "no brawler" (ASV) d. "not a drunkard" (NRSV) e. "who does not transgress over wine" (Syriac version) f. "not insolent through wine" (Arabic version) 3. Used elsewhere: a. The word is found only in these two lists - 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7. b. Though the same idea is expressed in regards to deacons - cf. 1 Timothy 3:8.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "No more dangerous and hurtful practice is known to man that the use of strong drink. An elder must set a good example in all things." - Lipscomb

2. "The same inspired author who advises Timothy to use a little wine for the sake of his stomach and frequent illnesses (1 Timothy 5:23), also clearly declares that one who fails to practice moderation has no right to a place in the presbytery. A wine-bibber, tippler, or drunkard cannot be a worthy overseer." - Hendriksen II. NOT VIOLENT (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., plektes - "bruiser, ready for a blow; a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not violent" (NKJV, NRSV) b. "no striker" (KJV, ASV) c. "not pugnacious" (NASB) 3. Used elsewhere: a. The word is found only in these two lists - 1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7. b. Its close connection to the abuse of wine is akin to that found in Proverbs 23:29-30.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. An elder must not be "ungoverned in temper, ready to resent insult or wrong, real or imaginary, quarrelsome, or ready to fight." - Lipscomb

2. "He must be no striker; not quarrelsome; not ready to strike a person who may displease him; no persecutor of those who may differ from him; not prone, as one wittily said, 'To prove his doctrine orthodox By apostolic blows and knocks'." - Clarke III. NOT GREEDY FOR MONEY (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., aischrokerdes - "eager for base gain, greedy for money" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not greedy for money" (NKJV) b. "not greedy of filthy lucre" (KJV) c. Omitted in 1 Timothy 3:3 (ASV, NASB, NRSV) - see reason why below d. "not greedy of filthy lucre" (ASV, Titus 1:7) e. "not fond of sordid gain" (NASB, Titus 1:7) f. "not greedy for gain" (NRSV, Titus 1:7) 3. Used elsewhere: a. In reference to deacons - 1 Timothy 3:8. b. A similar word used by Peter regarding elders - 1 Peter 5:2.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "not covetous of getting money, of amassing wealth and riches together; or desirous of popular applause and glory from men." - Gill

2. "This clause is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in five of Beza's manuscripts and other copies, nor is it in the Vulgate Latin version, nor in any of the Oriental versions; it seems to be transcribed from Titus 1:7. And indeed it is unnecessary here; since the same is expressed by the word 'covetous', at the end of the verse, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clause, the opposition appears more manifest, between 'no striker' and what follows ('but patient')." - Gill IV. NOT QUARRELSOME (1 Timothy 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., amachos - "not contentious; abstaining from fighting" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not quarrelsome" (NKJV, NRSV) b. "not a brawler" (KJV) c. "not contentious" (ASV) d. "peaceable" (NASB) 3. Used elsewhere: a. Required of all Christians - Titus 3:2. b. A similar word used of servants of the Lord - cf. 2 Timothy 2:24.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. The elder "should not be a man given to contention, or apt to take up a quarrel. The Greek is, literally, 'Not disposed to fight.' - Barnes

2. "This does not mean that one is not to stand and contend for the truth, but many are ready to contend over unimportant matters. Such always live in foment and strife. Even truth and right should not be maintained in a contentious spirit." - Lipscomb V. NOT COVETOUS (1 Timothy 3:3)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., philarguros - not loving money, not avaricious - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not covetous" (NKJV, KJV) b. "no lover of money" (ASV) c. "free from the love of money" (NASB) d. "not a lover of money" (NRSV) 3. Used elsewhere: a. A virtue expected of all Christians - Hebrews 13:5. b. The vice of covetousness condemned as idolatry - Ephesians 5:5; Colossians 3:5. c. The love of money (philarguria) is a root of all kinds of evil - 1 Timothy 6:10.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "Not only must the overseer be a man who is far removed from the Judas-like attitude (John 12:6) of trying to enrich himself by dishonest means...but he must also be far removed from making the acquisition of earthly treasure his chief goal in life even though the means employed should be honest." - Hendriksen

2. "A man should not be put into the ministry who is characteristically a lover of money. Such a one, no matter what his talents may be, has no proper qualification for the office, and will do more harm than good." - Barnes VI. NOT A NOVICE (1 Timothy 3:6)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., neophytos - "newly planted; a new convert, neophyte (one who has recently become a Christian)" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not a novice" (NKJV, KJV, ASV) b. "not a new convert" (NASB) c. "must not be a recent convert" (NRSV) 3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. 1 Corinthians 3:1; Hebrews 5:12-13 ("babes")

1. Paul explains why this qualification is necessary ("lest being puffed up pride he fall...")

2. "The particular peril of a young convert who is placed in a position of prominence and power is that of pride...a 'novice' might be puffed up with self-conceit and vanity, and so fall under the doom incurred by devil, and ceasing to be a minister of light, he might become a instrument of darkness." - Erdman VII. NOT SELF-WILLED (Titus 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., authades - "self-pleasing, self-willed, arrogant" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not self-willed" (NKJV, KJV, ASV, NASB) b. "must not be arrogant" (NRSV) 3. Used elsewhere: in regards to those who despise authority - 2 Peter 2:10.

B. THE APPLICATION...

1. "Not doing things in the worship and house of God, in the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances, according to his own will, but according to the will of God, revealed in his word; otherwise what he does will come under the name of will worship." - Gill

2. "...he must not be of such a stubborn spirit that he clings to his own will and refuses to listen to reason or facts. One in such a position must have the sincere desire to fully investigate all sides, to know the full truth, and then be guided by it, and not by the self-will of his own." - Lipscomb VIII. NOT QUICK-TEMPERED (Titus 1:7)

A. THE WORD...

1. Gr., orgilos - "prone to anger, irascible" - Thayer 2. Translated as: a. "not quick-tempered" (NKJV, NASB, NRSV) b. "not soon angry" (KJV, ASV) 3. Not used anywhere else in the Scriptures - yet cf. James 1:19-20. ("slow to wrath")

1. An elder must not be "soon and easily provoked and inflamed. How unfit are those to govern a church who cannot govern themselves, or their own turbulent and unruly passions! The minister must be meek and gentle, and patient towards all men." - Henry

2. An elder must be "one who can restrain and govern himself [He should not be one ever ready with an angry, hasty word, remembering always his Master, 'who, when he was reviled, reviled not again.']. " - Lipscomb [J. W. Shepherd]

CONCLUSION 1. The list of negative qualities can be revealing about the work of elders... a. It can test one's patience (e. g., when there is murmuring, discontent, or apathy among brethren) b. It can place one in volatile situations (e. g., that faced by the apostles, cf. Act. 6:1-2) c. It can be tempting for those attracted by money (e. g., Judas, the Pharisees) 2. For the flock of God to be well-fed and well-led, it requires men who meet both... a. The positive qualities (what an elder must be) b. The negative qualities (what an elder must not be) Our next study will review the duties of the sheep toward their hepherds...

07.07. Our Duties Toward Them

"SHEPHERDS OF THE FLOCK" Our Duties Toward Them

INTRODUCTION 1. In this series of studies we have considered... a. The terms used to describe elders b. The work of elders as ordained by God c. The qualifications of those serve in this capacity 2. In this lesson we will "turn the tables"... a. Instead of examining the elders, we shall examine ourselves b. By considering our duties toward those who are elders [We begin by noting what should be true regarding...] I. OUR ATTITUDES TOWARD ELDERS A. WE ARE TO RECOGNIZE THEM...

1. This charge is found in 1 Thessalonians 5:12. a. Though elders are not mentioned by name b. They are the ones who are "over you" - cf. Acts 20:28. c. The same word (proistemi) is used in 1 Timothy 3:3-4; 1 Timothy 5:17.

2. To recognize (appreciate, NASB) them a. Gr., eidenai - to have regard for one, cherish, pay attention to (1 Thessalonians 5:12) - Thayer b. "To have a regard and respect for. Recognize their office, and treat them accordingly with reverence and with liberality in supplying their needs (1 Timothy 5:17)." - JFB B. WE ARE TO ESTEEM THEM HIGHLY IN LOVE...

1. This command found in 1 Thessalonians 5:13. a. The Ethiopic version renders it "honor them abundantly" b. This high esteem is to be accompanied with love 2. "This esteem is due them on account of their work." - B. W. Johnson C. WE ARE TO ENTREAT THEM AS FATHERS...

1. This duty is found in 1 Timothy 5:1. a. The word "elder" (KJV, ASV) likely means any "older man" (NKJV) b. But would certainly apply to those serving as elders 2. Elders should be approached with love and respect, as a child should his or her father 3. The charge to "not rebuke" does not preclude proper correction a. Gr., epiblesso - to strike upon, beat upon; to chastise with words, to chide, upbraid, rebuke - Thayer b. "the Arabic version renders it, 'do not strike an elder'; meaning not with the hand, but with the tongue, giving hard words, which are as heavy blows;" - Gill c. Yet notice what is said about erring elders in 1 Timothy 5:20.

D. WE ARE TO COUNT SOME WORTHY OF DOUBLE HONOR...

1. This instruction is given in 1 Timothy 5:17-18.

2. Regarding elders who: a. "rule well" - manage their oversight effectively b. "labor in the word and doctrine" - through study and teaching 3. Considered worthy of "double honor" a. "Of double respect; that is, of a high degree of respect; of a degree of respect becoming their age and office;" - Barnes b. "From the quotation which is made in 1 Timothy 5:18; in relation to this subject, it would seem probable that the apostle had some reference also to their support, or to what was necessary for their maintenance." - ibid.

E. WE ARE TO RECEIVE NO ACCUSATION WITHOUT PROOF...

1. This warning is given in 1 Timothy 5:19.

2. "No accusation of wrong or ill-doing is to be entertained against an elder, save before two or three witnesses." - Lipscomb 3. The testimony of two or more is similar to that required in the Law - cf. Deuteronomy 19:15.

[With such attitudes as respect, love and kindness toward elders, proper conduct should follow. What that conduct entails we now consider...] II. OUR CONDUCT TOWARD ELDERS A. WE ARE TO BE AT PEACE...

1. A charge given in 1 Thessalonians 5:13.

2. This will certainly make the elders' work of overseeing the flock easier 3. If we make their job difficult through envy, strife, and divisions, we will be held accountable - cf. Hebrews 13:17.

B. WE ARE TO OBEY THEM...

1. This command is found in Hebrews 13:17. a. Though elders are not mentioned by name b. They are the ones who "rule over you" - cf. 1 Timothy 3:4-5; 1 Timothy 5:17.

2. To "obey" a. Gr., *peitho* - "to listen to, obey, yield to, comply with" - Thayer b. "by constantly tending upon the word preached by them, and hearkening to it; by receiving it with faith and love, as it appears agreeable to the Scriptures; for a contrary behavior is pernicious to souls, and highly resented by God; and by being present at, and joining with them in the ordinances of Christ, as administered by them; and by regarding their admonitions, counsels, and advice:" - Gill C. WE ARE TO BE SUBMISSIVE...

1. This command is also found in Hebrews 13:17. a. Though again, elders are not mentioned by name b. Yet they are the ones who "watch over your souls" - cf. Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:12.

2. To be submissive (submit to them, NASB) a. Gr., *hupeiko* - "to resist no longer, but to give way, yield (of combatants); metaphorically to yield to authority and admonition, to submit" - Thayer b. "not only obey in cases where no sacrifice of self is required, and where you are persuaded they are right (so the Greek, for 'obey'), but 'submit yourselves' as a matter of dutiful yielding, when your judgment and natural will incline you in an opposite direction." - JFB D. WE ARE TO IMITATE THEM...

1. This admonition is given in Hebrews 13:7. a. Again, it is presumed that elders being referenced to b. For they have the "rule", and also "speak the Word" - cf. 1 Timothy 3:2, 1 Timothy 3:4-5; Titus 1:9.

2. "Whose faith follow" (NKJV) a. "imitate their faith" (KJV, NASB, NRSV) b. "try to have faith like theirs" (CEV) 3. This passage may have reference to elders who have died a. "Remember...considering the outcome of their conduct" b. "They lived to get good and do good; they were faithful to their God and his cause; they suffered persecution; and for the testimony of Jesus died a violent death. God never left them; no, he never forsook them; so that they were happy in their afflictions, and glorious in their death. Carefully consider this; act as they did; keep the faith, and God will keep you." - Clarke 4. Yet we certainly do well to imitate those who are mature in the faith - cf. Php 3:17.

E. WE ARE TO CALL THEM WHEN IN NEED...

1. Instructions found in James 5:14. a. Given to those who are sick b. To call for the elders, who will pray for them 2. Note where the responsibility to call is placed a. Those who are sick are to call (not wait to be called) b. While elders are watching over the souls, they can't always know every need 3. Whether our needs are physical or spiritual, don't wait for the elders - call them!

CONCLUSION

1. The work of elders is great, and their responsibility is grave: "they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account" - Hebrews 13:17.

2. We have a serious responsibility as well, in regards to elders who watch over us:

"Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you"- Hebrews 1:1.
May our attitudes and conduct toward those who serve as overseers and shepherds of the flock be such that they do their duty with joy...!mments here

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