

Sharp Sermons

by

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Directory

Preachers and Preaching

Sermon	Page
The Work of a Preacher	1
What It Means to Preach Christ	2
Declaring All the Counsel of God	3

Evidences for Faith

Does God Exist?	4
But Whom Say Ye That I Am?	6
Search the Scriptures	8
These Are Written That Ye Might Believe	10
If Christ Be Not Raised	12
The Empty Tomb	14
The Witnesses to the Resurrection	16
The Witness of Paul	18

God

The Lord Our God Is One Lord	20
------------------------------	----

Christ

The Son	21
The Son of God	22

The Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit: a Divine Person	23
The Holy Spirit & the Apostles	25
Baptism with the Holy Spirit	27
Spiritual Gifts	29
The Gift of the Holy Spirit	33

How the Holy Spirit Saves Sinners	35
The Witness of the Two Spirits	36
The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit	37
The Spirit & the Word	39
Sins Against the Holy Spirit	41
The Fruit of the Spirit	43

Providence

The Providence of God	44
Prayer & Providence	46

Bible

What the Bible Can Mean to You	47
Bible Study	48

First Principles

God's All Sufficient Plan	49
Justification	50
Sanctification	51
Amazing Grace - Part 1	52
Amazing Grace - Part 2	53
Grace and Works	54
Behold, A Sower Went Forth to Sow	55
Be Doers of the Word	56
Two Builders	57
You Must Be Born Again	58
Be Reconciled	59
Calling on the Name of the Lord	60
The Roman Road to Salvation	61

The Good Life	62
Saved By Water	63
The Cleansing of Naaman	65
Two Laws of Pardon	66
What About the Thief on the Cross?	67
What Is Man?	68

Faith

Now Faith Is	69
The Just Shall Live By Faith	70
Faith & Works	72
Salvation By Faith	74
We Walk By Faith	75
Let God Be True	76
The Obedience of Faith	77
Victorious Faith	78
The Anchor of the Soul	79

Conversion

Be Converted	80
Cases of Conversion in the Book of Acts	82
The First Converts of the Gospel	83
The Conversion of the Samaritans	84
The Conversion of the Secretary of the Treasury	85
The Conversion of Saul	87
The First Gentile Converts	88
The Conversion of Business Woman	90
The Conversion of the Jailor	91

The Non-Conversion of Felix	92
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Authority

The Authority of the Scriptures	93
Is Conscience a Safe Guide?	94
Do We Need Scriptural Authority?	95
Can We All Understand the Bible Alike?	96
How to Use the Old Testament	97
How God Teaches Us	98
Faith & Opinion	99
Is the New Testament Our Pattern?	100
The Nature of Bible Authority	101
How to Tell What Pleases God	102
What In a Passage Is Binding?	104
Liberty	106
Expediency	108

The Kingdom

The Promise to Abraham	110
All Things Must Be Fulfilled	111
The Kingdom of Christ	112
Christ on David's Throne	113
The Hope of Israel	114

Last Things

Will Christ Return Soon?	115
Christ and the Judgment	116

The Church

The Church Jesus Built	117
Will the Good People of All Churches Be Saved?	118
The Establishment of the Church	119
The Universal Church	120
The Local Church	121
The Autonomy of the Local Church	122
The Work of the Church	125
The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy	126
Responsibilities to the Local Congregation	128
Church Discipline	129
Decision Making in the Local Church	130
How to Settle Problems in the Local Church	131

Church Offices

The Holy Ghost Hath Made You Overseers	132
Qualifications of Elders	133
The Duties of Elders	135
The Rule of Elders	136
Qualifications of Deacons	138
The Work of Deacons	139

Unity

The Unity of the Spirit	140
The Bond of Peace	141
Except They Be Agreed (Fellowship)	142

Worship

The What, Who, Why, & How of Worship	143
True Worship	144
The Lord's Day	145
This Do in Remembrance of Me	147
The Privilege of Prayer	148
Music in Worship (1)	150
Music in Worship (2)	151
Instrumental Music in Worship	154
The Collection	155
Proper Attitudes for Proper Giving	157

Dedication to Christ

The Most Valuable Thing in the World	158
The Cost of Discipleship	159
I Have Been Crucified with Christ	160
Let Us Rise Up and Build	161
I Am Debtor	162
Do You Love Me More Than These?	163

Faithfulness

Let Us	164
The Vine & the Branches	165
The Christian's Race	166
Examine Yourselves	167
Soldiers of Christ	168
Hospitality	169
The Christian & Civil Government	170
The Bible in Business	172

Christmas	173
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Holy Living

Partakers of the Divine Nature	175
Discerning Good & Evil	176
A Living Sacrifice	178
Forgiving One Another	179

Worldliness

Worldliness	180
Do Not Love the World	181
Flee Also Youthful Lusts	182
Lie Not	183
Gossip	184
Murmuring	185
Lewdness	186
Modest Dress	187
Dancing	188
Beware of Covetousness	190
Gambling	191
Drinking	192
Respect of Persons	193

The Christian & Sin

Take Heed lest You Fall	194
For All Have Sinned	195
Just One Little Sin	196
Sins of Ignorance	197
Imputed Righteousness	199

The Christian and the Cleansing Blood	201
Eternal Life	204
The Progressiveness of Sin	205
Impossible to Renew	206
Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out	207
Perfection	208
That You May Know	210

Calvinism

The Sovereignty of God and Man's Free Will	211
Total Hereditary Depravity	212
Unconditional Election	213
Limited Atonement	214
Irresistible Grace	215
Perseverance of the Saints	216

Family

Wedding Ceremony	217
The Nature of Marriage	219
God's Plan for Husbands	220
God's Plan for Wives	221
God's Plan for Fathers	222
God's Plan for Mothers	223
God's Plan for Children	225
Divorce	226
Remarriage	228
Unscriptural Theories About Divorce and Remarriage	229

Evangelism

The Great Commission	232
Local Evangelism	233
Let's Go Fishing for Men	234
Into All the World	235
Congregational Cooperation for Evangelism	236
Contending for the Faith	237

The Work of a Preacher

Introduction:

- A. The attitude many have toward the work of a preacher is exemplified by the woman who “quit the church” because “the preacher did not come to visit her family.”
- B. Do you want the preacher to do the work God has assigned him or the work denominations assign their “pastors”?
- C. What is the scriptural work of a preacher?

I. What People Think:

- A. Visit the Sick - Acts 6:1-4
- B. Socialize - Acts 20:20
- C. Study for the Members - Acts 17:10-12
- D. Spend Forty Hours a Week in the Office - Acts 20:20

II. What the Scriptures Say: Preach the Word - 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Acts 20:20, 26-27

III. With What Aims Should He Preach?

- A. toward God: Please - Galatians 1:10
- B. toward Sinners: Reconcile - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19
- C. toward Brethren: Edify - Acts 20:32
- D. toward the Faith: Guard - Jude 3
- E. toward the Faithful: Teach to Teach - 2 Timothy 2:2
- F. toward the Congregation: Set in Order - Titus 1:5

Conclusion:

- A. Brethren, my work is to preach the Word.! - 2 Timothy 4:2
- B. If you want something else, you have the wrong man!

What It means to Preach Christ

Introduction:

- A. Often we hear the request, “Don’t preach anything offensive; just preach Christ.”
 - B. It is certainly true that all preachers should just preach Christ. - Philippians 1:15-18
 - C. What will one preach if he preaches Christ?
- I. the existence of God (offends atheists, agnostics and pagans) - Acts 17:18,22-32
 - II. the Sonship of Jesus (offends Jews and infidels) - Acts 9:20-23
 - III. the name of Jesus (offends denominations) - Acts 8:12
 - A. salvation in His name - Acts 4:10-12 (nothing in a name? What about wife wearing another’s name?)
 - B. authority of His name (even offends many brethren) - Colossians 3:17
 - C. wearing His name - Acts 11:26 (We honor Christ as wife honors her husband.)
 - IV. one faith (offends denominations) - Galatians 1:15-16,23; Ephesians 4:5
 - V. necessity of obedience to the faith (offends “faith only” people) - Romans 16:25-26
 - A. repentance (offends irreligious and immoral) - Acts 17:30
 - B. confession - Romans 10:8-10
 - C. baptism (offends almost everyone) - Acts 8:5,12-13,35-36; Mark 1:9; 16:16
 - VI. the kingdom of God (offends premillennialists) - Acts 8:5,12; John 18:36; Colossians 1:13
- ### Conclusion:
- A. If this lesson seems old to you, it is! It is the story of Jesus, unchanged in almost two millennia.
 - B. I pray that you never grow tired of this story, for it’s “the sweetest story that ever was heard.”
 - C. Why don’t you respond to the story in the way the Samaritans did?

Declaring All The Counsel of God

Introduction:

- A. Once I was told I needed to leave local work because I am too plain in my preaching.
 - B. The problem is deeper seated: Some do not want the plain declaration of the whole counsel of God. - Acts 20:26-27
 - C. This lesson will answer four questions about declaring the whole counsel of God.
- I. Why do preachers need to declare all the counsel of God?
- A. save sinners - Romans 1:16; James 1:21
 - B. edify the church - Acts 20:32
 - C. prevent apostasy - Acts 20:28-31
- II. What is included in declaring all the counsel of God?
- A. the word - 2 Timothy 4:1-2
 - B. only the word - 1 Peter 4:11
 - C. all the word - Acts 20:20, 26-27
- III. How should we declare all the counsel of God?
- A. plainly - 2 Corinthians 3:12
 - B. in love - Ephesians 4:15
- IV. Why do many preachers not declare all the counsel of God?
- A. on the part of preachers: selfishness - Acts 20:22-24,33-35
 - B. on the part of brethren: lack of love for truth - 2 Timothy 4:3-4
- Conclusion: I am determined to fulfill the charge. - 2 Timothy 4:1-8

Does God Exist?

Introduction:

- A. When Halley's comet returned from the deep recesses of space in 1986 to once again circle the sun and be visible on earth, scientists were able to predict precisely where it would go and when it would be there. The British astronomer Sir Edmond Halley observed this comet in 1682, and based on the times of similar sightings in past centuries, correctly predicted it would return in 1758. The comet returns to view about once every 75 years. In the eighteenth century astronomers were able to work out a complex formula to accurately predict the orbits of comets. What does this demonstrate about the nature of the universe?
 - B. A boy in one of our Bible classes asked his teacher how we know God exists. Could you answer his question? - Psalm 19:1
 - C. Does God exist?
- I. It is a matter of faith.
- A. I cannot prove by the scientific method (observation and experimentation) that God exists.
 - B. But neither can the atheist prove by the scientific method He does not exist.
 - C. Why doesn't God just come down and show Himself to us?
 - 1. Once He did. - Exodus 19:16-19
 - 2. The people begged God not to appear any more to them. - Exodus 20:18-21
 - 3. Less than two months later they forsook God. - Exodus 32:1-6
 - 4. It is no different for us. - Luke 16:27-31
 - D. God wants us to accept Him by faith. - Hebrews 11:6
 - E. This means we must have conviction and trust about things we do not see based on evidence. - Hebrews 11:1-3; e.g., Do you believe Columbus discovered America?
- II. Is there sufficient evidence to cause a reasonable, honest person to believe God exists?
- A. First Argument
- 1. Consider as evidence some of the most basic laws of science.
 - a. The Law of Causality: The first principle of science is the Law of Causality (Neal D. Buffaloe and J.B. Throneberry, **Concepts of Biology**. 6) In essence, it states there must be an adequate cause for every effect.
 - b. The First Law of Thermodynamics: This great principle "states that energy can neither be created nor destroyed but can be changed in form." (Ibid, 76)
 - c. The Second Law of Thermodynamics: The Second Law *holds that energy tends to dissipate itself* In other words, the second law relates energy changes in a system to the organization of that system. Placed in this context, it states that there is an increase in **entropy** (disorder or randomness) - that is, a decrease in organization. Since useful energy is organized energy, an increase in entropy means a decrease in useful energy. (Ibid, 77)
 - 2. Think!
 - a. Either the material universe does exist, or it does not exist.
 - b. Either the material universe (the summation of all physical effects) has always existed or it had a beginning.

- c. If the universe had existed forever, all usable energy would have been gone in the ageless past.
- d. either mindless energy is the uncaused first cause, or there must be a supernatural (outside the realm of nature) uncaused First Cause.
- e. Since energy cannot be infinitely old (Second Law), it cannot be the Uncaused First Cause.
- f. There must be a supernatural Uncaused First Cause.

B. Second Argument:

- 1. Order in Diversity: Our universe has amazing order in incomprehensible complexity. The laws of physics apply in all parts of the universe.
- 2. Energy cannot be the Uncaused First Cause, else the universe would be random, cold, lifeless chaos.
- 3. There must be a supernatural Uncaused First Cause.

C. Third Argument: The Law of Biogenesis: “Thus far, life seems to come only from prior life in an unbroken chain...” (Ibid. 114)

- 1. Either life exists on earth, or it does not.
- 2. Either life has always existed, or it had a beginning. (Since the universe had a beginning, life on earth had a beginning.)
- 3. Either life came from natural or supernatural causes. (The Law of Biogenesis rules out natural causes.)
- 4. Therefore, life came from a supernatural Cause.

D. What kind of a supernatural Uncaused First Cause?

- 1. infinitely powerful
- 2. infinitely intelligent
- 3. eternal existence
- 4. These are the divine attributes, the characteristics that belong to God alone. - Romans 1:20

III. Yes, the evidence is conclusive. - Romans 1:18-23; Psalm 14:1

Conclusion:

- A. What are the chances of a random explosion in a print shop producing all 30 volumes in order of the **Encyclopaedia Britannica**? There is far less chance of a “Big Bang” producing the infinitely complex yet perfectly orderly universe.
- B. Without a doubt, “The heavens declare the glory of God.”

But Whom Say Ye That I Am?

Introduction:

- A. Modernists try to take the middle ground with Jesus and call him just a good man.
- B. With Jesus there is no middle ground. - Luke 11:23
 - 1. This is because with Christ, unlike with other great teachers, one cannot separate the teaching from the teacher.
 - 2. Buddha: "It doesn't matter whether you remember me or not; remember my teachings, Remember the way, the truth."
- C. Jesus - John 8:58; 14:6; Matthew 16:13-18
- D. Proposition: Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, or He is NOT a good man.
- I. He claimed equality with God. - John 5:17-18
 - A. He wasn't merely A son of God but THE Son of God. - Matthew 16:16
 - B. Jesus referred to God as His Father over 100 times in the gospel accounts but never in the same sense God was the Father of His disciples. - cf. John 20:17
 - C. His claim was unshared Sonship. - Matthew 11:27-30
 - D. He claimed to:
 - 1. forgive sins. - Mark 2:1-12
 - 2. have eternal existence. - John 8:24,28,56-59
 - 3. be God. - John 10:30-33
 - 4. see Him is to see God. - John 14:7-10
 - E. Thus, He is either the Christ or a blasphemer.
- III. He accepted worship.
 - A. Jesus taught that only God should be worshiped. - Matthew 4:10
 - B. During His ministry He accepted worship. - Matthew 8:2-3; 9:18-19; 14:33; 15:25; John 9:35-38
 - C. After His resurrection His disciples worshiped Him. - Matthew 28:9-10; cf. Acts 10:25-26
 - E. Thus, he is either the Christ or an impudent pretender.
- IV. He claimed sinlessness.
 - A. Compare the admissions of the apostles. - 1 Timothy 1:15; Luke 5:8; 1 John 1:8-10
 - B. But Jesus claimed sinlessness.
 - C. He condemned self-righteousness. - Luke 18:9-14
 - D. But He confessed no sin. - John 8:46
 - E. Thus, He is either the Christ or an hypocrite.
- V. He claimed to be the Savior.
 - A. He claimed to be:
 - 1. the light of the world. - John 8:12
 - 2. the door. - John 10:7-9
 - 3. the good shepherd. - John 10:10-11
 - 4. the way, the truth and the life. - John 14:6
 - B. Thus, He is either the Christ or a liar and an impostor.
- VI. He claimed to offer Himself for man's sins.
 - A. He claimed His blood would remove the guilt of sin. - Matthew 20:28; 26:28
 - B. Thus, He is either the Christ or a fanatic.
- VII. He claimed to be Christ.

- A. He confessed Himself to be the “Christ, the Son of the Blessed.” - Mark 14:61-64
- B. Thus, He is either the Christ or the great deceiver. - cf. Matthew 27:63

Conclusion:

- A. There is no middle ground with Christ. Either He is the Christ, the Son of God, or He is **NOT** a good man. - Luke 11:23
- B. Who do you say that Jesus is? - Matthew 16:15

Search the Scriptures

Introduction:

- A. There are many things in life about which one may be completely indifferent. - e.g., sports
- B. Men have reached various verdicts about Jesus of Nazareth. - e.g., Matthew 14:33; 27:63; John 3:1-2
- C. With Christ one cannot be neutral. - Luke 11:23
- D. Proposition: Jesus' fulfillment of the old Testament prophecies concerning Christ proves He is the Christ the Son of God.

I. The Proposition Explained:

- A. the Christ: "anointed ... of the coming king whom the Jews expected to be the saviour" (Thayer. 672); cf. Psalm 2; Matthew 1:21
- B. the Son of God - Luke 1:35; Acts 13:33; John 1:1-3,14
- C. Jesus appealed to fulfilled prophecy to sustain His claims. - John 5:39; Luke 24:44
- D. The apostles did the same. - Acts 3:18; 10:43; 17:2-3; Romans 16:25-26; 2 Peter 1:16-21; Revelation 19:10

II. The Importance of the Evidence

- A. It sustains our faith in the Bible, the source of our faith.
 - 1. Man cannot know the future; only God can foretell history or events. - Isaiah 46:8-11
 - 2. The Bible foretold the coming of Christ.
 - 3. Therefore the Bible is the Word of God not of man. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- B. It sustains our faith in God.
 - 1. If the Bible is the Word of God, there is a God.
 - 2. The Bible is the Word of God.
 - 3. Therefore there is a God.
- C. It sustains our faith in Jesus.
 - 1. If Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament promises and prophecies of the Christ, He is the Christ the Son of God.
 - 2. Jesus did fulfill the Old Testament promises and prophecies of Christ.
 - 3. Therefore Jesus is the Christ the Son of God. - Matthew 16:16-18

III. The Nature of the Evidence: the Characteristics of True Prophecy

- A. The events must be beyond the power of men to foresee.
- B. It must be demonstrated that the prediction was written long before the event.
- C. The prediction must be applicable to the event.
- D. The language of the prediction must be unambiguous and unmistakable.
- E. Every prophecy or part of prophecy must be fulfilled; no mistakes are allowed. - Deuteronomy 18:20-22

IV. The Evidence: Christ in Prophecy - e.g., finding a man in a lineup of suspects; look for identifying characteristics

- A. Time: Roman Empire - Daniel 2:36-45; Luke 2:1; 3:1
- B. Place: Bethlehem Ephrathah - Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6
- C. Lineage
 - 1. Abraham - Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Matthew 1:1
 - 2. Judah - Genesis 49:10; Matthew 1:2-3
 - 3. David - 2 Samuel 7:12-13; Psalm 89:19-45; Matthew 22:41-42; 1:1; Acts 13:22-23

4. woman - Genesis 3:15; Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23; Galatians 4:4

D. Character

1. Obedient - Deuteronomy 18:18; John 12:49-50; Philippians 2:8
2. Wise - Isaiah 11:1-4; Luke 4:22; Matthew 7:28-29; John 7:45-46
3. Love of Righteousness - Psalm 45:6-7; Matthew 5:10; Hebrews 1:8-9
4. Gentleness & Tenderness - Isaiah 42:1-3; Matthew 12:15-21; 19:13-15; 23:37; 1 Peter 2:23
5. Compassion - Isaiah 61:1-3; Luke 4:16-21; John 11:35; Matthew 9:36-38
6. Piety - Psalm 40:7-8; Hebrews 10:7; John 4:31-34

E. Events

1. Forerunner - Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 40:3-5; Mark 1:2-4
2. Anointed by Holy Spirit - Isaiah 42:1; Matthew 3:16-17
3. Man of Sorrows - Isaiah 53:3; Matthew 26:36-39
4. Triumphant Entry - Zechariah 9:9; Matthew 21:1-11
5. Jews' Rejection - Isaiah 53:1-3; Matthew 27:22-23

F. Betrayal and Trial

1. Betrayal - Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:14-16; 27:3-8
2. Demeanor on Trial - Isaiah 53:1-7; Matthew 27:12-14

G. Crucifixion and Burial

1. Unjust Judgment - Isaiah 53:8; Matthew 27:15-26
2. Scourging - Isaiah 50:6; Matthew 27:26-31
3. Crucifixion - Psalm 22:1,6-8,16-18; Matthew 27:39-46; John 19:23-24, 31-34
4. Burial - Isaiah 53:9; Matthew 27:57-60; John 19:38-42
5. Triumph
 - a. Resurrection - Psalm 16:10; Acts 2:29-32; 13:34-37
 - b. Ascension - Psalm 68:18; Acts 1:9; Ephesians 4:8-10

Conclusion:

- A. Indeed, Jesus is the Christ the Son of God!
- B. What will you do with Jesus? - Acts 8:26-39

These Are Written That You Might Believe

Introduction:

- A. "You can no more understand a miracle torn from its context than you can understand a comet detached from the solar system in which it moves." (A.J. Hoover, **The Case for Christian Theism**. 151)
- B. Jesus staked His claim to be the Son of God on the reality of His miracles. - John 10:24-25; 14:11
- C. The inspired writers record His miracles as proof of His claims. - John 20:30-31
- D. Proposition: The miracles Jesus worked confirm He is the Christ the Son of God.

I. What is a miracle?

- A. There are four biblical terms for these occurrences.
 - 1. "miracle" (source): power - Acts 2:22
 - 2. "wonders" (effect): that which produces astonishment - Ibid
 - 3. "signs" (purpose): tokens of authority and power - Ibid
 - 4. "works" (encompassing) - John 10:25
- B. Miracles are:
 - 1. works of supernatural origin and power that are radically different from the regular order of nature. - Matthew 14:15-33
 - 2. the intervention of God's power directly into the realm of the natural. - cf. Luke 5:17
- C. Miracles are NOT:
 - 1. simply God's day to day rule of the universe (Otherwise, they would neither be signs nor wonders). - Acts 17:24
 - 2. providential answers to prayer (ditto). - 1 John 5:14-15
 - 3. nor, scientifically explainable. - cf. 2 Kings 20:1-11

II. Should one admit the possibility of miracles?

- A. For one to assert he knows a miracle could never have occurred is to claim he knows everything that has ever happened in every part of the universe. - cf. Job 38:1-4
- B. For one to assert that God would not disrupt the order of nature to work a miracle is to claim to know perfectly the mind of God. - cf. Job 40:1-8; 42:1-6; Romans 11:33-36; Hebrews 2:3-4
- C. If one admits the existence of an all-powerful God, he must admit the possibility of miracles. - Romans 1:20
- D. If one admits that God intervenes in man's behalf to forgive sins, he must admit that miracles are probable. - John 3:16

III. The miracles of Christ demand an answer.

- A. If Christ worked miracles, as the gospel writers claim, then His claims are true. - John 3:1-2; 10:24-25,37-38; 21:25
- B. His miracles cannot be dismissed.
 - 1. They were not done secretly. - Acts 26:26
 - 2. They were not psychological healings. - Luke 7:11-15
 - 3. There is adequate testimony.
 - a. the beneficiaries - Mark 1:40-45
 - b. the disciples, who suffered for their testimony - Acts 5:40-42
 - c. the enemies of Christ - John 10:37-39; Matthew 12:22-29

IV. The Gospel of John dramatically demonstrates the true purpose of the miracles of Christ.

A. What is the purpose of John's account of Christ?

1. not biography: one third of the book devoted to Jesus' last 24 hours
2. It presents the conflict between Jesus and Satan. - John 1:5,10
3. Its purpose is to produce faith in Christ. - John 20:30-31

B. The miracles of Jesus were worked for moral purposes.

1. Jesus' claims are couched in the seven great "I am's." - John 4:25-26; 8:58
 - a. bread of life - John 6:35
 - b. light of the world - John 8:12
 - c. door - John 10:7-9
 - d. good shepherd - John 10:11,14
 - e. way, truth, life - John 14:6
 - f. vine - John 15:1
 - g. resurrection and life - John 11:25
2. Seven great signs confirm the seven great claims.
 - a. water to wine - John 2:1-11
 - b. healing the nobleman's son - John 4:46-54
 - c. lame man at Bethesda - John 5:1-19
 - d. feeding of 5000 - John 6:5-14
 - e. walking on water - John 6:16-21
 - f. sight to blind - John 9:1-7
 - g. raising of Lazarus - John 11:38-44

Conclusion:

- A. Jesus truly worked great signs, wonders and miracles in proof of His claims. - Acts 2:22
- B. But He claimed to be the Son of God. - Acts 2:36
- C. Therefore, Jesus is the Christ the Son of God.

If Christ Be Not Raised

Introduction:

- A. "I have more important things to consider than the presence or absence of an empty tomb in the land of Palestine some nineteen centuries ago" (Mahatma Ghandi).
 - B. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is in fact the single most important even in human history. - mentioned at least 104 times in the New Testament
 - C. How important is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead? - 1 Corinthians 15:12-19
- I. If Christ has not been raised, our faith is vain. - 1 Corinthians 15:12-15
- A. Our preaching is vain.- 1 Corinthians 15:12-14
 - 1. "vain": "without substance" (The resurrection gives substance to the gospel.)
 - 2. The resurrection of Christ is the heart of the gospel message.- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
 - 3. Thus, if Christ be not raised, the gospel message is utterly without substance!
 - B. Your faith is vain.- 1 Corinthians 15:14
 - 1. The religion of Christ is one of faith. - Hebrews 11:6; Romans 5:1,2; 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - 2. That faith is that Jesus is the Son of God.- Matthew 16:13-18; John 20:30-31
 - 3. Faith that Jesus is merely a good man is absolutely useless.- John 8:24
 - 4. That faith is based on the evidence of testimony. - Hebrews 11:1
 - 5. The supreme evidence for our faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. - Matthew 12:38-40; Romans 1:3-4
 - 6. If Christ has not been raised, our faith has no substance.
 - C. We are found false witnesses of God. - 1 Corinthians 15:15
 - 1. The mission of the apostles was to bear witness of Christ.- John 15:27; Acts 10:39-41
 - 2. Their apostleship required they be able to give this testimony. - Acts 1:21-22; 1 John 1:1
 - 3. Their constant and consistent testimony and the substance of their preaching was the resurrection of Jesus Christ. - Acts 2:32; 17:30-31
 - 4. If they cannot be believed here, how can they be believed on anything? - 1 Corinthians 15:15
 - 5. If they right here, they must be believed in all things. - Acts 2:36; 2 Corinthians 5:20
- II. If Christ has not been raised, our hope is vain.- 1 Corinthians 15:16-19
- A. Ye are yet in your sins.- 1 Corinthians 15:16-17
 - 1. Jesus' sacrifice on the cross was useless if he has not been raised. - Romans 4:25
 - a. The resurrection proves the worth of the sacrifice. - Acts 13:26-39
 - b. It allows Christ to intercede for us as our high priest.- Romans 8:33-34; Hebrews 7:15-17,25
 - 2. If Jesus' sacrifice is of no avail, we are yet sinners.- 1 Corinthians 15:17
 - 3. If we are yet sinners, our lot is eternal, spiritual death.- Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8
 - B. They also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.- 1 Corinthians 15:18
 - 1. The resurrection of Christ is the proof of immortality.- 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - 2. If He has not been raised, there is no hope for our dead loved ones.- 1 Thessalonians 4:13-14
 - 3. If Christ has not been raised, eternal, physical death is our lot.

C. We are of all men most miserable (pitiable - ASV).- 1 Corinthians 15:19

1. The life of a Christian is far more than a good, moral life; it is a life of total self-sacrifice in hope of eternal life.- Matthew 16:24-27; Philippians 3:4-11; 2 Corinthians 11:23-30
2. Take away the resurrection, and the Christian has no hope.- 1 Peter 1:3-4
3. Life without hope is meaningless and vain. - Ephesians 2:12
4. Life with false hope is worse.- Job 8:13-14
5. A life of complete self-sacrifice based upon false hope is most the most pitiable of all. - 1 Corinthians 15:19

Conclusion:

A. ... *while the literal bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the cornerstone of the Christian doctrine, it is also the Gibraltar of Christian evidence, and the Waterloo of infidelity and rationalism.* (R.A. Torrey, **Fundamentals**. 5:82)

B. Christ has been raised, and our faith and hope are secure!- 1 Corinthians 15:20

The Empty Tomb

Introduction:

- A. I want you to help me uncover a mystery.
 - B. The mystery is this: How did the tomb in which Christ was laid come to be empty?
 - C. This question is of paramount importance in considering the claims of Jesus.
 - 1. If it was empty because Jesus was raised, His claims are sustained. - Matthew 12:38-40; Romans 1:4
 - 2. We should not accept his resurrection uncritically, but carefully consider if there is a reasonable, natural explanation for the empty tomb.
 - 3. Does any nonmiraculous theory harmonize with the facts?
 - D. an historical question:
 - 1. gather evidence (sources: Matthew 26:36 - 28:6; Mark 14:32 - 16:8; Luke 22:39-46; John 19:1 - 20:8)
 - 2. hear testimony
 - 3. evaluate witnesses
 - 4. test hypotheses
 - 5. draw a conclusion
 - E. Is there a reasonable, natural explanation for the empty tomb?
- ### I. Background
- A. Did Jesus die?
 - 1. agony in the garden - Matthew 26:36-44; Luke 22:39-46
 - 2. scourged - Matthew 27:26
 - 3. mocked by soldiers - Matthew 27:27-31
 - a. crown of thorns - John 19:32
 - b. physically beaten - John 19:3
 - 4. apparently unable to bear the cross - John 19:16-17; Luke 23:36
 - 5. refused to be drugged - Mark 15:23-24
 - 6. crucified - Mark 15:25
 - 7. taunted - Matthew 27:39-44
 - 8. side pierced - John 19:34-35
 - 9. death witnessed by:
 - a. the centurion - Luke 23:46-47; Mark 15:44-45
 - b. the women - Mark 15:40
 - c. John - John 19:25-30,35
 - d. acquaintances - Luke 23:49
 - e. soldiers - John 19:31-34
 - f. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus - John 19:38-40
 - B. Was Jesus buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea? - John 19:41-42; Matthew 27:60; Mark 16:4
 - 1. Joseph and Nicodemus - John 19:42
 - 2. women - Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55-56
 - 3. Jews and Roman guard - Matthew 27:62-66
 - a. watch
 - b. seal
 - C. Was the tomb empty?
 - 1. guards - Matthew 28:2-4,11-15
 - 2. women - Mark 16:1-8

3. Peter and John - John 20:1-8
 4. not disputed by Jews - Matthew 28:11-15; Acts 2:29-32
 - D. The evidence is conclusive: Jesus of Nazareth died on the cross and was buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, but on the third day the tomb was empty.
- II. Is there any reasonable way to explain the empty tomb short of the resurrection of Jesus from the dead?
- A. Did the disciples steal the body?
 1. the testimony of the guard - Matthew 28:11-15
 - a. if asleep, incapable of testifying
 - b. if awake, lied
 - c. every motive to lie
 2. lack of motive to steal the body - 1 Corinthians 4:9-13
 3. lacked courage to do so - Matthew 26:56
 4. honest men (conceded by unbelieving historians) - 1 Thessalonians 2:1-12
 5. lacked ability
 - a. the guard - Matthew 27:62-65
 - b. the stone - Matthew 27:66; Mark 16:4
 6. the clothes and the orderliness of the tomb - John 20:1-7
 - B. Did Joseph of Arimathea take the body?
 1. man of impeccable honesty - Mark 15:43; Luke 23:50
 2. what motive?
 3. why leave clothes and orderly at that?
 4. lacked courage - John 19:38
 5. lacked ability
 6. no evidence to sustain theory
 - C. Did the women go to the wrong tomb?
 1. Could they forget!?
 2. They carefully noted where He was buried. - Matthew 27:59-61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55-56
 3. Peter and John independently went to the tomb. - John 20:1-8
 4. Why were grave clothes in the tomb? - John 20:7
 5. Why did the Jews invent the story His body was stolen? - John 19:41-42; Matthew 27:66
 6. Why didn't Joseph of Arimathea show them the right tomb?
 - D. Did Jesus become comatose and then revive?
 1. testimony to Jesus' death
 - a. soldiers - John 19:31-33
 - b. centurion - Mark 15:42-45
 - c. Joseph and Nicodemus - John 19:38-39
 2. what Jesus endured (see I,A,1-8)
 - a. embalmed - John 19:39-40
 - b. cold tomb - John 19:41-42
 3. impossibility of man just revived from coma to:
 - a. roll away the stone - Mark 16:4
 - b. overpower or slip by guard - Matthew 27:66
- Conclusion:
- A. Honest friend, how do you account for the historical fact of the empty tomb?
 - B. There is no rational, natural explanation for the empty tomb.
 - C. Thus, Jesus was indeed raised from the dead. - Matthew 28:5-6
 - D. Therefore, He is the Christ the Son of God. - Romans 1:4

The Witnesses to the Resurrection

Introduction:

- A. The preeminent question in considering the claims of Jesus: Was He raised from the dead?
- Matthew 12:38-40; Romans 1:4
 - B. The constant, consistent testimony of His disciples was that they saw Him alive after His death. - 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
 - C. This is a question of historical fact. - Luke 2:1-3; 3:1-2
 - D. Can we believe the disciples' testimony that Jesus was raised from the dead?
- I. The Witnesses (The Appearances) - Acts 1:3
- A. Mary Magdalene - Mark 16:9; John 20:11-17
 - B. the other women - Luke 24:10; Matthew 28:9
 - C. Simon Peter (later that day) - 1 Corinthians 15:5; Luke 24:34
 - D. Cleophas and another disciple on the road to Emmaus - Luke 24:13-32
 - E. Apostles in Jerusalem (Thomas absent) - John 20:19-24; Luke 24:36-43
 - F. 500 at once - 1 Corinthians 15:6
 - G. James - 1 Corinthians 15:7
 - H. all the apostles (Thomas included) - 1 Corinthians 15:7; John 20:26-29
 - I. 7 apostles at Sea of Tiberias - John 21:1-14
 - J. 11 apostles in mountain in Galilee (Great Commission) - Matthew 28:16-17
 - K. 11 in Jerusalem - Luke 24:44-50
 - L. 11 on Mount of Olives near Bethany - Luke 24:50-51; Acts 1:9-11
 - M. Saul (last of all) - 1 Corinthians 15:8; Acts 9:1-6
- II. Are the witnesses credible? (Three Criteria: Honesty, Competency, Number)
- A. Honesty (What motive did they have to lie?)
 - 1. dispassionate, matter-of-fact relating of incidents
 - 2. facts to their own discredit - Matthew 26:69-75
 - 3. allusions to details (which give away lies) - e.g., John 19:19-20; 20:6-7
 - 4. testimony different (thus, no collusion) but harmonizable
 - 5. their sufferings - e.g., Acts 5:17-42
 - 6. their change
 - a. from unbelief - Matthew 16:21-23; Luke 24:11; Mark 16:14
 - b. to belief - Acts 2:32
 - c. from fear - Matthew 26:56
 - d. to boldness - Acts 4:33; 5:29
 - 7. their zeal - Acts 8:1-4
 - B. Competency
 - 1. opportunity - Acts 1:21-22; 10:41-42
 - 2. mental capacity - Read what the apostles wrote!
 - C. Number - Deuteronomy 19:15

III. were the appearances hallucinations or visions?

A. If so, this would in no way account for the empty tomb.

B. Were the disciples excitable visionaries? - Matthew 16:21-23; Mark 16:14

C. Can this theory possibly explain His appearance to:

1. Thomas? - John 20:24-28

2. two on road to Emmaus? - Luke 24:13-31

D. Three times He was not immediately recognized. - John 20:14-17; Luke 24:13-31; John 21:4

E. Why did the appearances cease after forty days? - Acts 1:3,9-11

Conclusion:

A. The uniform, consistent testimony of the witnesses is that Jesus was raised from the dead.

B. Their testimony passes the test of historical evidence: Honesty, Competency, Number.

C. Jesus was indeed raised from the dead and is the Christ, the Son of God. - Romans 1:4

The Witness of Paul

Introduction:

- A. Tell of charismatic man I studied with who believed he knew of a man who had been raised from the dead. - liar? fanatic? deceived? truth?
 - B. Paul claimed to have seen the raised Lord.- Acts 22:6-9; 26:12-15
 - C. Paul presented the fact of the resurrection of Christ as the grand and final proof He is the Son of God.- Romans 1:3-4
 - D. Did Paul actually see and hear the risen Lord, or was his testimony false? - 1 Corinthians 15:8
- I. Was Paul a liar?
- A. There is no testimony to contradict his claims.
 - B. Did he have ulterior motives?
 - 1. Was it to gain wealth?
 - a. As an unbeliever, he had a promising, lucrative career. - Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:13-14
 - b. He abandoned this to espouse a cause that brought him great hardship.- 1 Corinthians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 12:14-15; Acts 20:33-35
 - c. Are his dying words those of a greedy man? - 2 Timothy 4:13,21
 - 2. Was it to gain fame, popularity, prestige or reputation?
 - a. He left these behind.-Philippians 3:4-6; Galatians 1:14
 - b. By following Christ, he lost all these.- Philippians 3:7; 1 Corinthians 4:9-13
 - 3. Was it to gain power?
 - a. This he had as an unbeliever.- Acts 22:4-5
 - b. He sacrificed this to follow Christ. - 2 Corinthians 4:5
 - 4. Was it to gratify fleshly lust?- e.g., Joseph Smith
 - a. He controlled his fleshly passion.- 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - b. He espoused a noble moral standard.- Galatians 5:19-26
 - c. He scathingly denounced immorality.- Romans 1:18-32
- II. Was Paul a fanatic?- e.g., Mehmet Ali Acga, convicted assailant of the pope; Acts 26:24-25
- A. Paul remained calm while his detractors raged.- Acts 21:26 - 22:24; 23:1-10; 26:24-29; Philippians 4:5
 - B. Paul had no illusions of grandeur.- 1 Corinthians 15:9-10; 1 Timothy 1:15
 - C. He was never illogical.- Acts 17:1-3; 24:25; Romans 1:20
 - D. He was cheerful under terrible circumstances.- Acts 16:16-25; Philippians 1:12-18; 4:4,9-13
 - E. Saul of Tarsus did not “see what he was looking for.”- Acts 26:9-13
- III. Was Paul deceived?
- A. By what words could they fool such a man?- Acts 7:58 - 8:3; 9:1-2
 - B. By what clever device could they produce such an effect? - Acts 9:3-1; 26:13

IV. Did Paul tell the truth?

- A. His testimony has “the ring of truth.” - 1 Corinthians 2:1-2; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 2 Timothy 1:1
- B. Paul willingly, cheerfully suffered for his convictions.- 2 Corinthians 11:23-30
- C. The only reply the unbelieving Jews had to Paul’s testimony was the unrelenting effort to persecute and to kill him.- Acts 9:22-25,28-29; 13:49-50; 14:4-7,19; 17:5,13; 18:12-13; 20:3; 21:27-36; 22:22-23; 23:10,12-15; 24:1-9; 25:7
 - 1. They were the ones who knew his former life best.
 - 2. Among them were his companions on that fateful journey to Damascus.

Conclusion:

- A. Paul claimed to be an eyewitness of the raised Lord.- 1 Corinthians 15:3,4,8
 - 1. His testimony is true.- 2 Timothy 1:12
 - 2. Jesus Christ was raised from the dead.- 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - 3. He is the Son of God.- Romans 1:3-4
- B. The salvation of your soul depends on your faith in and obedience to the Christ whom Paul preached.- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Hebrews 5:8-9

The Lord Our God Is One Lord

Introduction:

- A. Take a little test.
 1. How many Gods are there?
 2. Are the Father, the Spirit and the Son
 - a. different Gods,
 - b. different Persons in one God, or
 - c. different manifestations of the same Being?
 3. Is Jesus God, or is He a created being?
 4. Is the Holy Spirit a Person or a mindless force?
 5. **Give scriptural proof for each of your answers.**
- B. Without a knowledge of God, one cannot be saved.- 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9
- C. How are the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit one? - Deuteronomy 6:4

I. God is one God. - Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6

II. This is united oneness. - John 17:20-23; cf. Genesis 11:6 (nature, purpose, word, work, mind)

III. There are three divine Persons in the one Godhead. - Acts 17:29

(“person”: “a being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense”- **Webster's Third New World Dictionary**, unabridged; “being”: “the quality or state of existing; material or immaterial existence”- Ibid)

- A. The Father is God. - Ephesians 4:6
- B. The Son is God. - John 1:1,14; 5:17-18; Hebrews 1:8
- C. The Holy Spirit is God.
 1. He is a Person. - John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 2:11
 2. He is God. - Acts 5:1-4

IV. These three are separate Persons.

- A. The Son and the Father are not the same Person. - Hebrews 10:5
- B. The Son and the Holy Spirit are not the same Person. - John 15:26
- C. The Father and the Holy Spirit are not the same Person.- John 14:26

Conclusion:

- A. Review the test.
- B. The Father willed your salvation. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- C. That salvation is in the Son. - 2 Timothy 2:10
- D. The Holy Spirit revealed the plan of salvation. - Ephesians 3:1-6
- E. Will you not believe and obey that plan? - Revelation 22:17

The Son

Introduction:

A. The author of Hebrews exhorts Christians to remain faithful to Christ rather than return to Judaism. He portrays the superiority of Christ to all things judaistic. He begins in chapters one and two by showing us the nature of Christ and the offices He fills as the results.

B. What is the nature of Christ?

I. The Son of God - chapter one

A. God's Authorized Spokesman (Prophet) - 1:1-2

B. God (King) - 1:2-3,5,8

C. better than angels - 1:4

D. essential nature unchanging - 1:10-12

II. The Son of Man - chapter two

A. Man's Sympathetic Representative (High Priest) - 2:17-18

B. Man (Savior) - 2:5-11,14

C. lower than angels - 2:9

D. nature same as ours - 2:11,14,17-18

Conclusion:

A. Jesus of Nazareth was **God as He is and man as he ought to be.**

B. "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness." - 1 Timothy 3:16

The Son of God

Introduction:

- A. Modernists try to take the middle ground with Jesus and call Him just a good man.
 - B. With Jesus there is no middle ground. - Luke 11:23
 - C. The Scriptures present Jesus as the Son of God. - John 20:30-31
 - D. How do the Scriptures present Jesus as the Son of God?
- I. The Scriptures present the absolute essentiality of accepting that Jesus is the Son of God.
- A. It is the fulfillment of the old Testament. - John 5:39,45-47; Luke 24:44; Acts 3:18-26; Galatians 3:24; 1 Peter 1:10-12
 - B. It is the central reason the gospel accounts were written. - John 20:30-31
 - C. It is the central theme of the gospel message. - Romans 1:1-4; Acts 2:36; 10:36
 - D. It is the foundation of the church. - Matthew 16:13-18
 - E. Belief in this fact is absolutely essential to one's salvation. - John 8:24
- II. The Scriptures present what it means to affirm that Jesus is the Son of God.
- A. He was born of a virgin. - Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23
 - B. He is God.
 - 1. prophesied - Psalm 45:6-7; cf. Hebrews 1:8-9; Isaiah 9:6; cf. Luke 1:31-33
 - 2. plainly stated - John 1:1-3,14; John 5:17-18; John 8:58; cf. Exodus 3:13-14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Titus 2:13
 - 3. possesses the essence of deity - Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:1-4
 - 4. He was raised from the dead. - Acts 13:32-37
- III. The Scriptures present credible testimony that He is the Son of God.
- A. the testimony of John - John 1:29-34
 - B. the testimony of the Father - Matthew 3:16-17; 17:1-5; 2 Peter 1:16-18
 - C. the testimony of the prophets - John 5:39,46; Luke 24:13-32,44-47
 - D. the testimony of His miracles - John 5:36; 20:30-31; Acts 2:22
 - E. the testimony of His teaching - John 7:45-46
 - F. the testimony of His sinless life - John 8:46
 - G. the testimony of His resurrection - Romans 1:4
- Conclusion:
- A. What a marvelous fact to contemplate: God sent His Son to live on the earth as a man and to die in my stead! - 1 John 4:9-10
 - B. What a wonderful life to live, one of walking in His steps! - 1 John 2:6
 - C. What a glorious hope to contemplate: being like Him in eternity! - 1 John 3:2
 - D. Will you not believe Him, obey Him, follow Him and live with Him through eternity?

The Holy Spirit: A Divine Person

Introduction:

- A. There is much misunderstanding in the religious world concerning the nature of the Holy Spirit. - e.g., "... God's holy spirit is not a God, not a member of a trinity, not coequal, and is not even a person... It is God's **active force**.... may be likened to a radar beam" (**The Watch Tower** [Jehovah's Witnesses]. July 15, 1957. 432-3)
 - B. There are some things we cannot know about the Holy Spirit, but there is much we can. - Deuteronomy 29:29
 - C. Proposition: The Holy Spirit is a divine person.
- I. The Holy Spirit is a person.
- A. definition of "person"
 1. I do not mean He possesses a physical body. - Luke 24:36-40
 2. "person": "a being characterized by conscious apprehension, rationality, and a moral sense b: a being possessing or forming the subject of personality" (**Webster's Third New International Dictionary** [unabridged]. 2:1686)
 - B. proof of proposition
 1. He is spoken of by Christ as a person (10 uses of personal pronouns which designate a person). - John 16:13-15
 2. He possesses the characteristics of a person.
 - a. knowledge - 1 Corinthians 2:11
 - b. love - Romans 15:30
 - c. will - 1 Corinthians 12:11
 3. He does the work of a person.
 - a. speaks - 1 Timothy 4:1
 - b. teaches - 1 Corinthians 2:13
 - c. guides - John 16:13
 - d. forbids - Acts 16:6-7
 - e. searches - 1 Corinthians 2:10
 4. He suffers the slights and injuries of a person.
 - a. grieved - Ephesians 4:30
 - b. spited (insulted) - Hebrews 10:29
 - c. lied to - Acts 5:3

II. The Holy Spirit is divine.

A. definition:

1. Acts 17:29 (*theion* - “divine nature” [NASB])
2. Romans 1:20 (*theiotes* - “divine nature” [Ibid])
3. Colossians 2:9 (*theiotetos* - “deity” [Ibid])

B. proof of proposition

1. The Spirit is called God. - Acts 5:1-4
2. He possesses the attributes of deity.
 - a. eternal - Hebrews 9:14
 - b. all-knowing - 1 Corinthians 2:10-11
 - c. all-present - Psalm 139:7-10
3. He does the work of deity.
 - a. creation - Genesis 1:1-2
 - b. providence of nature - Psalm 104:30
 - c. miracles - Matthew 12:28; 1 Corinthians 12:7-11

Conclusion:

- A. Therefore, the Holy Spirit is a divine person.
- B. He invites you to come to Christ. - Revelation 22:17

The Holy Spirit and the Apostles

Introduction:

- A. We must note to whom Scripture is speaking. - e.g., Genesis 6:14
- B. Many “Holy Spirit passages” were intended for the apostles alone.
- C. What was the mission and work of the Holy Spirit through the apostles?

I. What are “apostles”?

- A. definition of *apostolos* (78 NT occurrences) “a delegate, messenger, one sent forth with orders” (**SeedMaster** computer Bible program, quoting **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**)
- B. Jesus is God’s apostle to the world. - Hebrews 3:1
- C. Jesus selected 12 to be His apostles to Israel (Limited Commission). - Luke 6:12-16; Matthew 10:1-7
- D. Eleven of these, plus Matthias, He later sent as His apostles to the world (Great Commission). - Mark 16:14-16; Acts 1:15-26
 - 1. They were eye-witnesses of the raised Lord. - Acts 1:21-22; 10:36-42; 1 Corinthians 9:1
 - 2. They were His ambassadors to deliver with authority His will to the world. - 2 Corinthians 5:20; 2 Peter 3:1-2; Galatians 1:11-12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - 3. He equipped them with authoritative signs as the badge of their office. - 2 Corinthians 12:12
 - 4. Paul was the last of the apostles of Christ. - 1 Corinthians 15:8-10
- E. Other men besides the apostles of Christ were apostles of the churches, i.e., they were sent out by congregations. - e.g., Acts 14:14; Romans 16:7
- F. Our study pertains to the apostles of Christ to the world under the Great Commission.

II. What was their mission?

- A. Jesus promised to send them a “Helper” to take His place. - John 14:16
 - 1. definition: *parakletos*: 1) *summoned, called to one’s side, esp. called to one’s aid 1a) one who pleads another’s cause before a judge, a pleader, counsel for defense, legal assistant, an advocate 1b) one who pleads another’s cause with one, an intercessor 1c) in the widest sense, a helper, succourer, aider, assistant 1c1) of the Holy Spirit destined to take the place of Christ with the apostles (after his ascension to the Father (SeedMaster, quoting TDNT).*
 - 2. The promise of the “Helper” (“Comforter,” **King James Version**) was specifically to the apostles. - John 13:1-4, 21-30; cf. Mark 14:17-21; John 14:16-18
- B. By the help of the Holy Spirit the apostles of Christ:
 - 1. received all the truth of the gospel. - John 14:26; 16:13-15
 - 2. were able to bear witness of Christ. - John 15:26-27
 - 3. were able to prophesy the future. - John 16:13

III. Did they fulfill their mission?

- A. They received, revealed, and wrote down for us all the truth of the gospel. - Ephesians 3:1-7
 - 1. This is a once-for-all-time revelation. - Jude 3
 - 2. It is not to be altered. - Galatians 1:6-9
 - 3. It is completely sufficient for our spiritual needs. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:3-4
- B. They bore witness to Christ. - Acts 2:22-42; 1 Corinthians 15:1-8
- C. They prophesied the future. - e.g., 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4; 2 Peter 3:1-10
- D. Their teaching and testimony were miraculously confirmed. - Mark 16:17-20; Hebrews 2:1-4

Conclusion:

- A. The apostles by the help of the Holy Spirit completed their work.
- B. The result of their work, the New Testament, is our complete rule of faith and practice, and all the guidance we need to please God and go to heaven.
- C. Make it your guide and stay.

Baptism with the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

A. Pentecostal and charismatic people believe baptism with the Holy Spirit “is a needed and promised experience for every believer” (J.A. Dennis, **The Holy Spirit**. 7).

B. Is baptism with the Holy Spirit:

1. promised to every believer?
2. needed by every believer?

I. To whom was baptism with the Holy Spirit promised?

A. Baptism in fire, mentioned in connection with the promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit, is eternal punishment (two classes of people, two baptisms). - Matthew 3:10-12; Luke 3:9,17; Revelation 20:14-15

B. The tongues that sat upon the apostles were not fire, they were “as of fire.” - Acts 2:3

C. “You” does not always apply to all in the audience. - Matthew 3:11; cf. 1 Corinthians 1:2; 6:7-8 (Pentecostals must recognize the promise was not to all assembled, for some refused to believe the gospel.)

D. The Promise Specified:

1. The apostles were to receive: - Luke 24:49
 - a. the promise of the Father
 - b. in Jerusalem
 - c. with power
2. The apostles
 - a. were to wait in Jerusalem. - Acts 1:1-4
 - b. to receive the promise of the Father. - Acts 1:4
 - c. that promise was baptism with the Holy Spirit. - Acts 1:5
 - d. to receive power. - Acts 1:8
 - e. to be His witnesses to the world. - Acts 1:8

3. The apostles did receive the Holy Spirit with power and did bear witness of the risen Christ. - Acts 1:26; 2:1-4, 7,14,32,37,42-43

E. It was seen and heard not better felt than told. - Acts 2:33

F. The promise of baptism with the Holy Spirit was only to the apostles of Christ.

II. Do all people need baptism with the Holy Spirit?

A. What were its purposes?

1. to witness the establishment of the kingdom
 - a. The kingdom was to come with power. - Mark 9:1
 - b. The power and the kingdom were to come when the Holy Spirit came on the apostles. - Acts 1:6-8
 - c. The Holy Spirit did come on the apostles with power. - Acts 2:1-4
2. to empower the apostles to do their work - Acts 1:8
3. Both these purposes, as the promise, pertained exclusively to the apostles.

B. There is only one New Testament baptism. - Ephesians 4:5

1. It is a command, whereas baptism with the Holy Spirit was a promise. - Acts 10:46-48; 1:4-5
2. It is administered by men, whereas Holy Spirit baptism was administered directly by Christ. - Matthew 28:19; 3:11

3. Baptism “in the name of the Lord” is water baptism. - Acts 10:46-48

III. What about Cornelius?

A. Cornelius and his household - Acts 10:44-47; 11:15-17; 15:8-9

1. received the “the Holy Spirit,” - Acts 10:44, 47; 11:15

2. received the gift of the Holy Spirit the Holy Spirit, - Acts 10:45

3. spoke in tongues - Acts 10:46

4. and received the same gift as the apostles, baptism with the Holy Spirit. - Acts 11:15-17

B. The purpose was to prove that God accepts uncircumcised Gentiles on the same basis as Jews . - Acts 10:46-47; 11:15-18; 15:8-9

C. The apostles and Cornelius

1. The baptism of the apostles with the Holy Spirit proved the kingdom had come.

2. The baptism of Cornelius and his household with the Holy Spirit proved Gentiles were accepted into the kingdom.

3. The Holy Spirit led the apostles into all the truth. - John 16:13

4. Cornelius and his household had to hear the preaching of the word. - Acts 10:36, 44, 48; 11:15; 15:7

Conclusion:

A. Baptism with the Holy Spirit is neither needed by nor promised to believers in general.

B. I do not minimize the Holy Spirit, nor do I doubt He is real and alive; I simply magnify the Spirit-revealed Word. - Hebrews 4:12

C. Draw closer to God through His Word, not through some emotional experience unsanctioned by the Lord. - 2 Peter 1:3

Spiritual Gifts

I. Introduction:

- A. The popular intellectual climate of our age is sometimes called “postmodernist.”
 - 1. The age of “modernism” subjected all beliefs to the standard of human reason.
 - 2. In reaction to this, “postmodernism” appeals to feelings and emotion.
- B. Thus, in the religious world, “charismatic” claims are all the rage.
- C. Their attempt to justify their practices biblically is the claim that the spiritual gifts of the first century are for all believers until the end of time.
- D. Thus, they are simply a watered down, more respectable version of Pentecostalism.
- E. Does biblical teaching on spiritual gifts support modern charismatic claims?

I. What are the issues?

A. NOT

- 1. honesty of charismatics
- 2. reality of some experience - cf. Jacob’s belief Joseph was dead in Genesis 37.
 - a. There was a real experience involved, but Jacob misinterpreted it.
 - b. Jacob sincerely, deeply believed Joseph was dead, but he was sincerely mistaken.
- 3. existence of miraculous, spiritual gifts in the first century church
- 4. power of God
- 5. unchangeableness of God
- 6. the fact the Holy Spirit is alive and active

B. IS

- 1. Are miraculous, spiritual gifts promised to Christians today?
- 2. Do modern charismatics measure up to the New Testament standard?

II. What were the spiritual gifts?

A. definitions

- 1. “spiritual”: “emanating from the Divine Spirit, or exhibiting its effects a and so its character.... produced by the sole power of God himself without natural instrumentality, supernatural” (Thayer. 532) - cf. 1 Corinthians 12:1,7
 - a. directly from God
 - b. distinct from the written Word
 - c. miraculous
- 2. gifts”: *charisma: a gift of grace; a favor which one receives without any merit of his own.... extraordinary powers, distinguishing certain Christians and enabling them to serve the church of Christ, the reception of which is due to the power of divine grace operating in their souls by the Holy Spirit* (Ibid. 667) - cf. 1 Corinthians 12:4

B. Those so led by the Spirit would speak truth and only truth. - 1 Corinthians 12:2-3; 14:37

C. All the gifts emanated from one Godhead. - 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (Thus, His Word, not feelings, emotions, or experiences, must be the standard by which supposed gifts are measured. - 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17)

- D. There were many manifestations of one Spirit. - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11
1. “word of wisdom”: miraculously imparted understanding of divine will
 2. “word of knowledge”: miraculously imparted knowledge of will
 3. “faith”: miracle working faith, not saving faith - cf. Matthew 17:19-20
 4. “gifts of healings”: miraculous ability to heal diseases and infirmities - Mark 16:17-18; Acts 3:1-10
 5. “working of miracles”: (*dunamis*: divine power) - cf. Mark 16:17-18; Acts 9:36-42; 20:7-12
 6. “prophecy”: speaking for God - cf. Exodus 4:15-16; 7:1-2
 7. “discerning of spirits”: ability to know another’s mind - Acts 5:1-4
 8. “tongues”
 - a. This was the miraculous ability to speak a language foreign to the speaker. - Acts 2:4-11
 - (1) The word “unknown” is an interpolation (added by the translators). - 1 Corinthians 14:2
 - (2) The “tongues of angels” were still languages and were to be interpreted. - 1 Corinthians 13:1; 14:10,28
 - b. Tongues was the least important of the nine spiritual gifts. - 1 Corinthians 12:7-11,28,31
 - c. Why, then, do our “charismatic” friends so ardently seek this gift?
 - (1) One can more easily deceive himself with this. - 1 Corinthians 12:2
 - (2) It is showy. - 1 Corinthians 14:20
 9. “interpretation of tongues” - the miraculous ability to translate a language one could not know by natural means
- III. Upon what basis shall we conduct our inquiry?
- A. The gospel appeals to man’s understanding.
 1. One must understand to come to Christ. - John 6:44-45
 2. The new birth is the result of understanding. - 1 Peter 1:22-25
 - B. Miracles appealed to the understanding. - John 20:30-31; Mark 16:20
 - C. Tongues appealed to the understanding rather than to the emotions.
 1. If the tongue speaker was not understood - 1 Corinthians 14:2,14
 - a. It was unprofitable. - 1 Corinthians 14:6
 - b. It was just so much air. - 1 Corinthians 14:9
 - c. It made the tongue speaker like a barbarian. - 1 Corinthians 14:11
 - d. The hearer could not say, “Amen.” - 1 Corinthians 14:16
 - e. It did not edify. - 1 Corinthians 14:17, cf. verses 12, 26
 - f. Outsiders would think they were insane. - 1 Corinthians 14:23
 2. It was better to speak five understandable words than ten thousand unintelligible ones. - 1 Corinthians 14:19
 - D. Thus our appeal will be to reason from the Scriptures, not to relate emotional experiences or tell about feelings.

IV. Have spiritual gifts fulfilled their purposes?

A. Reveal the Truth

1. Spiritual gifts were to reveal truth. - 1 Corinthians 14:6
2. All truth has been revealed. - John 16:13; Galatians 1:6-9
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of revealing truth.

B. Confirm the Word

1. Spiritual gifts were to confirm the Word. - Mark 16:17-20
2. The Word has been confirmed. - Hebrews 2:1-4
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of confirming the Word.

C. Edify

1. Spiritual gifts were to edify in the absence of the written Word. - 1 Corinthians 14:12-13,26; cf. 13:9
2. The written Word is now completely sufficient to edify us. - Acts 20:32; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
3. Therefore, spiritual gifts have fulfilled their purpose of edifying.

D. Since spiritual gifts have fulfilled all three reasons for which they were given, we should expect that they have ceased.

V. The New Testament reveals when spiritual gifts were to cease. - 1 Corinthians 13:8-13

<p>Charismatic Position “that which is perfect” is Christ</p> <p>1. doesn’t fit the context 2. involves an insurmountable difficulty</p>		
First Century	Present	After Christ Returns
spiritual gifts	spiritual gifts	
faith, hope, love	faith, hope, love	faith - Hebrews 11:1 hope - Romans 8:24-25 love
<p>The Truth “that which is perfect” is the completed revelation</p> <p>1. fits the context 2. involves no scriptural difficulty</p>		
First Century	Present	After Christ Returns
spiritual gifts		
faith, hope, love	faith, hope, love	love

- A. “perfect”: “1) brought to its end, finished 2) wanting nothing necessary to completeness” (**SeedMaster** computer Bible program; quoting **TDNT**) - cf. 1 Thessalonians 3:9-10
 - B. If this speaks of Christ and His return, then faith and hope will continue to abide after His return. - 1 Corinthians 13:13
 - 1. But faith will become sight. - Hebrews 11:1
 - 2. Hope will be realized. - Romans 8:24-25
 - C. The context is of complete revelation. - 1 Corinthians 13:9-12
 - D. Thus, when the revelation was completed, the spiritual gifts ceased.
- VI. Spiritual gifts cannot be imparted today.
- A. Spiritual gifts were imparted by and only by the apostles of Christ. - Acts 8:14-19; 19:1-7; Romans 1:11; 1 Timothy 4:14; 2 Timothy 1:6
 - B. There are no apostles on the earth today. - Acts 1:21-22,25-26; 1 Corinthians 15:8
 - C. Therefore, no one today can impart spiritual gifts.
- VII. God is not the author of lies.
- A. God is the author of truth and only truth. - John 17:17; Titus 1:2
 - B. All those who claim to have spiritual gifts today could not possibly be of the truth.
 - 1. They teach various and conflicting doctrines. - United Pentecostal, Assembly of God, Catholic, Mormon, etc.
 - 2. Yet they all give the same proof: second hand tales of supposed experiences.
 - 3. Why should we believe one and reject the others?
- VIII. Modern charismatics do not measure up to the first century standard.
- A. Where are those who drink poison and pick up deadly serpents? - Mark 16:17-18 (So, their so-called “full gospel” becomes a three-fifths gospel by their own standard.)
 - B. Why do they not raise the dead? - Acts 9:36-42 (If they will raise one; I will raise two. If they will raise two; I will raise the rest of the cemetery. And I don’t claim to be able to work miracles!)
 - C. They have more than one speaking in tongues simultaneously. - 1 Corinthians 14:27, cf. v. 32
 - D. They speak in tongues without interpreters. - 1 Corinthians 14:27-28
 - E. They have women preachers. - 1 Corinthians 14:34-35; 1 Timothy 2:11-12
 - F. Their assemblies are disorderly. - 1 Corinthians 14:33,40
 - G. They use instrumental music in worship. - 1 Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:18-19
 - H. Their assemblies are more for entertainment than for worship and edification. - 1 Corinthians 14:26
- Conclusion:
- A. We have measured the modern charismatic claims by the New Testament standard and have found them lacking. - 1 John 4:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:21
 - B. Spiritual gifts were the scaffolding for the building of the New Testament. Since the building is finished, i.e., the New Testament has been completely revealed, confirmed and recorded, the scaffolding has come down.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

- A. Acts 2:38 is one of the more controversial passages in the Bible.
- B. A less discussed part of its controversial nature is the meaning and application of the phrase “gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- C. What is “the gift of the Holy Spirit”? To whom was it promised?

I. background:

- A. It behooves us to humbly, cautiously and open-mindedly approach the subject. - 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- B. We will use two universally recognized rules of Bible study to arrive at our conclusions: (1) examine the text in its context and (2) notice what other passages say on the subject.

II. What is the context of our text?

- A. The Holy Spirit was miraculously poured out on the apostles.- Acts 2:1-4
- B. They spoke in tongues as the result. - Acts 2:5-11
- C. To explain this miracle, Peter appealed to the prophecy of Joel 2:28-32 pertaining to the promise of the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit, the destruction of the Jewish state and salvation to those who would “call on the name of the Lord.” - Acts 2:12-21
- D. Peter expounded Joel 2:28-32 by informing them who the Lord is upon whom they were to call. - Acts 2:22-36
- E. The audience earnestly inquired what to do. - Acts 2:37
- F. Peter explained how to call on the Lord’s name. - Acts 2:38
- G. What is “the promise” of Acts 2:39?
 - 1. that of the context, that of Peter’s sermon and text, i.e., the miraculous outpouring of the Spirit and salvation by calling on the Lord’s name
 - 2. This is what Peter promised in Acts 2:38.
 - a. “remission of sins” = “Shall be saved”
 - b. “gift of the Holy Spirit” = “I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh”

H. A summary of the context reinforces this conclusion.

- 1. The Holy Spirit was miraculously poured out on the apostles.
 - 2. The audience inquired what this meant.
 - 3. Peter, in explanation, quoted Joel 2:28-32, a prophecy of the miraculous outpouring of the Holy Spirit.
 - 4. Explaining this passage, Peter promised “the gift of the Holy Spirit.”
- I. Would it not be strange for the apostle, in response to a question about the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit and in explanation of a text dealing with the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, with no explanation at all, to promise his audience a non-miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit?

III. Will an examination of other passages confirm our conclusion?

A. The phrase “gift of the Holy Spirit” is only found twice in the New Testament (SeedMaster computer Bible program). - Acts 2:38; Acts 10:45

B. What is the “gift of the Holy Spirit” in Acts 10:44-47?

1. Both Luke and Peter identify it as the reception of the Holy Spirit Himself. - verses 44,47

2. Luke indicates it was miraculous. - verse 46

C. Thus, the “gift of the Holy Spirit” was the miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit.

IV. Does this mean the miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit is for us?

A. Mark 16:15-18 is parallel to Acts 2:38-39, for the latter fulfilled the former.

1. Peter’s sermon in Acts 2:14-36 was in fulfillment of Mark 16:15.

2. The conditional salvation offered in Acts 2:38 fulfilled Mark 16:16.

3. The promise of the Holy Spirit in Acts 2:38-39 fulfilled Mark 16:17-18.

4. Both the promises, Mark 16:17-18 and Acts 2:38-39, although not limited by their immediate contexts, are limited by other passages as to scope, purpose and duration.

5. This does not mean the promise of salvation in either passage is so limited, for no other passages so limit them.

B. Acts 2:16-21 is parallel to Acts 2:38-39, for the latter explained the former. - verses 39

1. The “gift of the Holy Spirit” of Acts 2:38 is the outpouring of the Spirit of Acts 2:17-18.

2. The “remission of sins” of Acts 2:38 is the salvation of Acts 2:21.

3. The promise of the Holy Spirit in both passages, although not limited by their immediate contexts, is limited by other passages as to scope, purpose and duration.

4. This does not mean the promise of salvation in either passage is so limited, for no other passages so limit them.

Conclusion:

A. The “gift of the Holy Spirit” was the miraculous reception of the Holy Spirit.

B. This was a general promise to Christians of the first century comprehensive of the supernatural activities of the Spirit through them.

C. It is not a pledge of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in a nonmiraculous manner for Christians of all centuries.

How the Holy Spirit Saves Sinners

Introduction:

- A. It is common for men to ascribe a direct, supernatural influence by the Holy Spirit in man's salvation.

*God has given us no means by which the conversion of sinners, or the general revival of religion, can be effected, irrespective of the **direct** agency of the Spirit. The gospel itself **will not do it** (J.W. Hayhurst, Baptist preacher, **The Baptist Pulpit**, as quoted by Z.T. Sweeney, **The Spirit and the Word**. 102).*

- B. The Holy Spirit does indeed save sinners. - John 3:5
- C. The question is **how**: (1) direct operation or (2) through the gospel
- D. How does the Holy Spirit save alien sinners?
- I. The Testimony of Jesus - John 6:44-45; Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16; Luke 24:45-48
- II. The Testimony of the Examples in Acts - cf. Mark 16:20; Acts 1:8
 - A. 3000 on Pentecost - Acts 2:37,40-41
 - B. 5000 Jews - Acts 4:4
 - C. Great Company of Priests - Acts 6:7
 - D. Samaritans - Acts 8:12-17
 - E. Ethiopian Eunuch - Acts 8:26,29,35-38
 - F. Saul of Tarsus - Acts 9:3-6; 22:16
 - G. Cornelius - Acts 10:44; 11:13-14,17-18; 15:7-8
 - H. Lydia - Acts 16:14
 - I. Philippian Jailer - Acts 16:29-34
 - J. Bereans - Acts 17:10-12
 - K. Corinthians - Acts 18:8
 - L. Ephesians - Acts 19:5-7
- III. The Testimony of Apostolic Statements
 - A. Paul - Romans 1:16; 10:14-17; 1 Corinthians 4:15; 15:1-2
 - B. James - James 1:18,21
 - C. Peter - 1 Peter 1:22-23; 2 Peter 1:3

Conclusion:

- A. The Holy Spirit saves sinners by the influence of the gospel. - John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:22-23
- B. If you would be saved, you must accept this gospel. - Romans 1:16

The Witness of the Two Spirits

Introduction:

- A. People want to be able to tell whether or not they are saved. - e.g., New York woman who wrote, “How can I be sure I will live with Jesus?”
 - B. There is a way we can know if we are saved. - Romans 8:16-17
 - C. How can we know we are saved?
- I. Are feelings adequate evidence? - Genesis 37; 45:25-28; woman in El Dorado who “wouldn’t trade how I feel inside for a stack of Bibles this high.”
- II. Is the word of God adequate evidence?
- A. God cannot lie. - Numbers 23:19; Titus 1:2
 - B. If God says it, we know it is true. - Romans 3:3-4
 - C. We must walk by faith. - 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
- III. How does the Word of God bear witness to our salvation? - Romans 8:16-17
- A. “bears witness WITH” (not TO): “*bear joint witness*” (Thayer. 596)
 - B. It takes two witnesses to establish a legal fact. - Deuteronomy 19:15; Matthew 18:16
 - C. The Holy Spirit bears witness through the gospel, by telling us how to be saved. - John 6:63; Ephesians 3:1-7
 - D. If your spirit can testify honestly and knowledgeably that you have done what the Word of God says to do to be saved, you have the witness of the two spirits. - 1 John 2:5
- IV. The witness of the two spirits
- A. Am I saved? - Mark 16:16
 - B. Are my sins forgiven? - Acts 2:38
 - C. Am I a child of God? - Galatians 3:26-27
- V. If we have the witness of the two spirits:
- A. We can be confident of our salvation. - Hebrews 6:13-20
 - B. We can have peace and joy. - Philippians 4:7; 1 Peter 1:8-9 (Having peace and joy does not prove we are saved, but knowing we are saved gives us peace and joy.)
- Conclusion:
- A. The eunuch’s salvation brought him great joy. - Acts 8:39
 - B. Do you have the right to such peace and joy?
 - C. Do you have the witness of the two spirits?

The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

A. *It is my conviction that when Jesus left this earth to return to heaven, he requested that another helper be sent who would abide with us through the ages of his absence. That helper came! He is the Holy Spirit.... Let men quibble and dispute about whether the Spirit operates only by citing a passage, or quoting a scripture. I have no time for such debate any longer.... As the Spirit within opens up new insights when I hold the sacred book in my hand and read it, I am drawn ever closer to him who left heaven to become closer to me* (W. Carl Ketcherside, **Mission Messenger** [vol. 23, no. 1. 24,41]).

B. Over the years many faithful brethren have taken the position that the Holy Spirit dwells in the Christian directly, apart from the Word, yet nonmiraculously.

C. It is true that the Holy Spirit dwells in every Christian. - Romans 8:9

D. How does the Holy Spirit dwell in Christians today?

I. Does He dwell **directly, apart from** the Word?

A. The consequences of this position or either Calvinism or Pentecostalism (What can the Holy Spirit do for us, separate from the Word, that would not fall into one of these categories?).

1. Pentecostalism: Every New Testament example of the direct reception of the Spirit was miraculous. - Acts 2:1-4; 8:14-17; 10:44-47; 19:1-6

2. Calvinism (“inner light” or “illumination”)

a. **Westminster Confession of Faith** (Presbyterian): *All those whom God hath predestined unto life, and only those, he is pleased, in his appointed and accepted time, effectually to call, by his word and Spirit, out of that state of sin and death in which they are by nature, to grace and salvation by Jesus Christ; enlightening their minds spiritually and savingly to understand the things of God....*

b. quote from Ketcherside

B. This doctrine contradicts New Testament examples.

1. The Samaritans believed and were baptized, but they had not received the Holy Spirit. - Acts 8:14-17

2. Why did Paul ask the Ephesians if they had received the Holy Spirit, if all disciples receive the direct indwelling of the Holy Spirit? - Acts 19:1-2

II. Does He dwell **through the instrument of the Word**?

A. Dispelling Some Misunderstanding

1. This is not a denial of the **fact** the Holy Spirit dwells in us; it is an explanation of **how**.

2. This is not a denial of the personal interest of God in our lives; it is a partial explanation of **how** He manifests that interest.

3. This is not to say the Spirit and the Word are identical; it is to say the Word is the instrument of the Spirit. - John 6:63

4. This is not a denial of the work of the Holy Spirit; it is an explanation of **how** He works.

B. An Explanation

1. Much of the language of Scripture is figurative. - John 10:9
2. God the Father dwells in (fellowships) the Christian. - Ephesians 2:22; 1 John 4:15; 1:3
3. Christ dwells in (fellowships) the Christian. - Ephesians 3:17; 1 John 2:6; 1:3
4. The Holy Spirit dwells in (fellowships) the Christian. - Ephesians 5:18; 2 Corinthians 13:14

C. Scriptural Proof

1. Major Premise: If a person and an instrument perform the same task, the person is working through the instrument. - e.g., mowing the lawn
2. The Holy Spirit (Person) and the Word (instrument) both dwell in the Christian (same task). - Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16
 - a. Both books were written by Paul (Even their introductions are strikingly similar). - Ephesians 1:1-2; Colossians 1:1-2
 - b. The books have parallel themes.
 - (1) Colossians: Christ, the fullness of God. - Colossians 1:19
 - (2) Ephesians: the church the fullness of Christ. - Ephesians 1:22-23
 - c. Many passages in the two books are parallel and explain each other.
 - d. Ephesians 5:18-19 and Colossians 3:16 are parallel.
 - (1) In Ephesians we are told to let the Spirit dwell in us; in Colossians we are told to let the Word dwell in us.
 - (2) The results are the same; we will sing praises to God.

Conclusion:

- A. The Holy Spirit dwells in (has fellowship with) Christians through the instrument of the Word of God as we walk in the light of that Word. - 1 John 1:7
- B. If we have not the Spirit of God, we are none of His. - Romans 8:9
- C. Does the Holy Spirit dwell in you?

The Spirit and the Word

Introduction:

- A. For many years faithful gospel preachers have fought the idea of “direct operation” of the Holy Spirit, whether of Pentecostal or Calvinistic variety.
- B. Yet, perplexing as it is, a “Holy Spirit movement” has been running amok through the Lord’s church for a generation. - e.g., “I do not believe the Holy Spirit operates only through the word of God in the life of a Christian.” (Jimmy Allen, former head of Bible department, Harding College)
- C. Proposition: The Holy Spirit converts and sanctifies men by the instrument of the Word of God.

I. Definition and Explanation of Proposition

- A. The proposition acknowledges that the Holy Spirit is alive and active and explains **how** He is active in our salvation.
- B. “convert”: “turn to God” - Acts 3:19; 26:20
 - 1. alien sinner
 - 2. erring child of God - James 5:19-20
- C. “sanctify”: make “separate from common condition and use; dedicated, hallowed, pure, righteous, holy” (J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**) - cf. 2 Thessalonians 2:13
- D. The proposition includes everything done **to the heart** of man by the Holy Spirit in human salvation from the time he initially begins to be led to Christ until his spirit wings its flight to paradise.
- E. The proposition affirms the Holy Spirit uses the Word as His instrument to accomplish this work. - 2 Timothy 3:16; 1 Corinthians 2:12-13
 - 1. moral persuasion of the Gospel, not direct power
 - 2. not Spirit equals the Word
 - 3. not Spirit **in** the Word or **with** the Word

II. Proof of Proposition: Syllogism

- A. Major Premise: If a person and an instrument perform the same task, the person is working by the instrument.
- B. Minor Premise: Everything the Holy Spirit (person) does in man’s conversion and sanctification (task), the Word (instrument) does.
 - 1. born of - John 3:5; 1 Peter 1:23
 - 2. makes alive - John 6:63
 - 3. testifies - John 15:26; 5:39
 - 4. reproves - John 16:8; 2 Timothy 4:2
 - 5. comforts - Acts 9:31; 1 Thessalonians 4:18
 - 6. makes elders - Acts 20:28; 2 Timothy 2:2; Titus 1:5
 - 7. frees from sin - Romans 8:2; 6:17-18
 - 8. leads - Romans 8:14; Psalm 119:105
 - 9. bears witness - Romans 8:16; 1 John 2:5
 - 10. gives hope - Romans 15:13,4

11. has power - Romans 15:13; 1:16
12. washes - 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 15:3
13. sanctifies - 1 Corinthians 6:11; John 17:17
14. justifies - 1 Corinthians 6:11; Galatians 2:16
15. gives faith - 1 Corinthians 12:3; Romans 10:17
16. changes - 2 Corinthians 3:18; 4:3-5
17. walk in - Galatians 5:16,25; 2 John 6
18. produces fruit - Galatians 5:22-23; Colossians 1:5-6
19. strengthens - Ephesians 3:16; Acts 20:32
20. gives understanding - Ephesians 3:16-19, 3-5
21. dwells in - Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16
22. fellowships - Philippians 2:1; 1 John 1:7,3
23. speaks - 1 Timothy 4:1,6
24. saves - Titus 3:5; James 1:21
25. calls - Revelation 22:17; 2 Thessalonians 2:14

C. Conclusion: Therefore, the Holy Spirit converts and sanctifies man by the instrument of the Word of God.

Conclusion:

- A. The Holy Spirit works on the heart through and only through the Word of God in the conversion and sanctification of both alien sinners and Christians. - John 6:63
- B. The Scriptures supply everything we need to successfully live for Christ. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- C. Will you make them your rule of life and guide to heaven? - James 1:21

Sins Against the Holy Spirit

Introduction:

- A. People often ask, “What is the unpardonable sin?” and “What is the sin against the Holy Ghost?”
 - B. Since the Holy Spirit is a Person in the Godhead, all sin is ultimately against Him. - Psalm 51:4
 - C. But several sins are specifically noted as offending the Holy Spirit. - e.g., Matthew 12:31-32
 - D. What are the sins against the Holy Spirit?
- I. Blasphemy - Matthew 12:31-32
- A. God is willing to forgive even the vilest of sinners. - Isaiah 1:18; 1 Timothy 1:15-16
 - B. What is blasphemy against the Holy Spirit?
 1. The Lord had worked a miracle to sustain His claims. - Matthew 12:22
 2. The people believed, but the Pharisees, while admitting the miracle, attributed it to Satan. - Matthew 12:23-24
 3. The Master devastatingly demonstrated the deception of this denunciation. - Matthew 12:25-30
 4. In reality, Jesus performed miracles by the power of the Holy Spirit. - Matthew 12:28; cf. Luke 4:14
 5. In attributing the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan, the Pharisees blasphemed the Spirit of God (“blasphemy”: “impious and reproachful speech injurious of the divine majesty” [J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 102). - Matthew 12:31
 - C. How is it, then, that blasphemy against the Holy Spirit shall not be forgiven?
 1. Jesus performed miracles by the Holy Spirit for the specific purpose of demonstrating He is the Son of God. - John 20:30-31
 2. One whose heart was so hardened that he would attribute the miracles of the Holy Spirit to Satan could never be led to believe. - cf. John 12:37-40
 3. It was not a matter of unwillingness to forgive on God’s part but of unwillingness to believe on the Pharisees’ part.
 - D. Can we blaspheme the Holy Spirit?
 1. Since the miraculous manifestations of the Holy Spirit have ceased, we cannot commit this specific sin.
 2. However, we can become so hardened of heart we are unreachable.
 - a. alien sinners - Matthew 13:13-15
 - b. erring Christians - Hebrews 3:7-13; 6:4-6
- II. Resist
- A. “resist”: “to fall against, to rush against, to stand firm against” (Jimmy Tuten, **The Holy Spirit, His Person and Work**)
 1. The Jewish nation didn’t just refuse to hear the prophets; they killed them!
 2. The council didn’t just refuse to hear Christ; they killed Him!
 3. This very same council both rejected and killed Stephen! - Acts 7:54-60
 - B. When one closes his ears to the Word of God and persecutes the preacher, he is fighting, not just a man, but God. - cf. Luke 10:16

III. Tempt - Acts 5:9

- A. When Ananias and Sapphira lied to the apostle Peter, they lied to the Holy Spirit Who empowered Peter to know their thoughts. - Acts 5:1-4
- B. How did they tempt the Holy Spirit?
 - 1. not in the sense of enticing Him to sin - James 1:13
 - 2. rather in the sense of testing (Thayer. 498) His power to know their hearts and actions and His determination to punish sin.
 - 3. They lost in the test. - Acts 5:5-11
- C. We so tempt God by sin and unbelieving disobedience. - Hebrews 3:7-9
- D. We will lose in the test. - Hebrews 3:10-11

IV. Grieve - Ephesians 4:30

- A. Godly parents are terribly grieved when their children sin.
- B. Our Father is saddened when we leave Him. - Hebrews 3:10-13
- C. The Ephesians especially grieved the Holy Spirit because they were “sealed” by Him through the spiritual gifts. - Ephesians 1:13-14; Acts 19:1-7; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; 1 John 2:20,27
“sealed”: (1) *to set a seal upon, mark with a seal, to seal 1c1) to set a mark upon by the impress of a seal or a stamp.... 1d) in order to prove, confirm, or attest a thing.... 1d1) to confirm authenticate, place beyond doubt (SeedMaster computer Bible program, quoting **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**)*

V. Quench - 1 Thessalonians 5:19

- A. First century Christians could “quench (“suppress, stifle” [Thayer. 572]) the Holy Spirit by
 - 1. discouraging the use of spiritual gifts - 1 Thessalonians 5:20
 - 2. or failing to use spiritual gifts they had. - 2 Timothy 1:6
- B. We are guilty of a parallel sin if we
 - 1. discourage others in their service to God - 1 Samuel 8:1-7
 - 2. or fail to use our opportunities and abilities in service to Christ. - Matthew 25:14-30

VI. Do Despite - Hebrews 10:28-29

- A. “do despite”
 - 1. “insulted” (**New King James Version, New American Standard Bible**)
 - 2. “insult, act with insolence” (W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 1:301)
 - 3. “treat shamefully” (Thayer. 633)
- B. One insults the Holy Spirit by turning back from following His Word and intentionally living in sin. - Hebrews 10:26
- C. The punishment for this is terrible indeed! - Hebrews 10:27-31

Conclusion:

- A. We should be on guard lest we:
 - 1. reject the testimony of the Spirit in unbelief,
 - 2. resist the Spirit in refusing the Gospel,
 - 3. tempt the Spirit by our sin and disobedience,
 - 4. grieve the Spirit by sin,
 - 5. quench the Spirit by discouraging others in their service to God or failing to work ourselves,
 - 6. or do despite to the Holy Spirit by turning away from His Word to a life of sin.
- B. The Spirit invites all to be saved. - Revelation 22:17

The Fruit of the Spirit

Introduction:

- A. To be saved we must be led by the Spirit. - Romans 8:14
- B. If we are led by the Spirit we will produce the fruit of the Spirit. - Galatians 5:22-25
- C. What is the fruit of the Spirit?

I. Love: active good will - Matthew 22:35-40

- A. We must love God. - 1 John 5:3
- B. We must love the brethren. - 1 John 4:20; 3:16-18
- C. We must love all people. - Matthew 5:43-48

II. Joy: delight, gladness

- A. Sin brings temporary pleasure. - Hebrews 11:24-26
- B. Salvation in Christ brings eternal joy. - 1 Peter 1:3-9

III. Peace: harmony, concord

- A. Through Christ we are reconciled to God, so we have peace with Him. - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Romans 5:1
- B. This gives us peace of mind. - Philippians 4:6-7
- C. We should strive for peace in the church. - Ephesians 4:1-3
- D. We should try to live at peace with all people. - Romans 12:18

IV. Longsuffering: patient endurance under continual provocation - 1 Peter 2:19-24

V. Gentleness: kindness - Ephesians 4:32; Matthew 7:12; Gal. 6:1-2,9-10

VI. Goodness: benevolent, generous - Romans 5:7; Luke 6:38

VII. Faith: faithfulness, trustworthiness, reliability, the character of one who can be relied on

- A. toward God - Hebrews 10:38-39; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2
- B. toward men - Titus 2:10

VIII. Meekness: the quality of a trained animal: submissive to his master, gentle to others, inner equilibrium

- A. submissive to God - James 1:21
- B. gentle to others - Titus 3:2
- C. inner equilibrium - Numbers 12:3

IX. Temperance: self-control, the quality of one who masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites. - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Conclusion:

- A. By incorporating these qualities into life, we will follow the law of God and all just laws of men. - Galatians 5:23
- B. Are you producing the fruit of the Spirit?

The Providence of God

Introduction:

- A. Perhaps no subject is more difficult or misunderstood than the providence of God.
- B. There are two extremes on this subject.
 - 1. those who would leave God out of His creation: deists, theistic evolutionists
 - 2. those who see miracles in every event of life: Pentecostals, charismatics, Calvinists, guardian angels
- C. How does God manifest His providence?

I. What is the providence of God?

- A. “providence” (“*pronoia*”) - Acts 24:2
 - 1. “*forethought, provident care to make provision for a thing*” (Thayer. 540).
 - a. noun - Romans 13:14
 - b. verb - Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Timothy 5:8
 - 2. The English word “providence” is from the Latin “*providentia*” and refers to foresight (McClintock & Strong. 707).
 - 3. etymology: “pro” (before), “vidence” (“*video*” - “to see”); i.e., “to see before” (Hailey, **Prayer and Providence**)
- B. The providence of God is the forethought, rule, and care that God exercises in all things. - Acts 17:22-31
- C. The providence of God includes but is not limited to miracles.
 - 1. A miracle is the direct, supernatural intervention of God into the natural realm. - Acts 2:22; Hebrews 2:3-4; e.g., John 2:1-11
 - 2. These stand in contrast with false signs. - 2 Thessalonians 2:8-9; Acts 8:5-13; Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Jeremiah 10:1-2
 - 3. God’s providence is also manifested through His law.
 - a. natural - Acts 14:17 (foresees and provides for all needs of physical life)
 - b. spiritual - Ephesians 1:3 (foresees and provides for all needs of spiritual life)

II. God’s Providence in Nature

- A. He created the universe. - Genesis 1:1; Exodus 20:11
- B. He maintains the universe (by His natural law). - Hebrews 1:1-3
- C. He provides for man and beast (through His natural law). - Psalm 104:10-30; Matthew 6:26,28-30

III. God’s Providence in the Affairs of Men

- A. God rules all men and nations. - Daniel 4, esp. vv. 1-3,17,34-37; Habakkuk 2:20; Psalm 11:4
- B. This rule is now exercised through His Son. - Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:20-23; Revelation 19:15; 1 Corinthians 15:24-28

- C. He uses men and nations to accomplish His will without their knowledge and without violating their free will.
1. men - Exodus 9:13-16
 - a. God hardened Pharaoh's heart (by sending commands Pharaoh was too proud to obey). - Exodus 9:12; cf. 3:18-19
 - b. Pharaoh hardened his own heart. - Exodus 8:15
 2. nations - Habakkuk 1:5-7
- D. His rule is righteous. - Psalm 97:1-2
- E. His rule is for the purpose of saving His people.
1. The just shall live by faith. - Habakkuk 2:4; Romans 1:16-17
 2. Evil is self-destructive. - Habakkuk 2:4,8
 3. God's ultimate end is the salvation of His faithful remnant. - Habakkuk 3:13; Ephesians 1:10-12
- F. We should always trust Him to do right. - Habakkuk 3:17-19; Genesis 18:23-33
- IV. God's Providence in the Church
- A. He planned the church from all eternity. - Ephesians 3:8-12
1. salvation to be in Christ - Ephesians 1:3-4
 2. those so saved to be holy - Ephesians 1:4
 3. this to the glory of God - Ephesians 1:5-6
- B. All history is subservient to God's purpose of redeeming His people. - Romans 8:28-30; Ephesians 1:7-12; Galatians 4:4
- C. God provides His church everything we need for our salvation. - Romans 8:31-39
1. He sent His Son to die for us. - John 3:16-17
 2. He gave ample evidence to lead us to believe in Him. - John 20:30-31
 3. The Holy Spirit revealed and confirmed the Word for our guidance. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Hebrews 2:1-4
 4. He blesses us with all spiritual blessings. - Ephesians 1:3
 5. He answers our prayers. - 1 Peter 3:12; 1 John 5:14-15; Romans 8:26-27
 6. He will not allow Satan to tempt us beyond our ability to bear. - 1 Corinthians 10:13
 7. He disciplines us. - Hebrews 12:3-11
 8. His angels minister in our behalf. - Matthew 18:10; Hebrews 1:13-14
 9. He provides our material necessities. - Matthew 6:31-33
- D. To Him be glory forever! - Romans 11:33-36
- Conclusion:
- A. Truly, we must confess, "God's hand is in it all."
 - B. "O, to have the hand of God to lead you! What hand can guide so safely? What eye can choose and direct your path so well?" (McGarvey)
 - C. Will you not submit to the will of Him whose will governs the universe and shall determine your eternal destiny?

Prayer & Providence

Introduction:

- A. examples of faith in prayer and providence
 - 1. mother's prayer for sick child
 - 2. preacher's prayer for wisdom
 - B. How does the providence of God relate to prayer?
 - I. The practice of prayer is based on the providence of God.
 - A. God does hear His children's prayers. - 1 Peter 3:12
 - B. Therefore, prayer does avail. - James 5:13-18
 - II. Acceptable prayer is pleading the promises of God.
 - A. We must ask according to His will. - 1 John 5:14-15
 - B. The only way we can know His will is through His Word. - Deuteronomy 29:29
 - C. We should pray for:
 - 1. material needs - Matthew 6:11; James 4:3
 - 2. spiritual needs - Matthew 6:12-13
 - 3. whatever troubles us - Philippians 4:6-7
 - 4. the needs of others - 1 Timothy 2:1
 - D. We must not pray for God to work a miracle. - 1 Corinthians 13:10
 - E. When we are not sure what God's will is, we should pray for what seems right and submit to His will. - Hebrews 5:7; Matthew 26:36-45; Luke 22:43-44
 - F. Trust Him to give what is best for us spiritually. - Matthew 7:7-11
 - III. Prayer does not eliminate personal responsibility.
 - A. material needs - 2 Thessalonians 3:10
 - B. spiritual needs - Acts 8:22
 - IV. Our prayer life is a critical measure of our faith. - Luke 18:1-8
- ### Conclusion:
- A. Prayer is the refuge of the Christian. - 1 Peter 5:6-7
 - B. Therefore, pray. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

What The Bible Can Mean To You

Introduction:

- A. A daddy tried to show off to the preacher visiting in his home by asking his little boy to get “the book we all know and love.” The little boy brought out “TV Guide.”
- B. The Bible should be the “the book we all know and love.”- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- C. What can the Bible mean to you.?

I. Subject: All Scripture (“graphe”: “writing” - 51 occurrences)

- A. Old Testament (49) - 2 Timothy 3:14-15
- B. New Testament (1) - 2 Peter 3:16
- C. the whole Bible (1) - text

II. Source: Inspiration of God - cf. Psalm 33:6

III. Use

- A. Doctrine: “teaching” - 2 John 9
- B. Reproof: “conviction ... for convicting one of his sinfulness” (Thayer. 202) - 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Hebrews 4:12
- C. Correction: “lit., a restoration to an upright or right state... referring to an improvement of life and character" (Vine. 1:241) - Acts 26:16-18; Galatians 6:1
- D. Instruction in Righteousness
 - 1. instruction: “1. the whole training and education of children.... 2. whatever in adults also cultivates the soul, esp. by correcting mistakes and curbing the passions; hence a. instruction which aims at the increase of virtue” (Thayer, p. 473). - Ephesians 6:4
 - 2. righteousness: “the character or quality of being right or just.... conformity to the will of God” (Vine. 3:298-9) - Ephesians 4:24

IV. Purpose

- A. Perfect: “fitted, complete” (Vine, I, 220) - James 1:4
- B. Thoroughly Furnished unto All Good Works - Colossians 3:17; 2 Peter 1:8

Conclusion:

- A. Thus equipped, heaven will be our eternal home. - 2 Peter 1:10-11
- B. What a blessed book, the Bible!

Like a Star of the morning in its beauty,

Like a Sun is the Bible to my soul,

Shining clear on the way of love and duty,

As I hasten on my journey to the goal (H.B. Hartzler, “My Precious Bible”).

- C. Make it your rule of life and guide to heaven.

Bible Study

Introduction:

- A. In order to live, a child must grow.
 - B. In order for a child of God to live, he also must grow. - Hebrews 5:12-14
 - C. How can we grow in our knowledge of the Bible?
 - I. We must recognize the importance of Bible study. - 1 Peter 2:2
 - A. It is our only way of knowing God's will. - 1 Corinthians 2:11-13; Hebrews 1:1-2; John 16:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-6
 - B. It is the only way to be saved. - Romans 1:16; James 1:21
 - C. It is the only way to avoid sin. - Psalm 119:11
 - D. It is the only way to avoid apostasy. - Acts 20:29-31; 1 Corinthians 11:19; Ephesians 4:13-14
 - E. It is the only way to become complete Christians. - Ephesians 4:15-16; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - F. We must teach it to our children. - Ephesians 6:4
 - G. It is the basis of our faith and hope. - Romans 10:17; 15:4
 - II. We must have a regular program of Bible study. - 2 Timothy 2:15
 - A. Learn from sermons. - Hebrews 10:24-25; Acts 17:10-12
 - 1. both Sunday morning and Sunday night
 - 2. gospel meetings
 - B. Learn from meditation. - Psalm 119:97,99
 - 1. Bible classes and preparation
 - 2. bulletin
 - 3. gospel papers
 - 4. tapes
 - 5. daily Bible reading
 - 6. family devotionals
- Conclusion:
- A. If we fail to study, we will be destroyed. - Hosea 4:6
 - B. If we learn the word, we will be complete Christians. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - C. Therefore, let us heed the command. - 2 Timothy 2:15

God's All-Sufficient Plan

Introduction:

- A. No man or group of men have the wisdom to devise a plan that is all-sufficient for all time. - e.g., U.S. Constitution
- B. But God does have the wisdom to do so and has done so. - Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:25
- C. The purpose of this lesson is to demonstrate and apply the all-sufficiency of God's plan for men.
- I. "All-sufficiency" in relationship to God's plans means that the divine plans are completely able to accomplish what they are designed to do without human alteration. - Isaiah 55:8-11
- II. The All-Sufficiency of God's plans is manifested in:
 - A. God: All-Sufficient Creator - Genesis 1:31; Acts 14:15-17; 2 Corinthians 9:6-11 (no evolution needed)
 - B. Christ: All-Sufficient Savior - Colossians 2:6-10; Hebrews 7:25; 2 Corinthians 11:4 (no other savior needed)
 - C. The Holy Spirit: All-Sufficient Revelator - John 16:13; 2 Corinthians 11:4 (no new revelations needed)
 - D. The Bible: All-Sufficient Revelation - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; Revelation 22:18-19 ("It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction." - **Broadman Church Manual**. 39; no human creeds needed)
 - E. The Gospel: All-Sufficient Means of Salvation - Romans 1:16; Galatians 1:6-9 (no social gospel gimmicks needed)
 - F. The Church of Christ: All-Sufficient Relationship - Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13 (no denomination needed)
 - G. The Local Congregation: All-Sufficient Organization - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-4 (no church supported organizations needed)
 - 1. All-sufficient to evangelize. - Philippians 4:15-16; Mark 16:15-16; Colossians 1:6,23
 - 2. All-sufficient to edify. - Ephesians 4:12-16
 - 3. All-sufficient to relieve its own needy. - Acts 6:1-6

Conclusion:

- A. I cannot believe in the all-sufficiency of the U.S. Constitution and at the same time demand it be altered or abolished.
- B. Likewise, I cannot both believe in the all-sufficiency of God and things divine and at the same time substitute things of human origin for them.
- C. Will you let Christ the all-sufficient Savior save you?

Justification

Introduction:

A. The very purpose of the gospel is to enable us to be justified before God. - Romans 3:20-31

B. How can we be justified before God?

I. The System of Justification

A. not the law; not its purpose - Romans 3:20; Galatians 3:10

B. the faith of Christ - Romans 3:21-22; cf. 10:8,16-17

II. The Scope of Justification by Faith

A. for all - Romans 3:22; cf. 2:11

B. because all need it - Romans 3:23

III. The Basis of Justification

A. by grace - Romans 3:24

B. through redemption in Christ - Romans 3:24-25

IV. The Means of Justification

A. faith - Romans 3:25; 5:9-10

B. the obedience of faith - Romans 1:5; 16:26; cf. 6:3-4

V. The Results of Justification

A. God is shown to be righteous. - Romans 3:26

B. There is no grounds for boasting. - Romans 3:27-28; Luke 17:10

C. God is shown to be the God of all. - Romans 3:29-30

D. The purpose of the law is fulfilled. - Romans 3:31; 10:4

Conclusion:

A. The judgment of Christ will be just. - John 5:30

B. Will you be justified before Him on that great day? - John 5:28-29

Sanctification

Introduction:

- A. People often excuse themselves when they sin by claiming, “I’m no saint.” Well, I am, and you had better be!
 - B. Our salvation depends on our sanctification. - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
 - C. What does the Bible teach about our sanctification?
- I. What is “sanctification”?
- A. Primarily, to “sanctify” is “to separate from the world and consecrate to God” (**International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**. 4:2682). - cf. Genesis 38:21-22; Hosea 4:14
 - 1. Old Testament
 - a. Israel - Exodus 19:3-6,14
 - b. the priests - Exodus 28:41
 - c. the temple - 2 Chronicles 7:1-2,16
 - 2. New Testament: the church - Ephesians 5:25-26; 1 Peter 2:5,9; Ephesians 2:21-22
 - B. Secondly, “sanctification” is “the course of life befitting those so separated” (W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 3:317).
 - 1. All Christians are consecrated to God. - 1 Corinthians 1:2
 - 2. But if we belong to Him, our lives must reflect His character. - 1 Peter 1:15-16
- II. How are we sanctified?
- A. God’s Part
 - 1. God the Father - Jude 1; Ephesians 1:4
 - 2. Christ - 1 Corinthians 1:30; Hebrews 10:10; 13:12
 - 3. Holy Spirit - 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14
 - B. our part
 - 1. belief of the truth - Ibid
 - 2. washing of water - Ephesians 5:25-27
 - 3. holy lives - Romans 12:1-2; 2 Timothy 2:19-22
- III. What are the results of sanctification?
- A. salvation - 2 Thessalonians 2:13
 - B. an inheritance - Acts 20:32; Romans 6:22
- Conclusion:
- A. Without sanctification we cannot see God. - Hebrews 12:14
 - B. Are you sanctified?
 - 1. Have you believed and been baptized?
 - 2. Are you living a holy life?

Amazing Grace

(Part 1)

Introduction:

- A. The Ephesians had been dead in sin. - Ephesians 2:1-3
 - B. They had been made alive. - Ephesians 2:4-7
 - C. It was by grace through faith. - Ephesians 2:8-10
 - D. How may God's grace save you?
- I. What is "grace"?
- A. "good-will, lovingkindness, favor" (J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 666). - cf. Luke 2:52
 - B. "kindness which bestows upon another what he has not deserved" (Ibid) - Romans 4:4
 - C. implies:
 - 1. need on part of recipient - Romans 5:6; 3:23; 6:23
 - 2. ability of one who supplies grace to meet need - Hebrews 7:25
 - 3. recipient undeserving - Romans 5:7-8
 - 4. always of God toward man. - Psalm 50:12
 - 5. example - Luke 15:11-24
 - D. application to salvation
 - 1. availability of salvation - Titus 2:11-12
 - 2. relationship with God in Christ - Romans 5:1-2; 3:24; 1 John 1:9 - 2:1
- II. Is salvation wholly of grace?
- A. If so, man has no part in his own salvation. - Acts 2:40
 - B. If man has no part in his own salvation, then either:
 - 1. unconditional election or - Titus 2:11-12
 - 2. universalism - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9
- III. Does the fact salvation is a gift eliminate all conditions? - Ephesians 2:8; cf. Acts 2:38; Joshua 6:2; Give a dollar bill to a child who will come forward. Was this a matter of grace or debt?
- #### Conclusion:
- A. God's grace was manifested in an act. - John 3:16-17
 - B. Our faith must be manifested in an act. - Galatians 3:26-27
 - C. Will you act by faith? - Acts 22:16

Amazing Grace

(Part 2)

Introduction:

- A. Charges of “perfectionism” and “legalism” are being hurled.
 - B. We certainly are saved by grace. - Romans 3:24
 - C. But we dare not presume on the grace of God. - Jude 4
 - D. What are the divine conditions of grace?
- I. Does grace eliminate all works of man as conditions of pardon? - Ephesians 2:9
- A. If so, faith is not a condition of pardon. - John 6:28-29; Ephesians 2:8
 - B. “Boastful” works are eliminated. - Ephesians 2:9
 - 1. works of the law - Romans 3:27-28; Galatians 3:10
 - 2. works of one’s own design - Romans 10:1-3
 - C. Works of faith are not eliminated. - Galatians 5:6; James 2:24
- II. Does grace mean God does not demand we do all His will?
- A. If so, which part of His will is nonessential? - cf. Matthew 23:23
 - B. Once we sin even once, we will always, throughout all eternity, need God’s grace. - Romans 6:23; 3:23
 - C. No amount of works will ever earn salvation for the sinner. - Luke 17:10
 - D. God demands we obey all his will. - Matthew 28:20
- III. Does grace mean God will not charge us with the guilt of our sins?
- A. NO! - Genesis 3; 2 Samuel 6:1-7; Hebrews 2:1-3; James 2:10
 - B. His grace has provided a basis of pardon. - Romans 3:24
 - C. His grace has revealed a means of pardon. - Romans 3:25
 - 1. for alien - Romans 6:3-4
 - 2. for erring child of God - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:7-9; James 5:16
- Conclusion:
- A. We rejoice that God in His grace has made full salvation possible to the vilest of sinners. - 1 Timothy 1:15-16
 - B. But we dare not presume on the grace of God by offering salvation to the sinner in his sins.
 - C. If you are guilty, comply with the terms of pardon, and by His grace He will save you.

Grace and Works

Introduction:

- A. Pat said she would like to hear me preach on salvation by grace.
- B. I believe God's elect are justified by His grace. - Romans 11:1-6
- C. What is the relationship between grace and works in the justification of God's elect?

I. Grace

- A. Salvation by grace means we do not earn or deserve justification. - Romans 4:4
 - 1. We all deserve death - Romans 3:23; 6:23
 - 2. Salvation is a free gift. - Romans 6:23
- B. God's grace is according to His election. - Romans 11:5 ("election": "the act of picking out, choosing" (Strong))
- C. God's choosing is without partiality. - Romans 2:11
 - 1. He loves all. - John 3:16 (Pat said she was troubled when she learned God didn't love her parents!)
 - 2. His will is that all be saved. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
 - 3. His saving grace is for all. - Titus 2:11-14
- D. God elected that salvation would be to all who come to Christ by faith. - Romans 1:16-17; 5:1-2
 - 1. Faith comes by hearing the Word. - Romans 10:17
 - 2. Saving faith is obedient faith. - Romans 1:5

II. Works

- A. Justification cannot be both by works and grace. - Romans 11:6
- B. But if works have nothing to do with our justification:
 - 1. How will God judge us according to our works? - Romans 2:5-11
 - 2. How are we justified by faith? - John 6:28-29
- C. The works that will not justify are those of the law. - Romans 3:20,27-28; cf. Galatians 3:10-11,16-17
 - 1. Justification by the works of the law demanded flawless, sinless obedience. - Romans 10:5
 - 2. This is because the law had no sacrifice that would take away sin. - Hebrews 10:4
 - 3. We won't be justified this way. - Romans 3:20,23
- D. But the obedience of faith does not nullify grace. - Galatians 5:6; Joshua 6
- E. To be justified in Christ by obedient faith we must.
 - 1. Hear the Gospel. - Romans 1:16-17; 10:17
 - 2. Believe. - Romans 10:8-10
 - 3. Repent. - Romans 2:5
 - 4. Confess - Romans 10:8-10
 - 5. Be Baptized - Romans 6:3-4; 5:9-10
 - 6. Live a Transformed Life. - Romans 12:1-2

Conclusion:

- A. Offer a dollar bill to any child who will come get one. They had to do something (work) to get the money, but it was a free gift by my grace. It was not earned.
- B. We are justified freely by His grace, but we must come to Him in obedient faith.

Behold, A Sower Went Forth to Sow

Text: Matthew 13:1-23

Introduction:

- A. Why is it that people of about equal intelligence, knowledge and apparent sincerity so often see the Bible entirely differently?
- B. This parable of the Master answers this very vital and interesting question.- Matthew 13:9-11,18
- C. Why do some understand the gospel, whereas others fail to do so?

I. background- Matthew 13:1-3

II. the parable- Matthew 13:3-9; cf. Mark 4:13

III. Why did Jesus speak in parables? - Matthew 13:10-13

- A. Why did some not understand?
 - 1. not because the mystery is incomprehensible - Ephesians 3:1-4
 - 2. not because of lack of intelligence- John 3:1,5,9,10
 - 3. not because of need of direct operation of Holy Spirit - 1 Peter 1:22-23
 - 4. because of the wrong attitude - Matthew 13:14-15
- B. In contrast, the disciples were blessed because they were willing to hear. - Matthew 13:16-17
- C. The key is attitude. - Proverbs 4:23

IV. What is the lesson of the parable? - Luke 8:9; Matthew 13:18-23

- A. The seed is the word of God.- Luke 8:11
 - 1. The seed has life within to produce fruit. - John 6:63
 - 2. That power is undiminished with time. - 1 Peter 1:24-25; Seed from King Tut's tomb bore fruit though buried for thousands of years.
 - 3. The seed has the same power in each case, but the soil will determine the yield.- Romans 1:16
- B. The sower is the preacher. - Mark 4:14; Romans 10:14-17
- C. Four soils are four hearts.
 - 1. The wayside soil does not understand the word. - Luke 8:12
 - 2. The stony ground soil has no root. - Luke 8:13
 - 3. The thorny ground is choked with cares, riches and pleasures.- Luke 8:14
 - 4. The good ground brings forth fruit with patience.- Luke 8:15

Conclusion:

- A. The answer is: Some have the right attitude and some do not.
- B. The lesson of the parable is both plain and vital: **Your Attitude Toward The Word Of God Will Determine The Destiny Of Your Soul.**
- C. Take heed therefore how ye hear. - Luke 8:18

Be Doers of the Word

Introduction:

- A. Have you ever looked at your face in the mirror and wished you could forget what you saw?
 - B. This is how many people treat the word of God. - James 1:22-25
 - C. What should we do with the word of God?
 - I. We must hear it. - James 1:18-20
 - A. Hearing the Word is essential. - James 1:18-21
 - B. But it is not enough. - Romans 2:13
 - II. Know it.
 - A. Knowing God's Word is essential. - John 6:44-45
 - B. But it is not enough. - Romans 2:17-23
 - III. Believe it.
 - A. Faith is essential. - Romans 5:1-2
 - B. But faith alone is not enough. - James 2:24
 - IV. We must **DO** God's Word. - James 1:22-25
 - A. One who hears the word but does not do it and thinks he is saved is self-deceived. - James 1:22
 - B. He is like a man who looks at his unwashed face in the mirror, turns away forgetting what he has seen, and does nothing about it. - James 1:23-24
 - 1. God's word shows us what we are like and how we need to change. - Hebrews 4:12
 - 2. We must use the mirror of God's word to bring our lives into conformity to Christ. - 2 Corinthians 3:18
- Conclusion:
- A. To be blessed we must be doers of the Word.
 - B. Are you a forgetful hearer or a doer that works?

Two Builders

Introduction:

- A. "The Wise Man and the Foolish Man" is a song most children love.
- B. But there is a vital lesson here for every adult. - Matthew 7:23-27
- C. What is the lesson of the Parable of the Two Builders?
 - I. The subject of the parable is entrance into the kingdom of heaven. - Matthew 7:21
 - II. The rock is the teaching of Christ. - Matthew 7:24
 - A. No house is more secure than its foundation. - e.g., Skyscrapers in Houston, Texas must have very deep foundations, because they are built on clay. Those in Manhattan are built on bed rock, and the foundation doesn't have to be as deep.
 - B. The doctrine of Christ is the only lasting foundation.
 - C. Christ is the foundation we must build upon. - 1 Corinthians 3:11
 - D. But we cannot accept Christ without accepting His Word. - John 12:48
 - E. His Word is an everlasting foundation. - Matthew 24:35; 1 Peter 1:24-25
 - III. The wise man both hears and obeys the Word of Christ. - Matthew 7:24
 - A. The fear of the lord is the beginning of wisdom. - Psalm 111:10
 - B. This wisdom is proven by obedience. - Ibid
 - C. This wisdom is demonstrated by preparation for the future. - Matthew 16:26-27
 - IV. The foolish hears but does not obey the Word of Christ. - Matthew 7:26
 - A. He was foolish, not because his house was not well built, but because he built on the wrong foundation. - e.g., Acts 10:1-2,22; 11:13-14
 - B. Any foundation other than the Word of Christ is sand.
 - 1. faith only - Matthew 7:21
 - 2. good works of human origin - Matthew 7:22-23
 - V. The storm is the judgment. - Matthew 7:22-23
 - A. For the wise it will be the greatest triumph. - Matthew 7:25; 25:34,46
 - B. For the foolish it will be the most horrible defeat. - Matthew 7:27; 25:41,46

Conclusion:

- A. The lesson of the Parable of the Two Builders is that one must obey the commands of Christ to withstand the judgment. - Matthew 7:21
- B. Have you built securely upon that sure foundation?
- C. Are you ready for that great day when the foundation of your life will be tried?

You Must Be Born Again

Introduction:

- A. A young woman would not study with me if I was not a “born again Christian.”
- B. Read Jesus’ discussion with Nicodemus on the new birth. - John 3:1-10
- C. We can and should understand the new birth. - John 3:9-10
- D. To be saved, we must be born again. - John 3:3,5,7
- E. What are the method and nature of the new birth?

I. Background

- A. Nicodemus - John 3:1-2
 - 1. Pharisee: smug, self-righteous?
 - 2. ruler of Jews
 - a. looking for material kingdom
 - b. looking for honored citizenship by virtue of Abrahamic descent and self-righteousness
 - 3. His confession did not go far enough, for Jesus is more than a teacher from God. - John 8:24,58
- B. Jesus’ reply arrested his attention and pointed him to the nature of the kingdom and the requirements for citizenship in it. - John 3:3
- C. Nicodemus posed two questions, and Jesus answered them in order. - John 3:4

II. How (Method) of New Birth - John 3:5 (one new birth both of water and Spirit)

- A. What is the part of the Spirit? - Romans 8:14; 1 Peter 1:22-23; James 1:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15; John 1:12-13; 1 Corinthians 12:13
- B. What is the part of water?
 - 1. Is this figurative water? - cf. John 7:38-39
 - a. In John 7 Jesus identifies the water as figurative; not so in John 3.
 - b. Substitute the word “spirit” for “water” in John 3:5 and see if it makes sense.
 - 2. Does “and” mean “even”? - Name one standard translation that so renders it.
 - 3. Does this refer to physical birth? - cf. John 1:13
 - 4. With what element of the gospel is water associated? - Acts 10:47-48; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26-27

III. Nature of the New Birth - John 3:6-8

- A. It is the inner man that is born anew. - John 3:6;; cf. Ephesians 4:22-24
- B. This part of man is like the wind. - John 3:7-8; cf. 1 Corinthians 2:11
- C. This brings us into a spiritual relationship.
 - 1. new creature - 2 Corinthians 5:17
 - 2. citizen of spiritual kingdom - Romans 14:17
 - 3. child and heir - 1 John 3:1; Romans 8:16-17; 1 Peter 1:3-5

Conclusion:

- A. If you would be saved, you must be born anew.
- B. If you through faith will be baptized into Christ, you will be born again.
- C. Will you not enter the kingdom and become a child and heir of God today?

Be Reconciled

Introduction:

- A. It is terrible to be alienated from a dear friend.
- B. But we have alienated our dearest Friend. - Isaiah 59:1-2
- C. How can we be reconciled to God?

I. What is "reconciliation"?

- A. "reconcile": "to renew friendship with one" (Thayer. 139)
- B. It implies there was once friendship. - Matthew 18:1-4
- C. But it also implies friendship has been severed. - Romans 3:23

II. What is God's part in reconciliation?

- A. He is the offended party. - Psalm 51:4
- B. His righteousness demands that wrath be executed upon the sinner. - Romans 1:18
- C. But His love demands that mercy be extended to the sinner. - Romans 5:6-8

III. That both these conditions be met, a mediator is essential.

- A. "mediator": "one who intervenes between two,... in order to make or restore peace and friendship" (Thayer. 401)
- B. Christ alone is qualified to be this Mediator. - Job 9:32-33; 1 Timothy 2:5
 - 1. He is able to speak on an equality with both parties. - Hebrews 1:8; 2:17
 - 2. He is thoroughly acquainted with the cause of alienation. - Matthew 11:27; Hebrews 4:5
- C. He removes the cause of alienation: sin. - Romans 5:10
- D. Reconciliation is in Him. - Ephesians 2:13-16

IV. What is our part in reconciliation?

- A. Since we are the offending parties, we must be reconciled to God, not Him to us. - 2 Corinthians 5:20
- B. We are reconciled to Him by the Word of reconciliation. - 2 Corinthians 5:18-19; Acts 2:38; 10:36
- C. We will thus be His friends again. - cf. James 2:23

Conclusion:

- A. How wonderful to walk with God as His friend. - cf. Genesis 5:24
- B. God has done all He can do to reconcile us to Himself.
- C. Will you be reconciled to God? - 2 Corinthians 5:20

Calling on the Name of the Lord

Text: Romans 10:12-13

Introduction:

- A. This is a grand promise: “Whosoever....”
- B. I believe every word of the passage.
- C. The promise is to you. - Acts 2:39
- D. How is the alien sinner to call on the name of the Lord?

I. Old Testament Background

- A. Israel had the special privilege of calling upon God. - Deuteronomy 4:7
- B. A time would come when all who would call upon the name of the Lord would be saved. - Joel 2:28-32

II. New Testament Application

- A. All may now call upon the Lord's name and be saved. - Romans 10:12-13
- B. But all must call in the way God directs. - Romans 10:1-3
- C. Prayer is not the way God has directed the alien sinner to call on His name. - Matthew 7:21
- D. How is the alien sinner to call on the name of the Lord?
 - 1. Jews on Pentecost
 - a. the promise - Acts 2:21
 - b. Who is the Lord? - Acts 2:22,36; cf. 4:10-12
 - c. How does the alien call on His name? - Acts 2:37-41; cf. 1 Peter 3:21 (**NASB**)
 - 2. Saul of Tarsus - Acts 9:1-11; 22:16
 - 3. Romans 10:8-17

Conclusion:

- A. Salvation is readily available to you. - Romans 10:12-13
- B. Will you not call on the name of the Lord today? - Acts 22:16

The Roman Road to Salvation

Introduction:

- A. Ancient Rome was such a magnificent city, a proverbial saying arose, “All roads lead to Rome.”
 - B. To the Christians in this city Paul wrote an inspired epistle. - Romans 1:7
 - C. The theme of this treatise is The Gospel, God’s Power to Save All That Believe. - Romans 1:16-17
 - D. According to the Roman epistle, how is one saved?
- I. One must realize he needs salvation.
- A. God’s justice demands the condemnation of all sinners. - Romans 2:2,11
 - B. All have sinned. - Romans 3:23
 - C. Thus, all are lost. - Romans 6:23
 - D. Therefore, we cannot earn our salvation. - Romans 3:27-28
 - E. We are completely dependent on the grace of God for our salvation. - Romans 3:24
- II. God’s grace is manifested in His Son. - Romans 3:24-26 (There may have been many roads to Rome, but there is only one way to God.)
- III. To receive the benefits of the death of Christ, we must be in Christ. - Romans 3:24
- A. One learns how to come to Christ through the gospel. - Romans 10:13-17
 - B. Thus, the gospel is God’s power to save. - Romans 1:16-17
 - C. We get into Christ by faith. - Romans 5:1-2
 - D. But this faith must be obedient. - Romans 1:5; 16:26
 - E. To render the obedience of faith, we must:
 - 1. repent. - Romans 2:5; 6:12
 - 2. confess. - Romans 10:8-10
 - 3. be baptized into Christ. - Romans 6:3-5,17-18
- IV. Those in Christ must live transformed lives. - Romans 12:1-2
- ### Conclusion:
- A. Christ never abandons those who place their trust in Him. - Romans 8:35-39
 - B. The greatness of this salvation far transcends all the wisdom of man. - Romans 11:33-36
 - C. This salvation is available to you. - Romans 2:11
 - D. Will you not come to Christ in obedient faith and be saved?

The Good Life

Introduction:

- A. What if we had the wealthiest man in the U.S. speaking to us on “How to Live the Good Life”?
 - B. We can have the benefit of the inspired advice of the wisest, wealthiest man in the world on this subject.
 - 1. author: Solomon - Ecclesiastes 1:1; 1 Kings 10:23
 - 2. audience: young people - Ecclesiastes 12:1
 - 3. problem: How to Live the Good Life - Ecclesiastes 2:1-3
 - C. What road of life should one travel to have “The Good Life”?
 - I. Why should a young person heed Solomon's advice?
 - A. wisdom: scientific observer - Ecclesiastes 2:1-3
 - B. wealth: ability to make observations - cf. 1 Kings 10:6-7,14,23
 - C. observations still true - Ecclesiastes 1:9-10
 - D. inability to figure life out without divine guidance - Ecclesiastes 8:17
 - II. What is the answer to the question?
 - A. NOT:
 - 1. human wisdom - Ecclesiastes 1:17-18
 - 2. pleasure - Ecclesiastes 2:1-2
 - 3. wine (mind altering drugs) - Ecclesiastes 2:3; Proverbs 20:1
 - 4. wealth - Ecclesiastes 2:9-11,18-19
 - 5. fame - Ecclesiastes 4:13-16
 - B. Remember thy Creator. - Ecclesiastes 12:1-7
- ### Conclusion:
- A. What is the sum of all roads without God? - Ecclesiastes 1:2; 12:8
 - B. What is the conclusion? - Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

Saved By Water

Introduction:

- A. Often Christians are ridiculed for believing in “water salvation.”
- B. There is a connection between water and salvation. - 1 Peter 3:18-22
- C. What is the connection between water and salvation'?
- I. Noah was saved from physical death (type). - 1 Peter 3:20
 - A. He was in danger of death. - Genesis 6:5-7,11-13,17
 - B. God was Noah’s Savior. - Genesis 7:16
 - C. Noah was saved by grace. - Genesis 6:8
 - D. Noah was saved by faith. - Hebrews 11:7
 - E. Noah was saved by obedience. - Genesis 6:14-16,18-22; 7:1; Hebrews 11:7
 - F. Noah was saved by water. - 1 Peter 3:20
 - 1. “by”: “of the means or instrument by which anything is effected” (Thayer. 133)
 - 2. Water both saved Noah and destroyed the disobedient.
 - 3. It was the dividing line between the saved and the lost.
 - G. As the result, Noah was:
 - 1. saved - 1 Peter 3:20; Hebrews 11:7
 - 2. righteous - Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 7:1
- II. We are saved from spiritual death (antitype). - 1 Peter 3:21
 - A. You are in danger of spiritual death. - Romans 3:23; 6:23; Revelation 21:8
 - B. God will save you. - Titus 3:4-5
 - C. It will be by His grace. - Titus 3:4-7
 - D. You will be saved by faith. - Romans 5:1-2
 - E. You will be saved by obedience. - Hebrews 5:8-9
 - F. You will be saved by baptism. - 1 Peter 3:21
 - 1. This is not just a “figure of salvation.”
 - a. Noah's salvation is the figure; our salvation is the fulfillment.
 - (1) The Old Testament is the shadow; the New Testament is the substance. - Hebrews 8:1-5
 - (2) “after a true likeness” (ASV)
 - b. Baptism at the end of the clause explains the water which now saves us.
 - c. There is a likeness between Noah's salvation and ours.
 - (1) In each there is salvation, water is the instrument, and water separates the saved from sin.
 - (2) This is the extent of the comparison.
 - 2. Must we stay out of the water as Noah did?
 - a. If this is the parallel, we will be lost if we are baptized!
 - b. One cannot become a Baptist without being baptized!
 - 3. “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh”
 - a. “not the removal of dirt from the flesh” (NASB)
 - b. The power to save is not in the water.
 - 4. “but the answer of a good conscience toward God”

a. "answer": "request, appeal an appeal to God for a clear conscience"(Thayer. 285)

b. In baptism one appeals to God to cleanse his conscience. - Hebrews 10:22; 9:13-14

5. "by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead" - Hebrews 7:15-16, 24-25

G. As the results, you will be:

1. saved - 1 Peter 3:21

2. righteous - Romans 6:17-18

Conclusion:

A. Which statement will you accept?

1. "Baptism doth also NOW save us."

2. "Baptism doth also NOT save us."

B. Why tarriest thou.? - Acts 22:16

The Cleansing of Naaman

Introduction:

- A. Tell the story of the cleansing of Naaman. - 2 Kings 5:1-14
- B. This story has several great lessons for us today. - Romans 15:4
- C. In what ways does Naaman's cleansing parallel our salvation?

I. Naaman's Need: Cleansing - 2 Kings 5:1

- A. Leprosy was a dreaded, incurable disease. - **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**. 4:1867-8
- B. The effects of sin are worse. - Romans 6:23; 3:23; Revelation 21:8

II. Naaman's Mistakes: Wrong

- A. Cure (He thought he could buy cleansing with money.) - 2 Kings 5:5; 1 Peter 1:17-19
- B. Authority (He went to the wrong man.) - 2 Kings 5:6-8; 3:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:6-10
- C. Reaction (He got angry at the Lord's command.) - 2 Kings 5:11-12; Mark 16:16

III. Attitude (He wanted his own way.) - 2 Kings 5:11-12; Proverbs 16:25

- A. Idea (He didn't think the cure was "great" enough.) - 2 Kings 5:11,13; 1 Corinthians 1:21-25
- B. Plan (He wanted to substitute his way for God's way.) - 2 Kings 5:12; Isaiah 55:8-9

III. Naaman's Cleansing - 2 Kings 5:10,14

- A. by grace - Ephesians 2:8-9
- B. a conditional gift - Mark 16:16 (water hole salvation? Faith in water?)
- C. blessing followed complete obedience - Hebrews 5:8-9; Matthew 28:20

Conclusion:

- A. If you have not believed and obeyed the gospel, you as Naaman need cleansing.
- B. Like Naaman, your cleansing is conditional.
- C. Will you accept God's cleansing?

Two Laws of Pardon

Introduction:

- A. Our denominational friends often demonstrate ignorance of the fact God has two laws of pardon:
 - 1. by calling on alien sinners to pray for salvation, and
 - 2. by asking if we believe an erring child of God must be rebaptized.
- B. In reality God has one law of pardon for the alien sinner and another for His erring child. - Acts 8:5-24
- C. What are God's two laws of pardon?

I. God's Law of Pardon for the Alien Sinner

- A. Alien Sinner - Ephesians 2:12; Acts 8:5,9-11
- B. He is NOT directed to:
 - 1. believe only. - James 2:24
 - 2. pray for salvation. - Matthew 7:21
- C. He IS directed to:
 - 1. hear the Word. - Acts 8:5,12; Romans 1:16; 10:17
 - 2. believe in Christ. - Acts 8:12-13; John 20:30-31
 - 3. repent of his sins. - Acts 3:19; cf. Acts 8:13
 - 4. confess his faith in Christ. - Acts 8:36-37; Romans 10:8-10
 - 5. be baptized for the remission of sins. - Acts 8:12-13; Mark 16:16

II. God's Law of Pardon for the Erring Child

- A. A child of God can be lost. - Acts 8:12-13,18-23
- B. He is NOT promised righteousness by means of:
 - 1. imputation of personal righteousness of Christ - - Romans 4:5
 - 2. continuous cleansing - 1 John 1:7-9
 - 3. general confession of sinfulness - 1 John 1:9
- C. He MUST:
 - 1. repent of his sins. - Acts 8:22
 - 2. confess his sins to God. - 1 John 1:9
 - 3. pray for forgiveness. - Acts 8:22
 - 4. confess his sins as publicly as they are known. - Acts 8:24; James 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. Sin is terrible. - Acts 8:23
- B. But God in His mercy offers pardon.
 - 1. alien. - Acts 8:12-13
 - 2. erring child - Acts 8:22
- C. Will you comply with the terms of pardon?

What About the Thief on the Cross?

Introduction:

- A. When faced with plain passages concerning the necessity of baptism, our denominational friends often cry, “But what about the thief on the cross?”
- B. It is true the thief on the cross was saved. - Luke 23:32-33,39-43
- C. Does the thief on the cross nullify the necessity of water baptism?
- I. Does this one case nullify the plain teaching of Christ and His apostles?
 - A. Christ taught the necessity of water baptism. - Mark 16:16
 - B. The apostles did too. - Acts 2:38
 - C. The Bible does not contradict itself.
- II. Can it be proven the thief was not baptized?
 - A. The burden of proof is on those using this case as a pattern of salvation. - e.g., What if I preached salvation without repentance, since repentance is not mentioned in Acts 8:12-13?
 - B. No one can believe the thief was not baptized. - Romans 10:17
 - C. The evidence is against the assumption. - Mark 1:4-5; John 4:1-3; Luke 23:40-42 (How did the thief know Jesus was Lord?)
- III. Is the salvation of the thief a pattern for us?
 - A. We are under the New Testament. - Hebrews 9:13-15
 - B. When did the New Testament come into force?
 - 1. not until after the death of Christ - Hebrews 9:16-17
 - 2. not until after the terms of the covenant were announced. - Luke 24:45-47; Acts 2:38; 11:15
 - C. Before His death, Jesus the Testator could dispose of His estate as He saw fit. - e.g., Mark 2:1-12
 - D. The thief lived and died before the New Testament was in force.
 - E. The plan of salvation is not the same in every age.
 - 1. The principle of salvation by faith remains the same. - Hebrews 11:7 (hear, believe, obey, be saved)
 - 2. But the specific requirements have changed. - Genesis 6:14-16,22; 7:1; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4
 - F. But just suppose the Lord did in this one case choose to ignore His own law of salvation and save a man without His obedience (And there is no evidence He did so), what is that to you? - John 21:18-22

Conclusion:

- A. No, the thief does not nullify the necessity of water baptism.
- B. If you have saving faith, you will obey the Lord’s commands. - Luke 6:46
- C. Will you obey? - Acts 22:16

“What Is Man?”

Introduction:

- A. Tell about interest in genealogy after Dr. Alex Haley’s “Roots.”
- B. It is the innate desire of each person to understand himself. - Psalm 8:3-5
- C. What is man?

I. Origin: “God-Consciousness” - Genesis 1:27; 2:7

II. Nature: “Spirit Consciousness” - 1 Thessalonians 5:23; Hebrews 12:9; Ecclesiastes 12:7

III. Potential: “Dignified Self-Consciousness”

- A. Man, with a body of flesh like an animal, can descend to the level of a beast. - Ephesians 4:17-19; e.g., Ted Bundy
- B. But, with a spirit fashioned in the image of God, he has the potential for “God-likeness.” - 2 Peter 1:4; 1 Peter 2:21-22

IV. Danger: “Sin-Consciousness”

- A. Through the flesh, we all sin - 1 John 1:8-10
- B. Continuing in sin destroys one's resistance. - 1 John 2:1; 1 Timothy 4:1-2
- C. The consequences are tragic. - Romans 6:23; Revelation 21:8

V. Duty: “Moral Consciousness” - Joshua 24:15; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14

VI. Destiny: “Eternity-Consciousness” - Matthew 25:46

Conclusion:

- A. With David we must marvel, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” - Psalm 139:14
- B. Will you not determine to fulfill your higher potential?

Now Faith Is

Introduction:

- A. The common motivational statement, “You gotta believe,” indicates a total ignorance of biblical faith.
 - B. Faith is absolutely essential to salvation. - Hebrews 11:6
 - C. What is faith? - Hebrews 11:1-3
 - I. definitions - Hebrews 11:1
 - A. “substance”
 - 1. “lit. a standing under, support” (W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 1:85)
 - 2. assurance, confidence, firm trust
 - C. “evidence”: “proof, proving ... a proving of (or conviction about) unseen things” (W.F. Arndt & F.W. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 248)
 - D. two elements of saving faith - Hebrews 11:6
 - 1. conviction (Thus, we accept what God reveals.)
 - 2. trust (Thus, we obey what God commands in trust He will faithfully reward us.)
 - II. Faith accepts the unseen as if seen by accepting testimony.
 - A. Faith begins and ends in the realm of the unseen. - Hebrews 11:3; 2 Corinthians 4:18
 - B. Because what we believe cannot be scientifically demonstrated doesn’t make our faith unreasonable. - e.g., How do you know Columbus discovered America in 1492?
 - C. Faith is not a blind leap but the honest acceptance of credible evidence.
 - III. The evidence is especially strong because it is of divine origin. - Romans 3:3-4
 - A. We know God is from His first and general revelation, the world. - Romans 1:20
 - B. We know God’s will through His second and special revelation, the Bible. - Romans 10:17
 - IV. Faith is the essential means of our salvation. - Hebrews 11:2,6
 - V. Faith is the guiding principle of the Christian’s life. - 2 Corinthians 5:7
- ### Conclusion:
- A. Saving faith will lead you to accept God’s word and obey His commands. - Hebrews 11:7
 - B. Do you have saving faith? - Acts 8:36-39

The Just Shall Live By Faith

Introduction:

A. Perhaps no religious doctrine is more popular in Protestant denominations than the doctrine of salvation by faith alone.

“... that we are justified by faith only, is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort” (**Methodist Discipline**, Article 9).

B. We are definitely saved by faith. - Romans 1:16-17; Galatians 3:11

C. How shall the just live by faith?

I. This is a quotation from the prophet Habakkuk.

A. Habakkuk was concerned over injustice in Judah. - 1:2

B. God said He would send Babylon to punish Judah. - 1:6

C. Habakkuk believed the Jews would live. - 1:12

D. God replied that the just would live by his faith. - 2:4

E. The ultimate fulfillment of this principle is in Christ. - 3:13a

II. Romans 1:16-17

A. All must be justified by the gospel. - 1:16-17

B. This is obedient faith. - 1:5; 16:26

C. All need it. - 3:23; 6:23

D. This justification is by the blood sacrifice of Christ. - 3:20-28

E. It demands that we:

1. Hear the gospel. - 1:16; 10:17

2. Believe in Jesus. - 5:1-2

3. Repent of our sins. - 2:5

4. Confess our faith. - 10:8-10

5. Be baptized into Christ. - 6:3-4; 5:9-10

6. Live transformed lives. - 12:1-2

III. Galatians 3:11

A. Question: Are we justified by the law or by the hearing of faith? - 3:2

1. the law - 3:17; cf. Romans 8:2

2. the hearing of faith - 1:11,23

B. Abraham himself was justified by faith apart from the law. - 3:6-7; cf. Genesis 15:6

C. We receive God's promise to Abraham by faith. - 3:8-9; cf. Genesis 12:3

D. The law brought the curse. - 3:10-12; cf. Deuteronomy 27:26; Leviticus 18:5

E. Christ redeemed us from the curse. - 3:13-14,22; cf. Deuteronomy 21:23

F. The purpose of the law was to prepare the way for Christ. - 3:23-25

G. All may become heirs of the promise to Abraham by being baptized into Christ. - 3:26-29

IV. Hebrews 10:38

- A. The writer exhorts his brethren not to cast away their confidence. - verse 35
- B. We do this by being patient. - verses 36-37
- C. As the result, we are just by faith. - verse 38
- D. If we fail to do this, we will be lost. - verses 38-39

Conclusion:

- A. To be justified by faith, we must believe and obey the gospel, live transformed lives, not seek to be justified by the law, and endure to the end.
- B. Justification before God is not only by anything. - e.g., how to make a garden
- C. Are you just by faith?

Faith and Works

Introduction:

- A. Perhaps the most fundamental point of agreement in Protestantism is the tenet of salvation by faith alone.

*We believe the Scriptures teach that the great gospel blessing which Christ secures to such as believe in Him is **justification**; that justification includes the pardon of sin and the promise of eternal life on principles of righteousness; that it is bestowed, not in consideration of any works of righteousness which we have done, but solely through faith in the Redeemer's blood... (The Hiscox Standard Baptist Manual).*

- B. So strongly does the book of James appear to deny this doctrine, Martin Luther, who emphatically taught salvation by faith alone, was led to question the book's place in the New Testament. He called the book "a right strawy one" and declared, "I will not have it in my Bible in the number of the proper chief books."

- C. What is the relationship between faith and works? - Romans 4:5; James 2:24

I. According to James - James 2:14-26

- A. Faith alone is dead. - verses 14-17

1. Some object that Paul refers to the justification of the alien sinner and that James refers to the justification of the child of God.
 - a. Both appeal to the same event in Abraham's life to prove their point. - Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; James 2:23
 - b. It is true, both for Romans 4 and James 2, that Abram had been a believer many years when that event occurred. - Genesis 12:1-4; Hebrews 11:8; Genesis 12:6-8; 13:3-4; 14:17-20; 15:1
 - c. Even if this distinction were legitimate, it does not remove the difficulty of Protestants, for most of them also believe a child of God need not do anything to inherit eternal life.

"Is the eternal salvation of the child of God, saved by the blood, absolutely unconditional in that he is not required to do anything to go to heaven?" Answer: "Yes" (question asked by J.T. Smith and answered by Dr. Albert Garner, Baptist, President of College of the Bible of Lakeland, Florida, in public debate in Citizenship, Arkansas, 1974).

2. Some object that James speaks of justification before men.

- a. Who saw Isaac offered? - Genesis 22:3-5; James 2:21-23
- b. His works revealed his faith and fear to God. - Genesis 22:11-12

- B. Works prove faith. - verses 18-20; Matthew 8:29; Mark 1:34

- C. Justification is by faith through works. - verses 21-26

1. Abraham (father of the Jews, child of God) - verses 21-24; Genesis 15:6; 22:1-18
 - a. Works perfect faith. - verse 22
 - b. Faith alone will not justify. - verse 24
2. Rahab (sinner of the Gentiles, alien) - verses 25-26; Joshua 2:1-24; 6:25

II. According to Paul - Romans 4:2-5

- A. The Jewish disciples first thought the gospel was for Jews only. - Acts 11:19
- B. The conversion of Cornelius convinced them otherwise. - Acts 11:18
- C. Many still thought it was necessary to keep the law of Moses and to be circumcised. - Acts 15:1,5
- D. Had they been correct in binding the law, perfect obedience would have been required; thus salvation would have to be earned, a matter of boasting. - Galatians 3:10; Hebrews 10:4
- E. These judaizers laid great stress on their physical relationship to Abraham. - Luke 3:8; John 8:33
- F. Paul showed that salvation was by the faith of Christ rather than the law of Moses. - Romans 3:27-28
- G. Abraham, the Father of the Jews, was Paul's case in point of righteousness without the law of Moses or circumcision. - Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:2-5

III. Summary

- A. The works that Paul says do not justify are the works of the law of Moses. - Galatians 5:1-4
- B. The works that James says do justify are those of obedience to the gospel. - Luke 17:10
- C. Faith alone:
 - 1. does not profit. - James 2:14
 - 2. will not save. - Ibid
 - 3. is dead. - James 2:17,20,26
 - 4. cannot be shown. - James 2:18
 - 5. is possessed by demons. - James 2:19
 - 6. will not justify. - James 2:24
- D. Obedience to the gospel of Christ is essential to salvation. - Matthew 7:21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; Hebrews 5:8-9; James 2:24

Conclusion:

- A. Faith alone may be "very full of comfort" (**Methodist Discipline**), but it is also very full of damnation.
- B. To be justified, you must by faith obey the gospel of Christ.
- C. Has your faith been perfected by works?

Salvation By Faith

Text: Acts 16:30-31

Introduction:

- A. It is certainly true faith saves. - text
- B. But to understand salvation by faith we must answer four questions.

I. What kind of faith saves?

- A. “little” or “great”? - Matthew 14:22-32; 8:5-13
- B. “dead” or “live”? - James 2:17,20,26
- C. imperfect or “perfect”? - James 2:22
- D. disobedient or obedient? - John 8:30-31,41,44; Hebrews 11:8
- E. “faith only” or faith plus works? - James 2:24; Galatians 5:6

II. How does faith save? - Hebrews 11:7; Genesis 6:13-17,22; 7:1

Principle of Salvation by Faith

God Speaks	Man Believes	Man Obeys	God Saves
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III. Whom does faith save?

- A. disobedient or obedient? - Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9
- B. impenitent or penitent? - Romans 2:5; Acts 3:19
- C. one who denies or one who confesses? - John 12:42-43; Matthew 10:3; Romans 10:9-10
- D. unbaptized or baptized? - John 3:5; Acts 16:31-34

IV. When does faith save? - Galatians 3:26-27

Salvation by Faith Galatians 3:26-27

Who?	all
What?	children of God
How?	by faith
Where?	in Christ Jesus
When?	baptized into Christ

Conclusion:

- A. Salvation is **not only** by **anything**.
- B. Do you have enough faith to be saved? - Acts 8:35-39

We Walk By Faith

Introduction:

- A. Great statements capture the essence of that for which men stand.
 - 1. Luther: "Here I stand; I can do no other."
 - 2. McArthur: "I shall return!"
- B. The apostle Paul summarized, in one pithy statement, the essence of the life that is pleasing to God. - 2 Corinthians 5:6-9
- C. What does it mean to walk by faith?
- I. Believe the Word of God. - Hebrews 11:11-12; cf. Genesis 11:29 - 12:7; 16:1-6,15-16; 18:1-15; 21:1-7
- II. Obey the Word of God. - Hebrews 11:8; cf. Matthew 28:20
- III. Speak the Word of God. - 2 Corinthians 4:13; Romans 10:17; 1 Peter 4:1
- IV. Pray Always. - Luke 18:1-8
- V. Be Patient. - Hebrews 10:35-38
- VI. Live in Hope. - 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Conclusion:

- A. The Reward of the Faithful - Hebrews 11:13-16
- B. Do you walk by faith?

Let God Be True

Introduction:

- A. If we believe God's word, we will accept what it says regardless of anything human. - Romans 3:3-4
- B. We must believe what God says regardless of human:
 - I. Experience - Hebrews 11:11-12; e.g., "better felt than told salvation," Genesis 37
 - II. Philosophy - Colossians 2:8-10; Genesis 1:1,27; 2:7
 - III. Doctrine - 2 John 9-11
 - IV. Desires - 1 John 2:15-17; e.g., Matthew 19:9

Conclusion:

Do you believe what God says regardless of what any man says?

The Obedience of Faith

Introduction:

- A. Tell about Martin Luther's struggles with the book of James.
 - B. We are saved by faith. - Romans 5:1-2
 - C. But the faith that saves is the faith that obeys. - Romans 1:5; 16:26
 - D. What is the obedience of faith?
- I. It is **obedience to the faith**, i.e., the gospel. - Romans 10:8,16-17
- A. Do what God says. - Genesis 4:8; Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17; e.g., Mark 16:16
 - B. Do **all** God says. - 1 Samuel 15:1-23; Matthew 28:20; e.g., Hebrews 10:24-25
 - C. Do not do what God forbids. - Genesis 2:16-17; 3:1-24; e.g., Hebrews 13:4
 - D. Do **only** what God says. - 2 Chronicles 26:16-21; Hebrews 7:14; 2 John 9; e.g., Ephesians 5:18-19
- II. It is **obedience that springs from faith**. - Romans 10:16; Hebrews 11:7

Conclusion:

- A. The very purpose of preaching the gospel is to bring about the obedience of faith. - Romans 1:5; 16:26
- B. The obedience of faith will save your soul. - Romans 1:16

Victorious Faith

Introduction:

- A. When you read the morning paper or watch the evening news, what do learn about?
Violence, evil, and injustice.
- B. The prophet Habakkuk lived in such a time. - Habakkuk 1:2; cf. 2 Kings 21:1-9,16
- C. In the Lord's answers to Habakkuk's urgent inquiry are great principles of faith for all time. - Habakkuk 2:4
- D. What should my attitude be when my world is wicked and unjust?

I. Habakkuk's Problems and God's Answers

A. First Problem and Answer

- 1. How can the Lord justify His indifference to injustice? - 1:2-4
- 2. God is not indifferent; He will execute judgment. - 1:5-6

B. Second Problem and Answer

- 1. How can God employ a wicked and godless agent? - 1:13
- 2. Babylon will also be destroyed. - 2:8,14

II. Principles Habakkuk Learned

A. God rules. - 2:19-20; cf. Psalm 11:4

B. God's rule is righteous.

- 1. The just shall live by faith. - 1:12. 2:4; cf. Deuteronomy 6:24-25
- 2. Evil is self-destructive. - 2:8

C. God's rule is for the salvation of His people. - 1:12; 3:13

III. Applications of Principles: Our faith will be victorious over doubt and despair if we:

- A. Hear God's word. - 2:1
- B. Submit to God's will without murmuring. - 2:20
- C. Take our problems to God in prayer. - 3:1-2
- D. Trust God to do right. - 3:16-19

Conclusion:

- A. Tell the story of the little girl on board ship who was calm in the storm at sea while all those around were terrified. Her father was the captain, and she trusted him.
- B. Our Father both guides the ship and controls the storm. - 2:20
- C. By faith we shall live. - 2:4
- D. Regardless of life's circumstances, trust Him to do right.
- E. Humbly submit to His will.

The Anchor of the Soul

Introduction:

A. Sectarians often ridicule Christians because we say we “hope” to go to heaven rather than we “know” we will.

B. But we can have “full assurance” in our hope.- Hebrews 6:9-20

C. How can we live in hope?

I. What is “hope” ?

A. definition: “desire + expectation”

B. Its object is something not actually possessed. - Romans 8:24-25

C. It is based on faith.- Hebrews 11:1

1. in God’s word - Romans 10:17; Titus 1:2

2. in Jesus’ resurrection- 1 Corinthians 15:20

II. What is the object of our hope? - 1 Peter 1:3-5; Ephesians 4:4

III. How can we have this hope?

A. Basis: Christ - 1 Timothy 1:1

B. Means: Things that Accompany Salvation- Hebrews 6:9-12; 11:6

C. Grounds: Faithfulness of God - Hebrews 6:13-20; Genesis 22:1-18; Galatians 3:28-29

Conclusion:

A. My fondest desire is to dwell in that fair land of the blessed. - Deuteronomy 34:1-7

B. Will you go with me? - Numbers 10:29

Be Converted

Introduction:

- A. I asked a class of teenagers if they were saved, and three who had never obeyed the gospel said yes.
- B. There is probably no other religious subject about which there is more disagreement than conversion.
- C. But conversion is essential to our salvation. - Matthew 18:1-3
- D. How can you be converted to Christ?

I. What is conversion?

- A. "Be converted" means "turn to." - Acts 3:19; 26:20
 - 1. (**Conversion is Cooperation** between God and man; i.e., man must do something in his own conversion.)
 - 2. Lyndon Whitley: "Reconciliation is one hundred per cent of God. We can do nothing to reconcile ourselves. It is an act of God." (Lyndon D. Whitley, Pastor, North Jacksonville Missionary Baptist Church, Sharp-Whitley Debate. March 6, 1981).
- B. "Conversion" is a general word covering the entire process of the salvation of the sinner. - Acts 15:3 (**Conversion is Comprehensive.**)
- C. God is involved in one's conversion from first to last. - Acts 3:26
(**Conversion is Celestial**; i.e., there is the divine side of conversion.)
- D. But in conversion man:
 - 1. exercises free will. - Revelation 22:17; John 5:40 (**Conversion is Not Coercion.**)
 - 2. acts from understanding. - Matthew 13:15-16 (**Conversion is Not Convulsion.**)

II. What causes conversion?

- A. the word (God's part) - Psalm 19:7; John 6:44-45
- B. the right attitude (man's part) - Matthew 13:15-16

III. What must one do to be converted? (man's part) - e.g., getting married

- A. Change of Heart - Acts 16:14
 - 1. This involves faith. - Acts 15:9
 - 2. But there is more than faith to conversion. - Acts 11:21
- B. Change of Life - Matthew 18:1-4
 - 1. This involves repentance. - Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10
 - 2. But there is more than repentance to conversion. - Acts 3:19
- C. Change of Loyalty - 1 Thessalonians 1:9
 - 1. This involves confession. - Romans 10:10
 - 2. But there is more than confession to conversion. - Ibid
- D. Change of Relationship - Colossians 1:13
 - 1. This involves baptism. - Romans 6:3
 - 2. When you do this, you have been converted. - cf. Acts 2:38; 3:19

IV. What is the result of conversion?

A. One's sins are forgiven. - Acts 26:18

B. This is God's part. - Mark 2:7

1. Forgiveness is an act of executive pardon which takes place in the mind of God. -
e.g., pardon of criminal

2. One's feelings do not prove what takes place in the mind of God. - e.g., prisoner who
demanded to be released because he felt like he was pardoned

Conclusion:

A. In order to be married, I had to go through all four of the steps which lead to that
relationship.

B. If you desire the blessings in Christ, you must go through all four steps of conversion.

C. Have you been converted? - Acts 3:19

Cases of Conversion in the Book of Acts

Case	Passage	Hear	Believe	Repent	Confess	Be Baptized
Jews on Pentecost	Acts 2:1-41	verses 1-37		verse 38		verses 38, 41
Samaritans	Acts 8:5-13	verses 5-6, 12	verses 12-13			verses 12-13
Eunuch	Acts 8:26-40	verse 35	verse 37		verse 37	verses 36, 38
Saul	Acts 9:1-22; 22:1-16; 26:12-18	9:6; 22:10				9:18; 22:16
Cornelius	Acts 10; 11:1-18; 15:7-9	10:5-6, 22, 32-33, 42; 11:1, 13-14; 15:7	10:43; 15:7,9	11:18		10:47-48
Lydia	Acts 16:13-15	verses 13-14				verse 15
Jailor	Acts 16:16-34	verses 31-32	verses 31,34			verse 33
Corinthians	Acts 18:8	verse 8	verse 8			verse 8
Ephesians	Acts 19:1-7	verse 5				verse 5

The First Converts of the Gospel

Text: Acts 2:37-41

Introduction:

- A. This is a great chapter, indeed, it is the hub of the Bible.
- B. It is a profitable study. - Acts 2:47
- C. What can we learn from the conversion of the Jews on Pentecost concerning our conversion?

I. A Great Day - Acts 2:1

- A. Significance - Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:15-16; Numbers 28:26
- B. First Day of Week - Leviticus 23:15-16
 - 1. Day on Which the Lord Was Raised - Luke 24:1-7
 - 2. Day on Which We Remember His Death - Acts 20:7

II. A Great Place - Acts 1:4; 2:5

- A. Greatness of the City - Psalm 2:6; 48:1-3
- B. Church to Begin Here - Isaiah 2:1-3; 1 Timothy 3:15
- C. Gospel to Go Forth from Here - Isaiah 2:3; Luke 24:45-49

III. Baptism with Holy Spirit

- A. On Speakers, Not Audience - Acts 1:26; 2:1-4
- B. Results of Baptism: Assured They Spoke Truth - Acts 2:4,6-8; John 16:13-15

IV. Audience

- A. Devout But Wrong - Acts 2:5,36
- B. Diverse, But with Same Need - Acts 2:9-11
- C. Confused - Acts 2:12-13

V. Peter's Great Sermon - Acts 2:14-36

- A. Defense of Apostles - verses 14-21
 - 1. Not Drunken - verse 15
 - 2. Fulfillment of Prophecy - verses 16-21; Joel 2:28-32
- B. The Facts of the Gospel - Acts 2:22-36
 - 1. Attested by Miracles -verse 22
 - 2. Attested by Resurrection - verses 23-24,32
 - 3. Attested by Fulfilled Prophecies - verses 25-36; Psalm 16:8-11; 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 110:1
 - a. when? - now
 - b. what? - Lord, Christ, King on Throne of David

VI. Question and Reply - Acts 2:37-40

- A. Great Question - verse 37
- B. Inspired Answer - verses 38-40

VII. Results - Acts 2:41-47

- A. Baptized - verse 41
- B. Continued Steadfastly - verses 42-46
- C. Church in Existence - verse 47

Conclusion:

- A. Do you believe the Gospel? - Acts 2:22-24,36
- B. Have you obeyed? - Acts 2:37-38

The Conversion of the Samaritans

Text: Acts 8:5-13

Introduction:

- A. The cases of conversion in the New Testament are examples of what to do to be saved.- Mark 16:15-16; Acts 2:38.
- B. But we must be able to discern between incidental detail and binding example.- e.g. Acts 8:30.

What lessons can we learn from the conversion of the Samaritans?

I. Background:

- A. Despite (because of?) persecution, the disciples faithfully proclaimed the word.- Acts 8:1-5.
- B. The lesson to Christians: faithfulness in adversity- I Thessalonians 1:6-8; 2 Timothy 4:2.

II. Preacher- Acts 8:5

- A. The deacon, not the apostle- Acts 8:1; 6:1-6; 21:8
- B. The lesson: We must all teach everyone we can.- John 15:8

III. Subjects- Acts 8:5

- A. Samaritans- 1 Kings 16:23-26; 2 Kings 17:22-34; John 4:9; 8:48; Acts 1:8
- B. The lesson: The gospel is for all.- Mark 16:15; Acts 2:39; 10:34-35

IV. Message- Acts 8:5

- A. He preached Christ fully.- 1 Corinthians 2:2; Acts 20:20,27; 8:12
 - 1. the kingdom of God - Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:4; 5:23
 - 2. the name of Jesus Christ - Matthew 28:18-19; Acts 2:38; Colossians 3:17
- B. The lesson: We must preach all the truth.- Acts 20:26-27.

V. Miracles vs. Sorcery - Acts 8:6-11

A. Miracles:

- 1. purpose: confirm word- Acts 8:6; Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:1-4
- 2. Demonstrable- Acts 3:1-11; 20:9-12
- 3. Instantaneous- Acts 9:33-34
- 4. Sometimes Where No Faith Present- Luke 7:11-15

B. Sorcery:

- 1. Elevate Practitioner - Acts 8:9-11
- 2. Based on Trickery- Acts 8:13
- 3. Evil- Galatians 5:19-21

C. Lesson: Do not be deceived by sorcerers.- 1 John 4:1

VI. Results - Acts 8:12-13.

- A. Hearing is essential. - Acts 8:5,12; Romans 10:17
- B. Belief is essential.- Hebrews 11:6
- C. Baptism is essential.- Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-4

Conclusion:

- A. The incidentals in your salvation may be different.
- B. But the essentials must be the same.- Acts 8:5,12-13
- C. Will you not obey?

The Conversion of the Secretary of the Treasury

Introduction:

- A. Good examples are a powerful influence for good.
 - 1. Denominational people try to encourage others to accept Christ by telling conversion experiences. - e.g., watching local Methodist service on cable TV, called “witnessing”
 - 2. Often famous people are used as examples to follow. - e.g., athletes on getting an education
- B. But which examples shall we follow?
 - 1. Modern stories of conversion experiences are related by uninspired people about events about which we have no way of knowing their true significance.
 - 2. Bible cases of conversion were under the direction of the Holy Spirit both when they occurred and when they were recorded.
- C. Luke’s record of the conversion of the treasurer of the nation of Ethiopia provides an example we can safely follow. - Acts 8:26-39
- D. How was the Ethiopian eunuch converted?
- I. Though he was a very religious man and worshiped God, he needed salvation. - Acts 8:26-27; cf. Matthew 7:21-23
- II. How did God lead the eunuch to conversion?
 - A. He sent the evangelist to him. - Acts 8:26-29
 - 1. Philip was an inspired evangelist. - Acts 8:5-7
 - 2. When the church was first established and the New Testament had not been recorded, the Lord sent inspired men with miraculous confirmation. - Mark 16:15-18; Acts 8:5-8
 - 3. But, with the New Testament written and confirmed, the miraculous work of God through His people has fulfilled its purposes and ceased. - Mark 16:19-20
 - 4. Philip, as an inspired evangelist, was miraculously sent. - Romans 10:13-17
 - 5. But the preaching of the gospel is still God’s means of saving sinners. - 1 Corinthians 1:21
 - B. He gave the Word of God which providentially came to the eunuch. - Acts 8:27-33
 - C. From the Word of God the evangelist preached Jesus. - Acts 8:34-35
 - 1. The prophets pointed to salvation in Christ. - 1 Peter 1:9-11
 - 2. The very passage the eunuch was reading should lead any unbeliever to faith in Christ. - Acts 8:32-33; Isaiah 53:7-8
 - a. silent in affliction - Matthew 27:12-14
 - b. put to death violently - John 19:16,31-34
 - c. died for our transgressions - Isaiah 53:8; Romans 4:25
 - 3. In preaching Jesus, Philip preached baptism. - Acts 8:35-36; cf. 8:12-13; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-4

III. How did the eunuch respond to God?

- A. Open Book: He studied God's Word. - Acts 8:27-28 (How strange to see this today. Woman on airplane deduced I was a preacher because I read my Bible. How sad!)
- B. Open Mind: He was humble enough to be taught. - Acts 8:29-34
- C. Open Mouth: He confessed his faith in Christ. - Acts 8:35-37; cf. Romans 10:9-10
 - 1. His confession was of faith in Christ, not of an "experience of grace."
 - 2. His confession of faith was the requirement for his baptism, not the vote of a church.
- D. Obedient: He was baptized into Christ. - Acts 8:38
 - 1. The language obviously demands immersion.
 - 2. A "desert" is a deserted place, i.e., a wilderness, and does not mean there was not enough water for immersion. - cf. Matthew 14:13
 - 3. If this was just "water in a jar" in the chariot, try substituting "water in the jar" for "water" in the context. - cf. Romans 6:3-4

IV. What was the result? - Acts 8:39; cf. 1 Peter 1:3-9

Conclusion:

- A. Why not rejoice in your salvation today?
 - 1. If you have not done what the eunuch did, you need salvation.
 - 2. God has done His part.
 - a. Jesus died for you.
 - b. The word of God has been preached to you.
 - 3. Will you do your part: believe, repent, confess, and be baptized?
- B. See, here is water, what hinders you from being baptized?

The Conversion of Saul

Text: Acts 9:1-22.

Introduction:

- A. The purpose of examples is to clarify rules.- e.g. sample problems in math book
- B. There are two kinds of examples of salvation which you can follow:
 - 1. modern cases related by denominational preachers- Mark 7:9.
 - 2. Bible cases which were under divine supervision twice: when done and when written- Acts 9:6,10-12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

What can we learn about our salvation from the conversion of Saul?

I. Does one's earthly importance matter with the Lord?

- A. Saul was born of a proud race.- Acts 22:3; Philippians 3:5
- B. He enjoyed great privileges.- Acts 22:24-29; 25:9-12
- C. He attained a position of great importance.- Acts 22:3; Galatians 1:14; Acts 26:10
- D. Yet, he needed salvation.- Acts 22:16; 10:34-35

II. Is one religion as good as another?

- A. Saul was a zealous member of a respected religion.- Acts 26:45; 22:3; Galatians 1:14
- B. Yet, he was not saved.- Acts 26:9; 4:10-12; cf. John 14:6

III. Is conscience a safe guide?

- A. Saul always had a clear conscience.- Acts 23:1
- B. Yet, his conscience led him to persecute disciples of Christ. - Acts 26:9-11; Acts 7:57-59; 8:1,3; 9:1-2,13-14; 22:4-5; Galatians 1:13
- C. But his clear conscience did not justify him.- 1 Timothy 1:15

IV. Is anyone too sinful to be saved? - 1 Timothy 1:13; I Corinthians 15:9; I Timothy 1:15

V. How can I be saved?

- A. Should I expect a miraculous "experience of grace"?
 - 1. Saul saw a miraculous appearance of the Lord.- Acts 9:3-7; 22:6-9; 26:12-15
 - 2. But the Lord did not save Paul there.- Acts 9:6; 22:10,16
 - 3. Why did the Lord appear to Saul?- Acts 22:14-15; 26:15-18; 1 Corinthians 9:1.
 - 4. Should we expect a similar occurrence? - 1 Corinthians 15:8.
- B. Should I "pray through"?- Acts 9:11; 22:16.
- C. How was Paul saved?
 - 1. preaching of the gospel- Acts 9:6,11-17; Romans 10:14-17.
 - 2. faith- Acts 9:4-6; Hebrews 11:6
 - 3. repentance- Acts 9:9; 3:19
 - 4. baptism- Acts 22:16; 9:18

Conclusion:

- A. Saul's life was transformed after this.- Acts 9:19-22
- B. The reason was simple.- Philippians 3:7-8
- C. If you will be like-minded, you can share his reward.- 2 Timothy 4:7-8.

The First Gentile Converts

Text: Acts 11:18

Introduction:

- A. The watchword of the day is “The good people of all religions will be saved.”
 - B. Cornelius was certainly a devout (dutiful, pious) man.- Acts 10:1-2,22
 - C. He will be a good test case for this popular doctrine.
 - D. What can we learn about conversion from the first Gentile converts?
- I. Will all devoutly religious people be saved?
- A. There never was a more devout man than Cornelius (any denomination would accept him).
 - 1. He feared (“to reverence, venerate, to treat with deference or reverential obedience” - Thayer) God with all his house.- Acts 10:2
 - 2. He gave much alms to the people.- Acts 10:2
 - 3. He prayed to God always.- Acts 10:2
 - 4. He was a just man.- Acts 10:22
 - 5. Although a Roman centurion, he had a good reputation among all the Jews. - Acts 10:22
 - B. Yet, Cornelius needed salvation.- Acts 11:14
- II. God is no respecter of persons. - Acts 10:34-35
- A. It took three miracles to cause Peter to make this statement. - Acts 10:1-23.
 - B. The truth in the statement must be therefore both difficult to accept yet important to realize.
 - C. Peter applied the truth to God.
 - 1. Negatively: He is no respecter of persons.- verse 34
 - a.”to accept or reject one or another, because of who he is, and not because of what he does”(Pulpit Commentary).
 - a. Sin condemns all.- Romans 3:9,23; 6:23
 - c. All will be judged by the same standard.- Romans 2:1-11; 1 Peter 1:17
 - 2. Positively: The obedient of every nation shall be saved.- verse 35
 - a. God loves all.- John 3:16; Titus 2:11
 - b. The Gospel is for all.- Mark 16:15; Acts 1:8; 2:39; Romans 10:11-13
 - c. Obedience is required of all.- Acts 10:35
 - D. This truth also applies to Christians.
 - 1. God was showing Peter a lesson about his own duty.- Acts 10:15, 19-20,28-29; 11:1-4
 - 2. What was his duty?
 - a. Do good to all men.- Matthew 5:43-45; Galatians 6:10
 - b. Take the Gospel to all.- Mark 16:15
 - c. Show no respect of persons.- Galatians 2:11-12; James 2:1-9

III. God sends the same Word to all. - Acts 10:34-43

- A. There have been many important messages in history.- e.g., Abraham Lincoln, “Gettysburg Address”
- B. To the household of Cornelius, the message of Peter in Acts 10 was the most important ever spoken.- Acts 11:13-14; 10:33
- C. What were the characteristics of the word Peter spoke?
 - 1. Source: God - Acts 10:36; Galatians 1:11-12
 - 2. Subjects: All Men - Acts 10:34-36; Mark 16:15; 2:36-40; 15:7-9; Romans 10:11-13
 - 3. Purpose: Peace - Acts 10:36; Matthew 10:34-37; Romans 5:1; Philippians 4:6-7
 - 4. Authority: Jesus Is Lord - Acts 10:36; Matthew 28:18; Hebrews 1:1-2
 - a. witnessed by anointment with Holy Spirit and power - Acts 10:37-38; Isaiah 61:1; Matthew 3:16-17; Luke 4:14-22
 - b. witnessed by miracles - Acts 10:38-39
 - c. witnessed by resurrection - Acts 10:39-42
 - d. witnessed by prophets- Acts 10:43
 - 5. Enforcement: Judge of Living and Dead- Acts 10:43
 - 6. Invitation: Remission of Sins- Acts 10:43

IV. Steps in the Conversion of the Household of Cornelius

- A. Had Right Attitude- Proverbs 4:23
 - 1. He feared God.- Acts 10:2,22,34-35
 - 2. He was interested in spiritual matters. - Acts 10:24
 - 3. He was taught to respect God rather than man.- Acts 10:25-26
 - 4. He was open and receptive to truth.- Acts 10:33
- B. Heard the Word - Acts 11:13-14; 10:33; 11:1
- C. Believed - Acts 15:7-9
- D. Repented - Acts 11:18
- E. Baptized - Acts 10:48
 - 1. It was water baptism, not Holy Spirit baptism.
 - a. The Holy Spirit had already fallen upon them.- Acts 10:44
 - b. Peter called for water.- Acts 10:47
 - 2. It was in the name of the Lord.- Acts 10:48
 - 3. It was only for those who could understand the Word.- Acts 10:33

Conclusion:

- A. Eliminate the miracles, and Cornelius salvation was like all others. - Acts 10:34-35
- B. Cornelius is a wonderful example of an honest seeker who was **SAVED**.- Acts 10:33
- C. You can in like manner be saved.- Acts 10:34-35

The Conversion of a Businesswoman

Text: Acts 16:6-15

Introduction:

- A. Many women today are vitally concerned with being considered the equal of men.
 - B. The gospel has done more to elevate women than any protest movement ever conceived.- Galatians 3:28
 - C. One of the most remarkable women of the Bible was Lydia.
 - D. What can we learn from the example of Lydia about our own salvation?
- I. What kind of woman was she?
- A. "Lydia": Greek name, perhaps a proselyte- verse 14
 - B. "a seller of purple"(fine cloth dyed with expensive purple dye obtained from a sea mollusk for which the women of Thyatira were famous): a wealthy business woman- verse 14; cf. Luke 16:19
 - 1. Business affairs did not make her worldly. for she was engaged in worship.- verse 14; Matthew 5:16
 - 2. Although heathen competitors were open for business, she closed shop to worship God.- verse 14; Matthew 6:33
 - C. Although she could have had many excuses not to worship, she was faithful.
 - 1. away from home- verses 12,14
 - 2. no men present- verse 13
 - 3. no fancy, comfortable building- verse 13
 - D. Obviously she was a good woman, but she needed salvation.- Romans 3:23; 6:23
- II. How did the Lord open her heart?- verse 14
- A. What is the Bible heart?- Matthew 13:15; Romans 10:10
 - B. How was her heart closed?
 - 1. not by depravity- verses 13-14
 - 2. not by refusal to hear (heard first)- verse 14
 - 3. prejudice- cf. 1 Corinthians 1:23
 - C. Her heart was opened by the preaching of the gospel.- Acts 16:6-11; cf. John 6:44-45
- III. Is this a case of infant baptism?- verse 15
- A. "Household" may not include infants.- Acts 10:46; 15:9; 16:34; 1 Corinthians 1:16; 16:15
 - B. There is no proof of infant baptism in Lydia's case.- cf. Mark 16:16
 - 1. Was she married?
 - 2. Did she have children?
 - 3. Were they with her?
 - 4. Were they infants?
- IV. What did Lydia do?
- A. She heard the word.- verse 14; cf. Romans 10:14-17
 - B. She attended to the word.- verse 14; James 1:22; Acts 3:19; Romans 10:9
 - C. Thus, she was baptized.- verse 15
 - D. Then she practiced hospitality.- verse 15; Matthew 28:19,20
- Conclusion:
- A. If you are mature enough to hear and attend to the word, you should, as Lydia. do so without delay.- verses 14,15
 - B. Will you not follow her example?

The Conversion of the Jailer

Text: Acts 16:16-34.

Introduction:

A. In this narrative we find the most important question ever posed. - Acts 16:30; Matthew 16:26-27.

B. The question itself implies that something must be done.- Matthew 7:21.

C. What must I do to be saved?

I. The background for the question- verses 16-29

A. Paul cast a spirit of divination out of a damsel.- verses 16-18; cf. Mark 1:23-26; Ephesians 5:11

B. Paul and Silas were cast into prison .- verses 19-24; Acts 18:2; 1 Thessalonians 2:2

C. the earthquake- verses 25-29

1. What an attitude they had!- verse 25; Philippians 4:4-8,11-13 (“Men do not pray when they are enraged, or sing when they are in deep distress.”- McGarvey)

2. The jailor did that which was natural. - verses 26-27; Acts 12:19

3. He had the right attitude.- verses 28-29; Acts 10:35

II. The question- verse 30.

A. not saved from earthquake: gone

B. not saved from Roman penalty: prisoners there

C. saved from divine condemnation - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

D. He realized he HAD to do something.- 2 Corinthians 5:10

III. The answer- verses 31-32.

A. They took him where they found him: a pagan.- verse 31; Hebrews 11:6

B. But they also spoke to him the word of the Lord.- verse 32

1. Repentance - verses 23-24, 33-34

2. Baptism - verse 34

a. not infant baptism - verse 34

b. not sprinkling - verses 33-34

c. no delay - verse 33

d. Only then could he rejoice.- verse 34

e. Only then had he truly believed. - verse 34

Conclusion:

A. The answer to the question is plain.- Acts 16:31-32

B. The reward for compliance is great.- Acts 16:31, 34.

C. Will you comply with His will now?- Acts 16:33.

The Non-Conversion of Felix

Introduction:

- A. Tell of the perplexing problem of Frank, who fought against obedience to the gospel.
 - B. The book of Acts contains several cases of conversion, which illustrate the requirements of salvation. - Philippians 3:17
 - C. But it also contains some examples of non-conversion, which illustrate why many people are never saved. - Acts 24:24-27
 - D. Why was Felix never saved?
- I. It was not because he was too sinful.
- A. Indeed, Felix was a sinner.
 - 1. He was cruel and rapacious. - **International Standard Bible Encyclopedia**: 2.1105-6
 - 2. Although he had a knowledge of the truth, he had not acted upon it. - Acts 24:22
 - 3. He was living in open adultery. - Acts 24:24; cf. J.W. McGarvey, **New Commentary on Acts**. 239
 - B. But God was willing to save him, as He is you. - 1 Timothy 1:15
- II. It was not because Felix did not have an opportunity to be saved.
- A. He heard Paul concerning “the faith in Christ.” - Acts 24:24; Galatians 1:11-12,23; Romans 1:16
 - B. Paul reasoned (The gospel appeals to man’s intellect.). - Acts 24:25
 - 1. righteousness (rightness, justice) to a man of cruel injustice - Romans 1:17; 10:10; 6:3-4, 17-18
 - 2. temperance (self-control) to a man of unbridled lust - Acts 3:19
 - 3. judgment to come to a man in danger of hell - 2 Corinthians 5:10
- III. He remained lost because of his attitude toward the gospel. - Proverbs 4:23
- A. He looked for what could never come, “a convenient season.” - Acts 24:25; Matthew 16:24
 - B. He valued money above his soul. - Acts 24:26; Matthew 16:26-27
 - C. He desired to please men. - Acts 24:27
- Conclusion:
- A. Felix’s “convenient season” never came. - Acts 24:27; cf. McGarvey. 241-2.
 - B. The words of Felix and Agrippa stand as grim reminders of the futility of delay. - Acts 24:25; 26:28
 - C. Please, do not follow them. - Acts 26:29

The Authority of the Scriptures

Introduction

- A. The Bible is a book of utmost practicality. - Colossians 3:17
 - B. What should the Bible mean to us?
 - I. The Bible is God's Word, not man's.
 - A. Old Testament - 2 Peter 1:19-21
 - B. New Testament - Ephesians 3:1-6
 - II. As such, it is:
 - A. authoritative
 - 1. Old Testament- Matthew 5:17-19; John 10:33-36
 - 2. New Testament - 1 Corinthians 4.:6
 - B. complete - John 16:13; Galatians 1:6-9; Jude 3
 - C. sufficient for our needs- 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - D. unchanging - 1 Peter 1:24-25.
 - III - Our responsibility to it is to:
 - A. believe it - Acts 24:14; 1 Thessalonians 2:13
 - B. follow it- Colossians 3:17
 - 1. in word - 1 Peter 4:11
 - 2. in deed - Matthew 28:20; 2 John 9
 - IV. By it we shall be judged - John 12:48
- Conclusion:
- A. quote the "The Hammer and the Anvil," by John Clifford.
 - B. Make this book your rule of life and guide to heaven.

Is Conscience A Safe Guide?

Introduction:

- A. popular admonition: “Let your conscience be your guide.”
- B. This is used to justify religious division.- John 14:6
- C. Is conscience a safe guide? - Acts 23:1

I. What is “conscience”?

- A. “con” “with”; “science” “to know” - “to know with oneself”
- B. Thus “conscience” is a consciousness of guilt or innocence. - Hebrews 10:2
- C. The function of conscience is to bear witness of one’s guilt or innocence to that person himself as he compares his own thoughts words and actions to whatever standard of right and wrong he has accepted. - Romans 9:1; John 8:9; e.g., speed control on car

II. Can conscience alone safely guide?

- A. Man is incapable of guiding himself.- Jeremiah 10:23; Judges 17:6; 21:25; Isaiah 53:6
- B. Some consciences are incapable of exerting the proper influence.

1. weak- 1 Corinthians 8:7

a. ignorant - Ibid

b. fails to exert enough influence- 1 Corinthians 8:10-12

2. defiled

a. violated - 1 Corinthians 8:7

b. filthy minded - Titus 1:15

3. seared - 1 Timothy 4:2; Ephesians 4:17-19

C. Saul of Tarsus exemplifies the problem.

1. He persecuted disciples of Christ “unto the death.”- Acts 8:1-3; 9:1-2; 22:4

2. Yet his conscience approved.- Acts 23:1; 26:9

3. This did not free him from guilt.- 1 Timothy 1:15

III. Is conscience ever a safe witness?

- A. Before Saul learned the truth his conscience was unsafe. - 1 Timothy 1:13-15
- B. After he learned the truth, his conscience bore proper testimony. - Acts 24:14-16

Conclusion:

- A. Conscience, to bear proper testimony, must itself be properly guided.
- B. That guide is not human feelings but divine revelation. - 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17

Do We Need Scriptural Authority?

Introduction:

- A. Several have said to me, “We do lots of things without Bible authority.”
- B. The Jews and the Lord recognized the need for divine authority. - Luke 20:1-8
- C. Do we need divine authority for what we believe, teach, and practice?

I. What is authority?

- A. “authority” (*exousia*): 3. *the power of authority (influence) and of right:... Lk. xx.2.... 4. the power of rule or government. (the power of him whose will and commands must be submitted to by others and obeyed, [generally translated authority.]); a. univ. Mt. xxviii.18.... (Thayer. 225)*

B. All authority is one of two kinds:

- 1. inherent (primary) - Acts 17:24; e.g., When children ask, “Why do we have to do this?”, mother replies, “Because I said so!”
- 2. delegated (secondary) - Matthew 28:18; e.g., One child says to others, “Mother said, ‘Come in and wash your hands for supper.’”

C. All legitimate authority has as its ultimate source God. - Luke 20:4; Matthew 15:1-9

II. Open contempt for authority of all kinds is a chief characteristic of our society.

- A. home: divorce and remarriage, rebellious children
- B. government: crime, riots, corruption in government
- C. business: bank corruption, cheating on taxes
- D. religion: “We do lots of things without Bible authority!”

III. Do we need divine authority?

- A. We see the need for authority in every day affairs: business: Bureau of Weights and Standards; government: Constitution; sports: rules
- B. We need divine authority as the ultimate standard because:
 - 1. We are not capable of guiding ourselves. - Jeremiah 10:23
 - 2. Results of rejecting divine authority tragic. - Judges 17:6; 19:30; 21:25
 - 3. Divine authority is necessary for unity. - 1 Corinthians 1:10
 - 4. Divine authority is essential to guide us to God. - 1 Corinthians 1:21
 - 5. We must walk by faith. - 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
 - 6. God demands we follow His authority. - Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9

Conclusion:

- A. Now, what do you think of the statement, “We do lots of things without Bible authority”?
- B. We need divine authority, Bible authority, for everything we believe, teach and practice.

Can We All Understand the Bible Alike?

Introduction:

- A. The common attitude toward the Bible is that we just cannot see it alike.
- B. But the Lord desires His people to be one. - John 17:20-21
- C. Can we all understand the Bible alike?

I. Do people misunderstand the Bible?

- A. There is division over what people think the Bible teaches. - e.g., Ask different preachers, "What must I do to be saved?"
- B. There is division between Christians over what they think the Bible teaches. - e.g., divorce and remarriage
- C. Division proves misunderstanding.
 - 1. A syllogism proves the point.
 - a. Truth is consistent, i.e., it never contradicts itself.
 - b. The Bible is truth. - John 17:17
 - c. Therefore, the Bible is consistent, i.e., it never contradicts itself.
 - 2. There are important applications of this conclusion.
 - a. If we understand the Bible at all, it will be alike. - 1 Corinthians 1:10; Is God a liar?
 - b. If we accept conflicting answers, someone is wrong. - 1 Timothy 6:3-5; e.g., math problem
 - c. It is not a matter of personal opinion or interpretation. - 1 Peter 4:11

II. Can we understand the Bible?

- A. Is the Bible an understandable book? - If not, either God could but wouldn't, or He would but couldn't.
 - 1. God wants us to understand. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
 - 2. He revealed an understandable book. - Ephesians 3:1-6
- B. Is man capable of understanding the Bible.? - Ephesians 5:17; John 6:44-45
- C. Are things different today?
 - 1. God's teaching is unchanged. - 1 Peter 1:24-25
 - 2. Man's nature is unchanged. - Ecclesiastes 1:9-10
- D. It is mainly a matter of attitude. - Acts 28:24-27

Conclusion:

- A. Yes, we can all understand the Bible alike.
- B. How wonderful if we did! - 1 Corinthians 1:10
- C. The means is very simple. - 1 Peter 4:11

How to Use the Old Testament

Introduction:

- A. Many people think Christians do not believe in the Old Testament.
- B. I believe all scripture is inspired of God. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21
- C. But it must be rightly divided. - 2 Timothy 2:15
- D. How are we to use the Old Testament?
- I. It is not our authority. - e.g., play on instrument like David
 - A. The Old Covenant was for Israel only .- Deuteronomy 5:1-3; 6:6-7
 - B. The purpose of the law has been fulfilled.- Matthew 5:17-18; Acts 3:18,24 ; Galatians 3:18-25
 - C. With Jesus' death on the cross, the Old Testament was abolished. - Colossians 2:14-17; Romans 7:7
 - D. God now speaks through His Son. - Hebrews 1:1-2
 - E. We are under law to Christ. - 1 Corinthians 9:21
 - F. To attempt to be justified by the law is to fall from grace. - Galatians 5:1-4
- II. However, the law is still useful.
 - A. Evidence - John 5:39
 - B. Hope - Romans 15:4
 - C. Shadow - Hebrews 8:4-5
 - E. Example - Hebrews 12:1-2

Conclusion:

- A. Just as Paul, we must believe all the law. - Acts 24:14
- B. But, also as Paul, we must not look to the law as authority. - Galatians 5:4
- C. We are not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ. - Galatians 2:16

How God Teaches Us

Introduction:

- A. Tell about the Pentecostal preacher who said God told him to have his entire congregation strip naked and drive to Florida.
 - B. The only way we can come to God is through Jesus. - John 14:6
 - C. But to come to Jesus, we must be taught of God. - John 6:44-45
 - D. How does God. teach us?
- I. God has all primary authority.
 - A. He rules by right of creation and possession. - Acts 17:22-28
 - B. But no man can search out his mind. - Romans 11:33-36
 - II. Christ has all delegated authority.
 - A. God has given him all authority. - Matthew 28:18
 - B. He reveals the Father to us. - Hebrews 1:1-2; Matthew 11:27-30; John 12:48-49
 - C. But Christ does not speak to us directly today. - 1 Corinthians 15:8
 - III. The Holy Spirit revealed Christ's authority. - John 16:13-15
 - IV. The apostles were Christ's ambassadors. - 1 Corinthians 2:9-13; 2 Corinthians 5:18-20; Acts 1:21-26
 - V. The apostles wrote Christ's authority. - Ephesians 3:1-6

Conclusion:

- A. You can only come to Jesus by accepting the teaching of this divine standard. - John 6:44-45
- B. Will you come? - Matthew 11:28-30

Faith & Opinion

Introduction:

- A. Two different extremes are seen in the Lord's church. - e.g., man who preached that Cain was born before Adam and Eve were cast out of the garden
 - 1. those who treat God's Word as if it were opinion and
 - 2. those who treat their opinions as if they were God's Word.
- B. Obviously, both errors stem from the failure to distinguish between faith and opinion. - Isaiah 55:8-9
- C. What is the difference between faith and opinion?

I. Faith

- A. God's Revealed Will - Jude 3; Galatians 1:11-12,23; Romans 10:8,17
- B. Determines Fellowship - 2 John 9-11; e.g., divorce and remarriage; Matthew 19:9
- C. Basis of Unity - Ephesians 4:5; 1 Corinthians 1:10
- D. Must Judge - 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15
- E. Must Preach - Galatians 1:23; 2 Corinthians 4:13; 1 Peter 4:11
- F. Must Contend For - Jude 3

II. Opinion - cf. "Heresy":

... denotes (a) a choosing, choice...; then, that which is chosen, and, hence, an opinion, especially a selfwilled opinion, which is substituted for submission to the power of truth, and leads to division and the formation of sects....(Vine. 2:217).

- A. Man's Thoughts - Romans 14:5
- B. Must **NOT** Determine Fellowship - Romans 14:1-3; e.g., one cup for Lord's Supper
- C. May Have Diversity - Romans 14:6-9
- D. Must Not Be Basis of Judgment - Romans 14:13
- E. Must Not Preach - Romans 14:22
- F. Must Not Contend For - Romans 14:22

Conclusion:

- A. We must be able to distinguish between faith and opinion. - Isaiah 55:8-9
- B. Have you responded to the preaching of faith?

Is The New Testament Our Pattern?

Introduction:

- A. Athens Clay Pullias, President of David Lipscomb College, wrote a tract entitled, “Where There Is No Pattern.” He contended the institutional issues were over areas where there is no divine pattern.
- B. Proponents of fellowship with those in error have followed this plan to its logical conclusion. -
“Nowhere, nowhere, do I find a consistent diagram or blueprint of what life should be or what the church should be” (J.P. Sanders, **Restoration Review** [March, 1967]. 51).
- C. Is the New Testament a binding pattern for Christians today?
 - I. Paul declared it is a pattern.
 - A. 2 Timothy 1:13 (“form”: “an example, pattern.... the pattern to be placed before one to be held fast and copied, model...” - Thayer)
 - B. Hebrews 8:5; cf. Exodus 25:8-9,40; 39:42-43; 40:34-35
 - II. He told us what this pattern is. - 2 Timothy 1:13
 - A. “sound words”: “to be well, to be in good health.... true and incorrupt doctrine” (Thayer)
 - 1. true - John 17:17; Romans 3:3-4
 - 2. incorrupt - Galatians 1:6-9; e.g., It takes less than 1% poison in good meal to make rat poison.
 - B. “which thou hast heard of me” - Ephesians 3:1-6
 - C. Thus, the New Testament pattern on any subject is the sum total of New Testament teaching on that subject. - Matthew 4:4; 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - III. Paul told us our responsibility to the pattern. - 2 Timothy 1:13
 - A. “Hold fast”
 - 1. definition: “keep” (Thayer); “retain” (NASB); “steadfast adherence” (Vine)
 - 2. example - Genesis 6:14-16,22; 7:1
 - 3. application - Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9
 - B. “in faith” - 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
 - C. “and love” - Ephesians 4:15

Conclusion:

- A. Tell about Dad as a child sawing rafters for Grandpa Brewer. He threw away the original pattern and used each subsequent rafter he sawed as a pattern. The last few rafters were unusable.
- B. We must strictly conform to the divine pattern!

The Nature of Bible Authority

Introduction:

- A. a preacher told me, “We do lots of things without Bible authority!”
- B. This is an example of the misunderstanding many brethren have of the nature of biblical authority. They think a practice must be specifically mentioned in the Bible to be authorized by the Bible.
 - 1. institutional brethren: “We do lots of things without Bible authority.”
 - 2. no Bible class brethren:
There is not one verse in all the Bible that says one word about dividing an assembly into two or more classes with teachers teaching at the same time... (E.H. Miller, “Proof Cups & Classes Are Not Scriptural.” 5).
- C. Proposition: Bible authority is both exclusive and inclusive.

I. Definition of Proposition

- A. Exclusive: Anything the Lord does not authorize, He excludes.
- B. Inclusive: What the Lord authorizes includes what is necessary and incidental to fulfilling the authorized action.
- C. Note
 - 1. A thing may be authorized although not specifically mentioned.
 - 2. A thing may be unscriptural and sinful although not specifically condemned.

II. Proof of Proposition

- A. Bible authority is exclusive. - Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9
- B. Bible authority is inclusive. - Mark 16:15; Acts 8:30-31; 13:4 (How shall we “go”?)

III. Application of Proposition

- A. Material of Ark: Gopher Wood - Genesis 6:14-16
- B. Music in Worship: Singing - Ephesians 5:18-19
- C. Organization of Church: Independent Local Congregation - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Philippians 1:1; 1 Peter 5:1-2

Conclusion:

- A. The proposition is sustained: Bible authority is both exclusive and inclusive.
- B. This answers the two common fallacies:
 - 1. institutional: Everything not specifically condemned is all right.
 - 2. no Bible class: Everything not specifically mentioned is unauthorized.
- C. Will you not be content to walk in this path? - Jeremiah 6:16

How to Tell What Pleases God

Introduction:

- A. Cry of the day: “We do lots of things without Bible authority!”
- B. We must not! - Colossians 3:17
- C. But we have a problem: How can we tell whether or not a doctrine or practice is authorized by the New Testament?
- D. How does the New Testament authorize any practice or doctrine?

I. Definition of “Authorize”

- A. “Authority”: “the power of one whose will and command must be obeyed by others” (Vine); cf. Matthew 8:5-9
- B. “To authorize” and “to teach” are not equivalent.
 - 1. The New Testament teaches that Peter denied the Lord three times, but that does not authorize us to deny the Lord. - Matthew 26:69-75
 - 2. “To authorize” is to give the right to act. - e.g., authorizing son to drive car
 - 3. “To teach” is to impart knowledge and understanding. - e.g., teaching son how to drive car

II. The New Testament authorizes things in three ways:

- A. **declaration** - Acts 20:27
 - 1. statement - Romans 6:3-4
 - 2. command - Acts 10:48
- B. **approved example** - Philippians 3:17
- C. **necessary implication** - 2 Timothy 2:7
 - 1. This recognizes the application of logic to Scripture study. - Acts 17:2-3
 - 2. It is the only way to apply the Scriptures to ourselves. - Acts 2:38 (How can we apply this to people today?)
 - 3. It is not to imply that all inferences drawn by men are scriptural. - Acts 16:14-15

III. Examples of Three Methods

- A. Jesus used these three methods of establishing authority when He resisted Satan’s temptations. - Matthew 4:1-11
 - 1. approved example - Matthew 4:4; cf. Deuteronomy 8:3
 - 2. necessary implication - Matthew 4:5-7; cf. Psalm 91:11-12; Deuteronomy 6:16
 - 3. declaration - Matthew 4:8-10; cf. Deuteronomy 6:13-15
- B. Controversy Over Circumcision
 - 1. approved example and necessary implication - Acts 15:6-11
 - 2. approved example and necessary implication - Acts 15:12
 - 3. declaration - Acts 15:13-19; cf. Amos 9:11-12

IV. Application of Three Methods

- A. Baptism
 - 1. necessity: declaration - 1 Peter 3:21
 - 2. proper subject: approved example - Acts 18:8
 - 3. element: necessary implication - Acts 10:47-48

B. Lord's Supper

1. necessity: declaration - 1 Corinthians 11:23-25
2. when: approved example - Acts 20:7
3. frequency: necessary implication - Acts 20:7; cf. Exodus 20:8

Conclusion:

- A. A faithful application of these principles will lead us to be pleasing to the Lord and to have scriptural unity.
- B. Will you not determine to do so?

What In a Passage Is Binding?

Introduction:

- A. Most brethren that the New Testament is a binding pattern. - 2 Timothy 1:13
- B. And yet we also agree that not every precept or example in the New Testament is binding on us today.
 - 1. Must we partake of the Lord's Supper in an upper room? - Acts 20:7 (example)
 - 2. Must we bring a cloak, books, and parchments to the apostle Paul? - 2 Timothy 4:13 (declaration)
 - 3. Must preachers be married? - Matthew 8:14 (necessary implication)
- C. How do we tell what in a passage is authoritatively binding and what is not?
- I. All New Testament precepts, examples, and necessary implications are authoritative and binding unless we can prove otherwise. - Philippians 4:9
- II. We must use the same rules of Bible study in determining what in a passage is authoritative and binding as we do in determining the meaning of a passage.
 - A. Who is the speaker? - e.g., Acts 26:28
 - B. To whom is he speaking? - e.g., 1 Corinthians 14:31
 - C. What is the subject? - e.g., 1 Corinthians 3:16-17; cf. vv. 9-15
 - D. Is the language literal or figurative? - e.g., 1 Corinthians 11:24-25
 - E. Why is this recorded? - e.g., John 13:1-15
- III. Three Kinds of Biblical Information
 - A. that which we MUST NOT follow (negative)
 - 1. declarations - 1 John 4:1,3; e.g., Acts 4:18-20; 5:27-32,40-42
 - 2. examples - 3 John 11; Matthew 26:69-75
 - 3. necessary implications - 1 Corinthians 2:1,5; 2 Corinthians 10:10
 - B. that which we MAY follow (approved, permissive) - 1 Corinthians 7:6-7,25-28,38-40
 - 1. declarations - 1 Corinthians 7:20,26
 - 2. examples - Matthew 3:5-6; Acts 8:36-38 (baptism in outdoor body of water)
 - 3. necessary implication - 1 Corinthians 9:1-6 (preacher refraining from secular labor)
 - C. that which we MUST follow (approved, binding)
 - 1. declaration - 1 Corinthians 11:23-25 (necessary to eat the Lord's Supper)
 - 2. example - Acts 20:7 (first day of week observance of Lord's Supper)
 - 3. necessary implication - Acts 20:7; cf. Exodus 20:8 (frequency of observance)
- III. There are principles taught by the Scriptures to help us determine what in a passage is binding.
 - A. Principle of Unity (Truth always agrees with truth.) - John 17:17; e.g., upper room observance of the Lord's Supper; John 4:19-24
 - B. Principle of Uniformity (For a binding pattern to exist, there must not be variation.) - John 17:17; e.g., one undivided assembly; Acts 20:17; Galatians 2:2
 - B. Principle of Universal Application (Unless information is universally applicable, it cannot be binding.) - Mark 16:15; e.g., washing feet; also 1 Timothy 5:9-10
 - C. Principle of Legitimate Extension (The passage must only be applied to situations parallel

to its context.) - 2 John 9; e.g., sell all we have to give to the poor; Acts 4:32,34-35; 5:1-4
D. Principle of Spiritual Significance (The spiritual significance of a passage is binding; thus, if the outward act is only a cultural or incidental expression of that principle, the act is a liberty). - John 18:36; Romans 14:17; Ephesians 1:3

Conclusion:

- A. In order to be mature in Christ, we need to be able to apply these principles. - Hebrews 5:14
- B. We should study for knowledge and pray for wisdom to be able to do this. - 2 Timothy 2:15; James 1:5

Liberty

Introduction:

A. "I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death." (Patrick Henry, speech at the Second Virginia Convention, March 23, 1775)

B. "Liberty!" is the cry of the day in religion as well. -

Now I am freed from the law. I am dead to that which once held me fast in its talons. I am free to serve God in a new way, not under a new law, but in a new way! ... He has set no bounds except those of love for Him in his infinite mercy, and for my fellow men in their infinite need. (W. Carl Ketcherside, **Mission Messenger**)

C. What does the New Testament teach about liberty?

I. What is liberty?

A. Definition: "freedom" (Vine. 2:131).

B. True liberty is in Christ. - John 18:36

C. It is based on truth. - John 8:31-32

D. It is also based on law. - Romans 8:2-3

E. It is obtained by obedience. - Romans 6:17-18 ["The fear of God is the basis of moral self-government, and self-government is the basis of true freedom" (Philip Schaff, **History of the Christian Church**. 8:265).]

F. To a certain extent there is liberty (freedom of action) within divine law. - 1 Timothy 4:4-5; 1 Corinthians 8:8-9

II. From what do we have liberty?

A. sin - Romans 6:18

B. the law of Moses - Galatians 5:1-4

C. human religious laws - Galatians 2:3-5

III. How is our liberty limited?

A. Liberty is not license. - Galatians 5:13; 1 Peter 2:16

1. definitions

a. "license" - "freedom that allows or is used with irresponsibility ... licentiousness" (**Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary**. 487).

b. "licentiousness" - "lacking legal or moral restraints"(Ibid); e.g., Ketcherside

2. License is slavery to sin. - 2 Peter 2:18-19; Romans 6:16; e.g., drunkard, dope addict

3. License is tyranny of the strong. - Galatians 2:3-5; e.g., anarchy in government; "Yellow Tag of Quarantine" in **Gospel Advocate**

B. Liberty is limited by law. - James 1:25; 2:12

C. Matters of liberty within law are non-essentials (allowed but not required) - 1 Corinthians 8:4-9; e.g., time of assembly, class arrangement, multiple containers

- D. Just because something is a liberty does not necessarily mean we should practice it.
1. We must not cause another to violate his conscience. - 1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:25-30,32; but, Galatians 2:3-5
 2. We must edify others. - 1 Corinthians 10:23
 3. We must seek the good of others. - 1 Corinthians 10:24,33
 4. We must do all to the glory of God. - 1 Corinthians 10:31

Conclusion:

A. Christian:

1. Stand fast in the liberty you have in Christ. - Galatians 5:1a
2. But, do NOT
 - a. mistake liberty for license - 1 Peter 2:16
 - b. or abuse liberty. - 1 Corinthians 8:9

B. Sinner, come to Christ for true liberty. - John 8:36

Expediency

Introduction:

- A. Innovators argue that the New Testament doctrine of expediency justifies their unlawful actions.
 - B. Let us examine their claims. - 1 Thessalonians 5:21
 - C. How can we tell if a practice is expedient?
- I. What is the meaning of the word?
- A. original: “*sumphero*” (16 New Testament occurrences)
 - 1. lexicons: “to help, be profitable” (Thayer. 597); “to be an advantage, profitable” (Vine. 2:62); “Help, confer a benefit, be advantageous or profitable or useful” (Arndt & Gingrich. 787)
 - 2. renderings in King James Version: “bring together,” “be better,” “be expedient,” “be good,” “be profitable,” “profit”; e.g., Matthew 5:29-30
- II. Two passages teach us how to tell if a practice is expedient for Christians.
- A. 1 Corinthians 6:12
 - 1. This verse relates expediency to Christians and their practices. - cf. v. 11
 - 2. Is “all” unlimited?
 - a. cf. 2 Corinthians 5:18; James 1:13
 - (1) “all things are of God”
 - (2) But temptation is not of God.
 - (3) “All” is unlimited in its context, but it is limited by its context.
 - b. Is there nothing that is unlawful? - Matthew 14:4; 2 Corinthians 12:4; 2 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 3:4
 - 3. “All” pertains to eating of meats, i.e., it is lawful to eat any kind of meat. - verse 13; cf. 1 Timothy 4:4-5
 - 4. First Rule: **Expediency is within the realm of divine law.** - cf. Acts 20:20,26-27
 - a. The end does **NOT** justify the means. - Romans 3:8
 - b. Nothing is spiritually good if it is not authorized. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; cf. Leviticus 10:1-3
 - 5. Second Rule: **Decisions about expediency involve liberties.** - v. 13; cf. 1 Corinthians 8:8-9
 - a. If something is required by the Lord, it is expedient (profitable), and our only choice is whether to obey or rebel. - John 16:7; 1 John 5:3; Acts 20:20,26-27
 - b. But if something is authorized but non-essential (i.e., a liberty), we have a choice as to whether or not it is expedient (profitable). - v. 13
 - c. Third Rule: **An enslaving practice is not expedient.**

B. 1 Corinthians 10:23-33

1. The Principle Repeated: **Expediency is within the realm of divine law.**
2. Fourth Rule: **The practice must edify.** - v. 23
3. Fifth Rule: **The practice must be to the glory of god.** - v. 31; Matthew 5:16
4. Sixth Rule: **The practice must not give offense** (lead others to sin - Thayer). - v. 32
 - a. This is a simple matter of being concerned about the spiritual welfare of others. - vv. 24,32
 - b. This involves matters that are authorized but non-essential (i.e., liberties). - v. 29
 - c. It involves matters of individual conscience. - vv. 27-31
 - d. It does **NOT** give anyone the right to bind his scruples on others. - Romans 14:21-22

Conclusion:

- A. There are six characteristics whereby we can determine if a practice is expedient or not.
- Repeat the six rules.
- B. Innovations into the divine pattern violate at least four of these rules.
 1. They are not lawful.
 2. They do not involve liberties.
 3. They do not edify.
 4. They are not to the glory of God.
- C. Let us therefore be content to “do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.” - Colossians 3:17

The Promise to Abraham

Introduction:

- A. Some events are so important that they alter the course of history. - e.g., Battle of Gettysburg in the American Civil War
 - B. The promises God made to Abraham shape the history of human salvation, outline the entire Old Testament, and tie the Old to the New. - Genesis 12:1-3,7
 - C. How were God's promises to Abraham fulfilled?
- I. The Promise was conditional. - Genesis 12:1; 22:1-18
- II. The Nation Promise - Genesis 12:1-2; Numbers 1:45-46; Deuteronomy 26:5
- III. The Land Promise
- A. Given - Genesis 12:7; 15:18
 - B. Fulfilled - Joshua 21:43-45; 1 Kings 4:21; Nehemiah 9:7-8, 22-24
- IV. The Seed Promise - Genesis 12:3; 22:18
- A. Christ is that promised Seed. - Galatians 3:8,16
 - B. All in Christ are the heirs of the Promise. - Galatians 3:26-29
 - C. Those in Christ are now God's Israel. - Galatians 6:15-16; 1 Peter 2:9-10
 - D. God's faithful fulfillment of the Promise gives us strong consolation. - Hebrews 6:13-20

Conclusion:

- A. God has been faithful in fulfilling the Promise.
- B. You can be the heir of the promise.
- C. Will you by faith be baptized into Christ?

All Things Must Be Fulfilled

Introduction:

- A. Premillennialists read Old Testament prophecy as if it is the daily newspaper.
 - “The astonishing thing to those of us who have studied the prophetic Scriptures is that we are watching the fulfillment of these prophecies in our time” (Hal Lindsey, **The Late Great Planet Earth**. 10).
- B. How are we to interpret the Old Testament prophets?
- I. Let the Scriptures interpret Old Testament prophecy. - 1 Peter 4:11; cf. Acts 2:16 (contrast: “It is conjecture on this writer’s part, but...” [Lindsey. 147].)
- II. The Old Testament prophecies of Christ and His kingdom have been fulfilled. - Luke 24:44-47; Acts 3:18-26 (contrast: quote in introduction)
 - A. They should be preached as evidence of God, the Bible and Christ, not as commentary on current political events. - Isaiah 46:8-10; John 5:39
 - B. The prophets pointed the way to Christ. - Acts 26:22-23
- III. To reject human theories about prophecy is not to reject prophecy. - 1 John 4:1 (*He [Peter] even warned that in ‘the latter times’ men posing as religious leaders would rise from within the Church and deny, even ridicule, the prophetic word [II Peter 2:1-3; 3:1-18].... If you pass this book around to many ministers you’ll find how true this prediction has become. [Ibid. 55-56] [makes denial of his book equivalent to denial of prophetic word]*)
- IV. The only men who had special insight into the prophetic word were inspired men. - Mark 16:14-15; Luke 24:44-45 (contrast: *This writer doesn’t believe that we have prophets today who are getting direct revelations from God, but we do have prophets today who are being given special insight into the prophetic word. God is opening the book of the prophets to many men. [Ibid. 78]*)
- V. The key that unlocks Old Testament prophecy is the New Testament “this is that.” - 1 Peter 1:10-12; cf. Acts 2:16 (contrast: *The key that would unlock the prophetic book would be the current events that would begin to fit into the predicted pattern. [Ibid. 170]*)
- VI. Many (although far from all) of the prophecies are symbolic and have spiritual application. - cf. Ezekiel 37:24; John 18:36 (contrast: *The real issue between the amillennial and the premillennial viewpoints is whether prophecy should be interpreted literally or allegorically. [Ibid. 165]*)

Conclusion:

- A. The prophets have been fulfilled. - Acts 3:18
- B. We should preach Jesus from the prophets, not vainly, wildly and idly speculate about current and future events. - Acts 8:30-35

The Kingdom of Christ

Introduction:

- A. The basic premise upon which those who try to apply Old Testament prophecies to current events in the Middle East operate is that the purpose of Christ's return is to set up a material kingdom on this earth.

The purpose of Christ's return to the Mount of Olives will be to establish Jerusalem as the capital of His new world kingdom. The law will once more go forth from Zion. (Isa. 2:3)
(Dr. John F. Walvoord, **Armageddon, Oil and the Middle East Crisis** [1990 edition]. 195)

- B. Thus, to see whether or not the claims being made concerning the Middle East crisis and biblical prophecies are true, we must understand the Old Testament prophecies concerning the kingdom of Christ.

- C. Proposition: The Scriptures teach that the kingdom of Christ of Old Testament prophecy was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection, that it is the church of Christ, that it is spiritual in nature, and that you may be a citizen of it now.

- I. The kingdom of Christ of Old Testament prophecy was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection.

A. Proof - Daniel 2:31-45; Luke 3:1-2; Mark 1:14-15; Mark 9:1; Acts 1:6-8; Acts 2:1-4

B. What about a future kingdom? - Hebrews 12:22-23,28

- II. The kingdom of Christ of Old Testament prophecy is the church of Christ. - Matthew 16:13-10; Hebrews 12:22-23,28

- III. The kingdom of Christ of Old Testament prophecy is spiritual rather than material in nature. - Luke 17:20-21 (The kingdom of Christ is the rule of Christ within the hearts of His people.); John 18:36; Romans 14:17

- IV. You may be a citizen of the kingdom of Christ of Old Testament prophecy now. - Revelation 1:9 (AD 64-96); 1 Thessalonians 2:12 (AD 50); Acts 2:47 (AD 30)

Conclusion:

- A. The greatest honor you can have on this earth is to be a citizen of the kingdom of Christ. - Matthew 11:11

B. You can become a citizen of that kingdom now. - John 3:3,5

C. Will you not meet the requirements of citizenship today?

Christ on David's Throne

Introduction:

- A. We are told by premillennialists that Christ is to return to this earth to sit on David's throne in Jerusalem.

*But the Bible teaches that everlasting peace will come to the world only after Christ returns and sits upon the throne of David in Jerusalem and establishes His historic kingdom on earth for a thousand years (Revelation 20:4-6) (Hal Lindsey, **The Late Great Planet Earth**. 159).*

- B. This contention is of the utmost importance.

1. It is the central tenet of premillennialism.
2. It negates the resurrection of Christ. - Acts 2:29-36

- C. When and where is Christ to sit on the throne of David?

I. What is the throne of David?

- A. David's throne is Solomon's throne. - 1 Kings 1:46-48; 2:12
- B. Solomon's throne is the Lord's throne. - 1 Chronicles 29:23
- C. Therefore, David's throne is the Lord's throne. - cf. Matthew 23:1-2

II. When is Christ to sit on David's throne?

- A. Old Testament Prophecies - 2 Samuel 7:12-16; Psalm 45:6; Psalm 89:3-4,28-37; Psalm 132:11; Isaiah 9:6-7; Zechariah 6:12-13; cf. Isaiah 11:1-2,10; Romans 15:12
- B. New Testament Fulfillment - Luke 1:30-33; Matthew 28:18; Acts 2:29-36; Ephesians 1:20-23; Hebrews 1:3,8; Hebrews 4:14; cf. Zechariah 6:13; Hebrews 7:1-3; Revelation 3:21

III. Where is David's throne?

- A. not on earth - Jeremiah 22:24,28-30; Matthew 1:12
- B. in heaven
 1. He is a priest on His throne. - Zechariah 6:13
 2. He is a priest in heaven. - Hebrews 4:14; 8:4
 3. Therefore, His throne is in heaven. - cf. Acts 7:49

Conclusion:

- A. Christ now rules and reigns on the throne of David in heaven as Lord and King. - Acts 2:29-36
- B. Will you submit to His rule and enter His Kingdom? - Acts 2:37-38

The Hope of Israel

Introduction:

- A. Premillennialists take the position that Old Testament national Israel will be restored and that modern Israel is the beginning of that restoration.

From the time of the promise to Abraham to the present hour, the prophecies about Israel's total possession and blessing in the land have not yet been fulfilled. The pulse of history, with three successive departures and three returns, has been a dramatic one. The most dramatic events, however, are still ahead. Is the present return of Israel the beginning of the last and ultimate regathering of Israel? Is this one more in a series of current events preparing the way for the end of the Time of the Gentiles? As non-Jewish nations jockey into position for their last moments of glory and judgment, it is important to realize that after the Time of the Gentiles ends Israel will finally experience all that has been promised and hoped for since the time of Abraham (Dr. John H.

*Walvoord, [Chancellor, Dallas Theological Seminary], **Armageddon, Oil, and the Middle East Crisis**, [Zondervan, 1990]. 79).*

- B. It is certainly true that God promised that Israel would inherit the land of Canaan. - Genesis 12:1-3,7
- C. Has God promised to again restore national Israel to the land of Canaan?
- I. The land promise to Abraham was fulfilled. - Joshua 21:43-45
- II. Retaining the land was conditional. - Deuteronomy 5:33; 28:15,64
- A. Israel was disobedient. - 2 Kings 17:7-22; 21:1-16
- B. Thus, they were destroyed from off the land. - 2 Kings 17:5-6,23; 25:1-21
- III. Restoration to the land was conditioned upon repentance. - Deuteronomy 30:1-3
- A. Restoration was prophesied. - Jeremiah 25:11; 27:22,
- B. The restoration promises were fulfilled. - Ezra 1:1-4; 2:70; Nehemiah 7:73
- IV. God finally cast off Israel for their disobedience.
- A. The promise of the everlasting covenant to the seed of Abraham was the land of Canaan. - Genesis 17:7-8
- B. God's covenant with Israel was conditional. - Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 8:19-20
- C. When Israel rejected the Son of God, God rejected Israel. - Matthew 21:33-43
- V. Old Testament national Israel cannot be restored. - Jeremiah 19:11
- A. Law of Moses - Deuteronomy 30:1-3,10; Galatians 5:1-4
- B. Levitical Priesthood - Nehemiah 12:44; Hebrews 7:11-17
- C. King in Jerusalem - Jeremiah 22:24,29-30; Matthew 1:12
- “The purpose of Christ's return to the Mount of Olives will be to establish Jerusalem as the capital of His new world kingdom.” (Walvoord, p. 195)
- D. Genealogies - Nehemiah 7:5; Titus 3:9
- E. Temple Worship - 2 Chronicles 36:22-23; Hebrews 10:1-4
- VI. The only hope for Israel from God is salvation in Christ by the gospel. - Acts 26:6-7,22-23
- VII. Those in Christ are now God's Israel. - Galatians 3:26-29; Romans 2:28-29; 1 Peter 2:4-5,9
- Conclusion:
- A. God has no further place for national Israel in His plan. - Matthew 21:43
- B. The hope of both Jew and Gentile is salvation through the gospel. - Acts 26:22-23
- C. Are you God's Jew?

Will Christ Return Soon?

Introduction:

- A. Premillennialists have always loved to engage in “date setting” for the Lord’s return.- e.g., booklet, “On Borrowed Time,” p. 48
- B. Without realizing it, even Christians sometimes slip into this trap.- e.g., “Jesus Is Coming Soon,” # 342, **Songs of the Church**
- C. Do the Scriptures teach that Christ will definitely return soon?

I. What is the issue?

A. **NOT**

- 1. Is Christ coming? - John 14:1-3
- 2. Is He coming literally? - Hebrews 9:27-28
- 3. Is He coming personally? - Acts 1:11
- 4. **COULD** Christ's coming be near? (I am more concerned with the possibility of Christ’s **IMMEDIATE** return than are premillennialists.) - Matthew 24:42

B. **IS**: Do the Scriptures teach that Christ will **definitely return soon**?

II. What can we know? - Deuteronomy 29:29

A. Things Revealed: **HOW** Christ will come

- 1. personally - Acts 1:11
- 2. visibly - Acts 1:11
- 3. audibly - 1 Thessalonians 4:16
- 4. gloriously - Matthew 25:31
- 5. with angels - Ibid
- 6. **AS A THIEF** - 1 Thessalonians 5:2

B. Secret Things: **WHEN** Christ will come

- 1. hour - Matthew 25:13 .If we can know the approximate time, why were the disciples of the 1st century to watch?
- 2. day - Ibid
- 3. watch - Matthew 24:43; Mark 13:35
- 4. time - Mark 13:33
 - a. “a fixed or definite period, a season” (Vine. 4:38)
 - b. “the decisive epoch waited for” (Thayer. 318)
- 5. times - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2 Matthew 24:34
- 6. seasons - 1 Thessalonians 5:1-2

III. Not even Christ knows when He shall return. - Mark 13:31-3

Conclusion:

- A. The Scriptures do **NOT** teach that Christ will definitely return soon.
- B. But we must watch, for He **COULD** return at any time.
- C. Are you ready? - Matthew 24:44

Christ and the Judgment

Introduction:

- A. A teenage boy was swimming with friends and started to drown. A middle aged man dived into the river and saved him. The same boy was later arrested for malicious mischief. When He appeared before the judge, it was the man who had saved him. He happily addressed the man as his savior. The man sadly replied that his role was now different. He was now his judge.
- B. Christ came once to save. - John 5:24-26
- C. He shall return to judge. - John 5:27-30
- D. What shall that judgment be like?

I. Those to be Judged

- A. All shall be there. - Romans 14:10-12
- B. Both the good and the evil shall be judged. - John 5:28-29

II. A Judge: Christ is that Judge. - John 5:22

- A. He is competent. - Hebrews 1:1-2; John 5:27; 2:24-25
- B. He is righteous. - John 5:30

III. A Standard: The Word of Christ is that Standard. - John 12:48

IV. A Day of Judgment - Acts 17:31

- A. That day is certain. - Hebrews 9:27
- B. That day is unknown. - Mark 13:32-33
- C. It will be when Christ returns - Jude 14-15
- D. What a great day that will be! - Jude 6; Matthew 25:31-32

V. A Verdict & a Sentence

- A. That verdict is final. - 2 Corinthians 5:10
- B. That sentence is eternal. - Matthew 25:46 (How long would it take a fly to carry all the earth to the sun?)

Conclusion:

- A. Life is **SO** brief; death is **SO** sure; that day is **SO** great; that verdict is **SO** final; eternity is **SO** long.
- B. Are you ready?

The Church Jesus Built

Introduction:

- A. When people ask, “What denomination are you a member of?”, I reply, “I’m not a member of any denomination. I’m just a Christian.”
 - B. That doesn’t mean I’m not a member of any church. I’m a member of the church Jesus built. - Matthew 16:13-18
 - C. What is the church built by Jesus?
- I. The church Jesus built is **NOT** a denomination.
- A. Most people think the church is just another denomination. - definition of “church”: “denomination” (**Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Dictionary**)
 - B. Is the church Jesus built a denomination?
 - I. What is a denomination?
 - a. “a religious organization uniting in a single legal and administrative body a number of local congregations” (Ibid), i.e., organization
 - b. Each denomination also has a creed and a party name (F.E. Mayer, **The Religious Bodies of America**. 3
 - 2. Does the church Jesus built have the characteristics of a denomination?
 - a. no organization larger than, smaller than, or other than local congregations - Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 1:2
 - b. no human creed - Revelation 22:18-19; cf. Acts 11:26; 1 Peter 1:23
 - c. no party name - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
- II. The church is the body of Christ. - Ephesians 1:22-23
- A. Christ has only one body. - Ephesians 4:4
 - B. It is composed of all saved people. - Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47
 - C. It is the assembly of people called out of the world into fellowship with Christ. - Hebrews 12:23; 2 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Corinthians 6:17-18; 1 John 1:3
- Conclusion:
- A. I do not ask you to join any denomination, subscribe to any human creed, or wear any sectarian name.
 - B. I earnestly desire that you obey the gospel so that you might be added by the Lord to the church, for only there is salvation to be found. - 2 Timothy 2:10
 - C. Will you not come to Christ and be saved? - John 14:6

Will the Good People of All Churches Be Saved?

Text : Acts 4: 10-12

Introduction:

- A. "I believe the good people of all churches will be saved." Many subscribe to this statement. Do you?
 - B. Surely a statement that involves the salvation of your soul is worthy of careful consideration .- Matthew 16:26-27
 - C. Will the good people of all churches be saved?
- I. Upon what basis shall we answer this question? - 1 Thessalonians 5:21
- A. not feelings, parents, human wisdom, creeds, etc., nor a preacher - 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - B. the word of God- Romans 10:17
- II. What does the Bible say about this question? (The opinion that the good people of all churches will be saved is based on several assumptions. We will look at those assumptions and see if they are scriptural.)
- A. Will good morals alone save? - Acts 10:1,2,22; 11:14; Romans 3:23; 6:23
 - B. Is religious zeal enough? - Romans 10:1-3
 - C. Is one church as good as another? (the principle of walking by faith)
 - 1. Was one sacrifice as good as another? - Genesis 4:3-5; Hebrews 11: 4
 - 2. Was one ark as good as another? - Genesis 6:13-22; Hebrews 11:7
 - 3. Is one gospel as good as another? - Galatians 1:6-12; 2 Corinthians 4:13
 - 4. Is one church as good as another? - Ephesians 4:4; 1:22,23; Matthew 15:13
 - D. Do all denominations belong to Christ? - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
 - E. Does God have a choice in the matter? - Matthew 7:21; Acts 2:47; Ephesians 5:23; Acts 4:10-12
- Conclusion:
- A. The answer to the question is "No." The good people of all churches will not be saved. - Matthew 7:22-23
 - B. One must be in Christ, in his body, the church, in order to be saved. - 2 Timothy 2:10
 - C. If you will believe and obey the gospel, God will save you and add you to his church. - Acts 2:47
 - D. Will you obey? - Acts 22:16

The Establishment Of The Church

Text: Isaiah 2:2-3

Introduction:

- A. Our missionary Baptist friends believe the church was established sometime between the beginning of John's ministry and the death of Christ.
 - B. We need to know when the church was established to:
 - 1. help identify the church and
 - 2. identify its law. - Hebrews 9:15-17
 - C. When was the Lord's church established?
 - I. The kingdom and the church are the same institution. - Matthew 16:18-19
 - II. When was the kingdom (the church) established?
 - A. Purpose - Ephesians 3:8-12
 - B. Promise - Genesis 12:3; Galatians 3:29
 - C. Prophecy- Isaiah 2:2-3
 - 1. last days - Hebrews 1:1-2
 - 2. mountain - Hebrews 12:22-23
 - 3. Lord's house - 1 Timothy 3:14-15
 - 4. out of Zion shall go forth the law - Luke 24:46-49
 - D. Preparation
 - 1. ministry of John the Baptist - Matthew 3:1-2
 - 2. ministry of Jesus
 - a. Matthew 16:18
 - b. Mark 9:1
 - c. Acts 1:6-8
 - E. Perfection
 - 1. law from Zion - Act 2:38
 - 2. power from on high - Acts 2:1-4
 - 3. beginning- Acts 11:15
- Conclusion:
- A. The church of Christ was established on the day of Pentecost, AD 33 (traditional reckoning of time), the first Pentecost after the Lord's resurrection.
 - B. It's law is the New Testament. - Hebrews 9:15-17
 - C. Will you allow God to add you to it? - Acts 2:47

The Universal Church

Introduction:

- A. Those who espouse a “new hermeneutic” deny there is a New Testament pattern to which the church is to conform.
For the individual believer, Christ's perfect example remains the benchmark for his or her life. For the corporate body of Christ, there is no historical prototype of the church for duplication. The kingdom of God is yet to come in its ultimate form (Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, **The Second Incarnation**. 6).

B. Every major apostasy began with a corruption of the organization of the church. - Catholic Church, Christian Church, institutional Church of Christ

C. There is a New Testament pattern for the organization of the church. - Hebrews 8:1-5

D. What is the organization of the universal church?

I. What is the universal church'?

A. It is the entity Jesus promised to build. - Matthew 16:18

B. It is composed of all those people saved by Christ. - Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47

C. Christ has only one such church. - Ephesians 4:4

II. What is “organization”?

A. definition: “organize”: “to set up an administrative and functional structure for” (**Webster's Third New World Dictionary** [unabridged]. 1590)

B. three characteristics:

1. pooled resources - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

2. oversight - 1 Peter 5:1-2

3. work common to all - 1 Timothy 5:16

C. not: arrangement, method, work - e.g., Bible classes vs. Sunday School

III. The universal church has no earthly organization.

A. The church is composed of individuals, not congregations. (Every metaphor used in the New Testament that describes the composition of the church applies to individuals.)

1. kingdom: citizens - Matthew 16:18-19; Ephesians 2:19

2. fold: sheep - John 10:16

3. vine: branches - John 15:5-6

4. body: members - 1 Corinthians 12:27

5. temple: stones - Ephesians 2:21; 1 Peter 2:5

6. family: children - Ephesians 3:14-15; Galatians 3:26

B. Individual members of this universal body function under a spiritual Head. - Colossians 1:18; 3:17

C. Christians universally have fellowship by each following Christ through submission to the words of His apostles. - 1 John 1:3,7

Conclusion:

A. Jimmy Lovell, founder of World Bible School, called for “universal action for the universal church.” This is the basis of both Roman Catholicism and the American Christian Missionary Society.

B. The universal church is a spiritual relationship.

1. Its only Head is Christ.

2. Its only tie is spiritual fellowship of individual Christians in Christ by submission to the word of His apostles.

3. It has no earthly organization.

C. We must maintain this pattern. - Hebrews 8:5

The Local Church

Introduction :

- A. Those who espouse a “new hermeneutic” deny that local churches of Christ must conform to the New Testament pattern for the local church; in fact, they deny there is such a pattern. “There is an exemplar and paradigm, but it is not a particular institutional form of the church in history. It is Jesus Christ himself” (Rubel Shelly and Randall J. Harris, **The Second Incarnation**. 78-79).
- B. The church of the New Testament, correctly studied, is indeed the perfect pattern for local churches today. - Philippians 3:17
- C. What are the scriptural characteristics of a local church of Christ?
 - I. It is composed of saints who agree to work together. - Acts 9:26-28
 - II. It is local. - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Romans 16:5
 - III. It assembles regularly. - 1 Corinthians 11:18; Hebrews 10:24-25
 - IV. It functions collectively. - 1 Timothy 5:16; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
 - V. It is organized. - 1 Timothy 2:11-12; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1; Acts 14:23
 - A. bishops - Acts 20:17,28
 - B. deacons
 - C. saints
 - D. supports evangelists - Philippians 4:15-16
 - VI. It is independent, autonomous. - 1 Peter 5:1-2

Conclusion:

- A. The local church, as revealed in the New Testament, is a group of Christians in a given locality who agree to worship together regularly and to do the Lord's work collectively through the use of pooled resources as an organized, functional body independent of all other organizations, human or divine.
- B. This simple pattern for the local church is to the glory of God. - Ephesians 3:8-12, 20-21
- C. We dare not violate this pattern. - 2 John 9

The Autonomy of the Local Church

Introduction

A. Many religious leaders claim to believe in local church autonomy.

1. Baptists: “Each church is an autonomous, spiritual democracy” (**Broadman Church Manual**. 147).

2. Institutional Brethren:

We are all in agreement that each local church is separate and independent in organization from all other local churches. All of us are opposed to the destruction of autonomy. (Lewis G. Hale, **How Churches Can Cooperate**. 77)

B. But these same leaders espouse practices that destroy local church autonomy.

1. Baptists: “Churches furnish the financial and leadership resources by which extensive work can be carried out by denominational bodies” (**Broadman Church Manual**. 148).

2. Institutional Brethren:

There are hundreds of churches which send financial aid to help keep the program on the air (Herald of Truth - KS). They have no part in the management of the program. They have no part in the selection of the preacher, singers, nor sermon topics. Their part is solely that of financial assistance. (Hale. 2)

C. How can each local church of Christ maintain its autonomy?

I. What is “autonomy”?

A. definition: “autonomy” - “the quality or state of being independent, free, and self-directing: individual or group freedom” (**Webster’s Third New International Dictionary**, unabridged. 148).

B. How does this principle apply to local churches of Christ?

1. NOT in legislative power (law making ability), for Christ is the sole head of the church and its only law giver. - Ephesians 1:22-23; James 4:12

2. Rather, it means the oversight of the execution of the will of Christ belongs within the local congregation and is not to be surrendered to outside control.

a. Elders are to be appointed in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

b. The elders have the oversight of and only of the work of the church of which they are members. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4

II. Why is autonomy important?

A. It is part of the New Testament pattern. - Colossians 3:17; 2 Timothy 1:13; Hebrews 8:4-5; 2 John 9-11

B. It protects the church from general apostasy. - Revelation 2:1-3,12-16; e.g., apples in barrel

C. Local people understand local problems and needs - e.g., selection of subject matter for radio program

III. How is the autonomy of the local church maintained?

A. Each church is to independently do its own work.

1. preaching the gospel - Philippians 4:15-16
2. edifying its members - Acts 11:25-26
3. disciplining its own unruly members - 1 Corinthians 5:4-5
4. assembling to worship - Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:18
5. relieving its own needy - Acts 2:44-45

B. Local churches of Christ may engage in concurrent cooperation.

1. Benevolence

a. The Judean Relief - Acts 11:27-30

- (1) condition: poverty in receiving churches - Acts 11:27-29
- (2) purpose: relief of needy brethren - Ibid
- (3) arrangement: contributing church sent directly to needy churches (no human organization or sponsoring congregation between) - Acts 11:29-30

b. The Great Collection for Jerusalem - Galatians 2:10; 1 Corinthians 16:1-4; 2 Corinthians 8 & 9; Romans 15:25-28; Acts 24:17

- (1) condition: deep poverty in receiving church - Galatians 2:10; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2,13-14
- (2) purposes:
 - (a) relief of needy brethren - Romans 15:26
 - (b) equality between churches (each church to have the resources to meet its own benevolent needs) - 2 Corinthians 8:13-14

- (3) arrangement: Each contributing church sent directly to the needy church (no human organization or sponsoring congregation between) - 1 Corinthians 16:3; 2 Corinthians 8:23

2. Evangelism

a. A congregation may send teaching to another congregation. - Acts 11:22-23

b. A church may act alone in supporting a preacher working with another congregation. - Philippians 4:15-16

c. Several churches may independently and directly send wages to a preacher working with another congregation. - 2 Corinthians 11:8

3. The New Testament pattern of congregational cooperation is concurrence (no pooling of resources by various congregations with common oversight).

a. No congregation acted as an agent for another congregation (Agency necessitates subordination).

b. No congregation assumed the oversight of any part of the work of another congregation or congregations.

c. Congregations did not pool resources under common oversight of either a board or an eldership.

d. The only reason one church sent funds to another church was for the relief of needy brethren in the receiving congregation.

e. The equality of each congregation relative to oversight was maintained.

IV. How can this autonomy be violated or destroyed?

A. Autonomy can be surrendered:

1. by force - e.g., Iraq invading Kuwait
 2. voluntarily - e.g., various states forming United States of America
- B. Many churches today have voluntarily sacrificed autonomy by:
1. setting up synods, conferences, conventions, or associations of churches
 2. contributing to human organizations
 3. contributing to sponsoring church arrangements such as “One Nation Under God”

Conclusion:

- A. The principle of congregational autonomy is a vital part of the New Testament pattern for the church of Christ which we must carefully maintain.
A congregation has no right to build anything larger than it is able to support. It has no right whatever to bind any other congregation to any program of work of its own selection. Each congregation must maintain its autonomy. Any effort that destroys the independence of the local congregation runs straight toward sectarianism, if not Romanism (E.R. Harper, “The Sponsoring Church,” 1939).
- B. The Lord in His great, divine wisdom made each local congregation of His people independent of every other congregation.
- C. Congregational support of human organizations and the sponsoring church arrangement:
1. destroy the autonomy of local congregations,
 2. are the same in principle as denominational synods, conferences, conventions, and associations, and
 3. thus are the first giant steps in creating a “Church of Christ” denomination.
- D. Let us determine to follow the divine pattern of congregational autonomy.

The Work of the Church

Introduction:

- A. At a “Gymnastics for Christ Youth Rally” in Beebe, Arkansas the “evangelist/gymnast” tumbled down the aisle as a part of his sermon.
- B. The church must be diligently at work. - 1 Thessalonians 1:2-3
- C. But it must be diligently doing God's work, not man's. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
- D. What is the scriptural work of the local church?

I. Background Principles:

- A. There is a New Testament pattern for the church which we must not violate. - 2 Timothy 1:13
- B. Individual Christians may do many things the local church cannot. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- C. The work of the local church reflects the nature of the relationship. - Ephesians 1:3,22-23

III. What activities is the local church authorized to engage in?

- A. evangelism - 1 Timothy 3:14-15; 1 Thessalonians 1:6-8
- B. edification - Ephesians 4:12-16
- C. relief of needy saints - Acts 4:34-35

IV. The church must not engage in work unauthorized by the New Testament. - 2 John 9; 2 Samuel 6:1-7

- A. general benevolence (glorified Salvation Army) - Romans 14:17; John 6:26-27
- B. social and recreational activities (glorified YMCA) - Romans 8:5-8
- C. politics (glorified political party) - John 18:36
- D. secular education (glorified school) - 1 Timothy 3:14-15; John 17:17

Conclusion:

- A. What kind of congregation do you want to be a member of:
 - 1. a nice, comfortable church that does little and expects little of you?
 - 2. a “live-wire” church that engages in all sorts of fun activities?
 - 3. a faithful church that diligently does the Lord's work and expects you to pull your share of the load?
- B. Your choice reflects what you want to be. - 1 Corinthians 15:58
- C. Be zealous in the Lord's work and be a member of a local church that diligently does what He directs and nothing more.

The Church's Work of Ministering to the Needy

Introduction:

- A. Quite often we are called “anti” and “orphan-haters.”
- B. We must avoid two extremes.
 - 1. acting without scriptural authority - 2 John 9
 - 2. failing to do what we ought - James 4:17
- C. What is the scriptural work of the local church in ministering to the needy?

I. Background Principles

- A. We as individuals are obligated to help the worthy poor, whether they are Christians or not, to the extent of our ability and opportunity. - Matthew 5:43-48; Acts 20:35; James 1:27
- B. Even as individuals, we have special obligations:
 - 1. to our own families (1 Timothy 5:8) and
 - 2. to our brethren (Matthew 25:40).
- C. The local church is neither required nor allowed to do everything the individual is. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- D. When a local church uses its funds, it is an expression of fellowship in Christ. - 2 Corinthians 8:1-4
- E. To find the pattern for the work of the local church in ministering to the needy, we must examine every scripture dealing with the subject, obey them, but not go beyond them. - 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 8:1-2; 2 John 9
- F. Our appeal must be to a “thus saith the Lord,” not to emotionalism. - Colossians 3:17; 2 Samuel 6:1-7

II. The Pattern Revealed

- A. Acts 2:44-45
- B. Acts 4:32-35
- C. Acts 6:1-4
- D. Acts 11:27-30
- E. Romans 15:25-26
- F. 1 Corinthians 16:1-4
- G. 2 Corinthians 8:4,13-15
- H. 2 Corinthians 9:1,12-13
- I. 1 Timothy 5:3,10,16

III. The Pattern Applied

- A. The widow indeed was the only permanent charge of the church. - 1 Timothy 5:16
- B. The local church is limited in its work of ministering to the needy to the relief of needy saints.
 - 1. Its first obligation is to its own needy members. - Acts 4:34-35
 - 2. A local church with abundance may assist another local church which is unable to meet its local relief needs. - 2 Corinthians 8:13-15
- C. Relief of the needy is not “a means of evangelism.” - John 6:26-27
- D. It is not the work of the church to eliminate poverty, provide the world's medical needs, or eliminate the world's social ills. - John 12:8; Romans 14:17; 1 Timothy 3:14-15

Conclusion:

- A. This pattern establishes a responsibility which the local church must not shirk. - 2 Corinthians 8:24.
- B. But it is also an exclusive pattern we must neither change nor violate. - 2 John 9
- C. Let us abound in the work of the Lord. - 1 Corinthians 15:58

Responsibilities to the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. A couple in Northwest Arkansas who floated from congregation to congregation, never becoming members of a local church and never recognizing any responsibility to a local church.
- B. Many Christians, although hopefully not this unfaithful, fail to realize their responsibilities to the local church.
- C. What are the responsibilities of a Christian to the congregation of which he is a member?

I. The Importance of Membership in a Local Congregation

- A. The only functioning unit of the church is the local congregation. - 1 Corinthians 1:2; 1 Timothy 5:16
- B. All Christians are to join a local congregation (idea of “free-floating” members is unknown to the New Testament). - Acts 2:44-46
- C. All the members of a local congregation have a peculiar responsibility to it to fully support its work (not to be discharged in any other way).
 - 1. based on **MUTUAL AGREEMENT** to work together - Acts 9:26-28
 - 2. based on **MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITIES** to one another - Romans 12:4-8 (Each of us has the same amount of responsibility to do his own part.)
 - 3. based on **MUTUAL LOVE** for one another. - Romans 12:9-10
 - 4. based on **MUTUAL NEED** for one another - Ephesians 4:16

II. The Importance of Each Member

- A. Each member of the congregation has his own function to perform. - 1 Corinthians 12:14-19
- B. Each member is important. - 1 Corinthians 12:20-24
- C. Each member should have the same care for one another. - 1 Corinthians 12:25-27

III. The Responsibilities of Each Member

- A. **ASSEMBLE** faithfully with the saints - Hebrews 10:24-25
- B. **GIVE** liberally to help the church discharge its work - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7
- C. **FULLY SUPPORT** all scriptural functions of the church - James 4:17
- D. Diligently do whatever **WORK** he can do - Romans 12:4-8
- E. Demonstrate **LOVE** and concern for each other - Romans 12:9-10
- F. **PRAY** for one another. - James 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. Each member of the congregation must fulfill his obligations for the local congregation to be successful in doing its work. - 1 Corinthians 12:14
- B. Are you doing your share? - Romans 12:11

Church Discipline

Introduction:

- A. When I visited Jim Patrick in the hospital just before his leg was amputated, he was cheerful and joking. He knew it was better to lose his leg than to lose his life.
- B. “discipline”: whole training and education of children; e.g., for the body to be healthy, all members need to be healthy
- C. There is a pattern; will we obey it? - 2 Corinthians 2:9
- D. How should we exercise discipline in the local church?

I. Right Attitudes - Proverbs 4:23

- A. purposes - 1 Corinthians 5:5-6
- B. attitudes - Galatians 6:1-2
- C. without favoritism - 1 Timothy 5:20-21
- D. long-suffering - 1 Thessalonians 5:14

II. Prevention (Vaccination): Teaching - Acts 20:26-27

III. Correction (Inoculation)

- A. private - 1 Thessalonians 5:14
- B. public - 1 Timothy 5:19-20

IV. Withdrawal (Amputation) - 2 Thessalonians 3:6

- A. what it is - Matthew 18:17; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 5:2,5,7,9,11,13
- B. where it is to take place - 1 Corinthians 5:4

V. Continued Admonition - 2 Thessalonians 3:15

VI. Forgiveness - 2 Corinthians 2:6-8

Conclusion:

- A. We cannot afford to overlook sin. - 1 Corinthians 5:6
- B. Will we obey? - 2 Corinthians 2:9

Decision-Making in the Local Church

Introduction:

- A. Recently the method of making decisions for the local church has become an issue.
 - B. What is the New Testament pattern for congregational decision-making? - 1 Peter 5:1-4
- I. The divine arrangement for congregational decision-making is elders in every church.
- A. There are to be elders in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
 - B. Elders are to rule in the local church. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4; 1 Timothy 5:17
 - C. To rule is to make decisions that others are obligated to follow. - Exodus 18:21-26; cf. 1 Kings 20:40
 - D. To refuse to follow the scriptural rule of God-ordained rulers is to rebel against God.
 - 1. the rebellion of Aaron and Miriam - Numbers chapter 12
 - 2. the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram - Numbers 16:1-40; esp. vv. 1-3,7,11
 - 3. Israel's demand for a king - 1 Samuel 8:1-8
- II. How should elders make decisions for the local church?
- A. In matters of opinion the elders should:
 - 1. learn and consider the needs and opinions of the members. - Acts 6:1
 - 2. make decisions for the church. - Acts 21:18,23-24
 - 3. inform the whole church of decisions that affect the whole church. - Acts 6:3; 15:19-20
 - B. In matters of faith elders should:
 - 1. decide privately what they believe is scriptural in order to have a united eldership. - Acts 15:5-6; Galatians 2:2
 - 2. inform the church of their position and their reasons for it and give the entire church the opportunity to discuss the issue and to express approval or disapproval. - Acts 15:7,12,22
- III. The whole church should:
- A. select its own officers (method a matter of liberty). - Acts 6:3
 - B. withdraw from impenitent sinners (in the assembly). - 1 Corinthians 5:4-5
- IV. How are decisions to be made in congregations which have no elders?
- A. Men still make decisions for the church. - Acts 13:1-3
 - B. Women may not rule over (help make decisions for) men. - 1 Timothy 2:12
 - C. The younger should submit to the elder. - 1 Peter 5:5
 - D. No one should seek or be allowed to have preeminence. - 3 John 9-10
 - E. All members of the church (including women) have the rights to:
 - 1. have their opinions and needs considered. - Acts 6:1
 - 2. be kept informed. - Acts 6:2-4
 - 3. have their approval sought. - Acts 6:2-5
- V. Whether a congregation has elders or not, all should:
- A. strive for unity and peace. - Ephesians 4:1-3
 - B. strive to please others and not to cause others to stumble. - 1 Corinthians 10:31-33
- Conclusion:
- A. The New Testament pattern for congregational decision-making is for elders to rule the local church.
 - B. Even in the absence of elders, mature men should lead in decision making.
 - C. This leaves no place for a popular vote to make local church decision or women or immature Christians (male or female) participating on an equality with mature men in decision making in the local church.
 - D. To rebel against the God-ordained leadership of the local church is to rebel against God.

How to Settle Issues in The Local Church

Introduction:

- A. God wants members of the local church to be one in faith. - Philippians 1:27
- B. How should doctrinal issues in the local church be scripturally settled?

I. Background Principles

- A. The Lord wants peace and unity in the local church. - Ephesians 4:3
- B. It is sinful to cause division. - Proverbs 6:16-19; 1 Corinthians 3:1-3; Romans 8:6
- C. Causes of division will arise. - 1 Corinthians 11:18-19
- D. But we must seek to lead erring brethren from their error. - James 5:19-20
- E. To have peace, we must have peaceable attitudes. - Ephesians 4:1-3; James 3:13-18

II. When church problems arise, we have an apostolic approved example to follow. - Acts 15

- A. Because this was a matter of faith, Paul and Barnabas did not yield. - Acts 15:1-2; Galatians 2:3-5
- B. The leaders of the church met privately to insure their unity. - Acts 15:4-6; Galatians 2:2,6-10
- C. The whole church came together to study the matter. - Acts 15:6-7,12
- D. The false teachers were given the opportunity to speak (though they were insincere). - Acts 15:7; Galatians 2:4
- E. The appeal was to divine revelation. - Acts 15:7-18; cf. Amos 9:11-12
- F. The leaders of the church stated the position of the church. - Acts 15:19-21
- G. The whole church concurred. - Acts 15:22-29

Conclusion:

- A. When divisive issues arise in the church we have an approved example to follow to settle them.
- B. By following this example we will:
 - 1. show our faith in divine wisdom
 - 2. and maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

The Holy Ghost Hath Made You Overseers

Introduction:

- A. It is noble for a man to want to be an elder (for the right reason). - 1 Timothy 3:1
- B. Every local church of Christ should strive to have qualified elders. - Acts 14:23
- C. But divinely approved elders are made by the Holy Spirit. - Acts 20:28
- D. How does the Holy Spirit make elders?

I. Illustration: By the Holy Spirit we are baptized into Christ. 1 Corinthians 12:13

- A. by following the precepts of the Spirit-revealed Word - Romans 8:14; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 10:17
- B. by human agency - Acts 8:38

II. By the Holy Spirit men are made elders. - Acts 20:28

- A. by following the precepts of the Spirit-revealed Word (meeting the scriptural qualifications) - 1 Timothy 3:1-2
- B. by human agency
 - 1. selection by the congregation - Acts 6:3-5
 - a. This is the only New Testament passage which shows how to select officers in the local church and thus constitutes the New Testament pattern on the subject. - e.g.
 - (1) Acts 20:7 (example) is the New Testament pattern for when we eat the Lord's Supper.
 - (2) 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 (command) is the New Testament pattern for how and when the local church is to raise its money.
 - b. The apostles in the infancy of the church ruled the local church as elders did and do later. - Acts 4:34-35; 11:27-30
 - c. The apostles decided privately (not secretly) the number of men to serve (a matter of opinion). - Acts 6:1-2
 - d. The officers were chosen from within the local church. - Acts 6:3
 - e. The entire church was informed of their decision. - acts 6:2-4; cf. 1 Peter 5:1-3; Matthew 20:25-28
 - f. The church approved and obeyed the apostles' decision. - Acts 6:5-6
 - g. The entire church chose its own officers (method of choosing not specified). - Acts 6:3-6
 - (1) in a decent and orderly fashion - 1 Corinthians 14:40
 - (2) not by politics - 1 Corinthians 1:10-13
 - h. If a man's selection threatens the unity of the congregation or if he is unqualified, his name should be withdrawn. - Ephesians 4:3; 1 Timothy 3:2
 - 2. appointed by an evangelist - e.g., President of U.S.: people (electors) elect; Chief Justice appoints
 - a. authority and meaning
 - (1) Acts 14:23: "*cheirotoneo*" - "extending the hand ... with the loss of the notion of extending the hand, to elect, appoint, create"(Thayer. 668)
 - (2) Titus 1:5: "*kathistemi*" - "to appoint one to administer an office" (Thayer. 314)
 - b. What should be done? - Acts 6:6; 14:23
 - (1) Certainly prayer should be used.
 - (2) The appointment should be done decently and orderly. - 1 Corinthians 14:40

Conclusion:

- A. If we follow these divine instructions faithfully, we can be assured that the Holy Spirit Himself has made the men so selected elders. - Acts 20:28
- B. Let us follow the Spirit-revealed path. - Colossians 3:17

Qualifications of Elders

Introduction:

- A. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the popular Governor of California, can never be President of the United States. Since he is not a natural born citizen, it would violate the Constitution.
- B. “God has probably required more of a man in order to serve as an elder than any country in the world requires of its highest leader.” (Lowell Williams)
- C. What are the scriptural qualifications a man must meet to become an elder?

I. Kinds of Qualifications: There are five types of qualifications for elders and a reason for each.

Kind of Qualification	Reason	Proof
A. character	the steward of God	Titus 1:7; cf. Hebrews 13:17
B. reputation	lest he fall into reproach	1 Timothy 3:7
C. ability	may be able to exhort and convince	Titus 1:9
D. family	prove his ability to rule	1 Timothy 3:5
E. experience	prevent pride	1 Timothy 3:6

II. 1 Timothy 3:1-7

- A. blameless: He must have no deficiencies of character or uncorrected sins that would keep him from being an example to Christians. - Hebrews 13:7; 1 Peter 5:3
- B. the husband of one wife
- C. vigilant: “sober, temperate, abstaining from wine” (Thayer. 613)
- D. sober: “of sound mind ...; hence, self-controlled, sober-minded” (Vine 4:45); “prudent, thoughtful” .Arndt & Gingrich. 810)
- E. of good behavior: “a well-ordered life” (Thayer. 356)
- F. given to hospitality: “not what is now meant by that word; namely, the keeping of a good table and an open house for one's friends... who are able to make him a return in kind; but it consisted in entertaining strangers...; the poor also, and the persecuted...”(MacKnight 451)
- G. apt to teach: “not merely the ability, but also the willingness, to teach” (**Expositor's Greek Testament. 4:112**).
- H. not given to wine: not one who actually drinks or one who behaves like a drinker, i.e., is quarrelsome and brawling
- I. no striker: “a pugnacious, contentious, quarrelsome person” (Vine. 4:83).
- J. not greedy of filthy lucre: “greedy of base gains” (Vine. 3:24); either by gaining money or material possessions through dishonest, illegal, or immoral avenues, or by being more concerned with money than with the Lord
- K. patient: “reasonable and gentle” (Alford. 3:323)
- L. not a brawler: “not contentious” (Vine: 1:146; so Thayer. 31)
- M. not covetous: “not loving money, not greedy” (Arndt & Gingrich. 126)

N. ruleth well his own house

1. subjection: “obedience” (Arndt & Gingrich. 855; Thayer. 645)

2. gravity: “that characteristic of a pers, ... which entitles to reverence or respect” (Thayer. 573)

O. not a novice: “not a new convert” (NASB)

P. reproach - “disgrace” (ESV, ISV)

Q. a good report of them which are without: “a good reputation with those outside the church” (NASB)

III. Titus 1:5-9

A. faithful children: “[Believing.] How shall he bring others to the faith, who could not bring his children?” (Bengel. 2:559)

1. not accused of riot: “of a dissolute, debauched, profligate manner of living” (Trench. 55)

2. or unruly

a. “that cannot be subjected to control, disobedient, unruly” (Thayer. 52)

b. “rebellious” (Arndt & Gingrich. 76)

B. not self-willed: “denotes one who, dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will” (Vine. 3:342)

C. not soon angry: “not quick-tempered” (NKJV, NASB)

D. a lover of good men: “a lover of what is good” (ASV, NKJV, other translations and lexicons agree); cf. Philippians 4:8

E. just: *righteous, observing divine and human laws; one who is such as he ought to be....2. In a narrower sense, rendering to each his due; and that in a judicial sense, passing just judgment on others* (Thayer. 148-49)

F. holy: “pure from evil conduct, and observant of God's will” (Vine. 2:227)

G. temperate: “self-controlled” (ASV, NKJV, NASB, and lexicons)

H. holding fast the faithful word : “cling to the trustworthy message” (Arndt & Gingrich. 215); verse 9

Conclusion:

A. To perform the important task of a bishop, a man **MUST** have these qualifications. -

1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:7

B. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you” men possessing these qualities, “whom we may appoint over: this church. - Acts 6:3

Duties of Elders

Introduction:

- A. Leaders are remembered as great because in times of trial they rose to the occasion. - e.g., Washington, Lincoln, Roosevelt
 - B. In a time of sweeping apostasy, the church sorely needs such leaders. - Acts 20:28-31
 - C. The success or failure of elders in the discharge of their duties will determine the eternal destiny of both the shepherds and the flock. - Titus 1:7; Hebrews 13:17
 - D. What are the duties of elders?
- I. "Take heed to yourselves" - Acts 20:28; cf. Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 5:3; 1 Timothy 3:7
- II. "Take heed ... to all the flock." - Acts 20:28
- A. oversee - Acts 20:28; 1 Thessalonians 5:12
 - B. shepherd (feed) - Acts 20:28
 - 1. feed - Psalm 23:2
 - a. teach personally - 1 Timothy 3:2; Ephesians 4:11; Titus 1:9; 1 Thessalonians 5:12; Hebrews 13:17
 - b. select competent, faithful teachers and evangelists - 1 Timothy 4:14; Acts 20:17; 1 Timothy 1:3
 - 2. guide - John 10:3-5; 1 Peter 5:3; Hebrews 13:7
 - 3. watch - Hebrews 13:17
 - a. care for the lambs - Romans 15:1; James 5:14-16
 - b. prevent the sheep from straying - Ezekiel 3:16-21
 - c. recover the lost - Luke 15:3-7
 - d. guard against predators - John 10:11-13; Acts 20:29-31; Titus 1:9-11

Conclusion:

- A. It is difficult to overestimate the importance of good elders to the local church. - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13
- B. Elders, perform your duties with zeal and care. - 1 Peter 5:2

The Rule of Elders

Introduction:

A. Extremes beget extremes.

1. In the fifties and sixties institutional brethren broadened the rule of elders beyond scriptural limits.
 - a. sponsoring church
 - b. "The elders decide; it's not my business."
2. For the last thirty years Charles Holt has led a charge to the opposite extreme, denying elders any rule in the local church.
3. Some are now arguing for popular, democratic rule in the local church.
4. With the Scriptures as our compass, we must chart a course away from all false positions and to the truth.

B. The Father wills that each local church develop and appoint elders. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5

C. What authority do the Scriptures assign to elders?

I. God has assigned leadership in every divinely ordained relationship.

A. the home - Ephesians 5:22-24

B. civil government - Romans 13:1-2

C. the church - Ephesians 1:22-23; Luke 22:14,29-30

II. Rule in the local church is the function of elders.

A. They are called "overseers." - Acts 20:17,28

1. This is the Greek word "*episkopos*," translated "bishop" in Titus 1:7.

2. It means "*an overseer*, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things to be done by others are done rightly, *any curator, guardian or superintendent*" (Thayer. 243).

B. They are to rule. - 1 Timothy 5:17 ("rule": "*to be over, to superintend, preside over*" [Thayer. 539])

III. What are the duties of members to the elders?

A. know and esteem - 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

B. honor - 1 Timothy 5:17; cf. vv. 3,18

C. follow - Hebrews 13:17

D. obey - Hebrews 13:17

1. They were selected as elders for their wisdom. - 1 Timothy 3:2

2. They are the divinely constituted overseers of the local church. - Acts 20:28

IV. How is their rule limited?

A. All human rule is subordinate to and limited by divine authority. - Acts 17:24; 5:29

1. civil rulers - Acts 5:29
2. employers - Colossians 4:1
3. parents - Ephesians 6:1
4. husbands - Colossians 3:18

B. How is the rule of elders limited?

1. They rule only the local church where they are members. - 1 Peter 5:1-4
2. They are not “lords over God’s heritage.” - 1 Peter 5:3
 - a. This is the principle behind all service in the kingdom of Christ. - Matthew 20:25-28
 - b. This does not eliminate rule but qualifies that rule. - Luke 22:24,29-30
- c. Jesus is the perfect example of this rule.
 - (1) He has all authority. - Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17
 - (2) But He served. - John 13:13-15
 - (3) In love He seeks what is best for His bride. - Ephesians 5:25; 1 John 5:3
 - (4) He does not simply issue orders but has set an example how to live. - 1 Peter 2:21-22
3. Elders do not have the right to:
 - a. legislate laws or to lead the church in unauthorized paths. - James 4:12; 2 John 9; Acts 20:28-30
 - b. forbid a preacher to preach any Bible truth. - Acts 20:26-27; Titus 1:10-13
 - c. tell members what they may study. - 2 Corinthians 1:24
 - d. tell Christians how to run their private lives in matters of opinion. - Acts 5:3-4
4. Elders should not enforce their own will in matters of liberty against the will and/or good of the congregation. - Titus 1:7
5. No elder should seek preeminence in the church. - 3 John 9-10

V. In making decisions for the church, elders should:

- A. learn and consider the needs and opinions of the congregation. - Acts 6:1
- B. inform the whole church of decisions that affect the whole church. - Acts 6:3; 15:19-20

Conclusion:

- A. For years I have heard brethren talk about the shortage of preachers.
- B. The real shortage in the Lord’s church is of qualified, dedicated elders.
- C. Elders should go about their work with serious dedication. - Hebrews 13:17
- D. The members should so behave toward the elders that we would deserve to have good elders.

Qualifications of Deacons

Text: 1 Timothy 3:8-13

Introduction:

- B. The office of deacon is an important office.- 1 Timothy 3:13
- C. But to fill the office, men must meet divinely ordained qualifications, be selected and be appointed.- 1 Timothy 3:8; Acts 6:3
- D. What are the qualifications of deacons? How should they be selected and appointed?

I. Qualifications:

A. 1 Timothy 3:8-13

1. grave: seriousness of mind reflected in character and conduct that demand respect
2. not double-tongued: “saying one thing with one person, another with another, with intent to deceive.” (Thayer. 152)
3. not given to much wine: “must not be a drunkard”(Dewelt)- cf. 1 Peter 4:4; 1 Timothy 5:23
4. not greedy of filthy lucre: “eager for base gain” (Thayer . 17) - 1 Timothy 6:10; John 12:1-6
5. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience: a knowledge of the word of God, steadfast loyalty to it and diligent application of it to one’s own life- cf. Hebrews 5:14
6. the husbands of one wife
7. ruling their children and their own houses well- Ephesians 5:23-25; 6:4

B. Acts 6:3

1. honest report: “of good reputation” (**NASB**) - cf. Acts 10:22; Hebrews 11:2,39
2. full of the Holy Ghost- Ephesians 5:18-19; Colossians 3:16; Galatians 5:22-23
3. wisdom- James 3:17

II. Selection & Appointment

A. selected by congregation - Acts 6:3,5

B. proved ... found blameless - 1 Timothy 3:10

1. proved: “to test, examine, prove, scrutinize to see whether a thing be genuine or not, as metals” (Thayer. 154)
2. blameless: “signifies that which cannot be called to account..., i.e., with nothing laid to one’s charge as the result of public investigation..... It implies not merely acquittal, but the absence of even a charge or accusation against a person” (Vine. 1:131)

C. appointment- Acts 6:3,6; cf. Titus 1:5

Conclusion:

- A. The office of a deacon is a work which any godly man could desire.- 1 Timothy 3:13
- B. But men must first be qualified.- 1 Timothy 3:8
- C. “Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you....”

The Work of Deacons

Introduction:

- A. Could you show from the Bible what the work of a deacon is?
 - B. This is an important office in the Lord's church.- 1 Timothy 3:13
 - C. What is the work of a deacon?
- I. All the New Testament terms used to describe the deacon and his work pertain to serving.
- A. *diakonos*: servant, minister, deacon - Matthew 23:11; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:8
 - B. *diakoneo*: serve- Matthew 25:44; 1 Timothy 3:10
 - C. *diakonia*: service- Luke 10:40; Acts 6:1
- II. Were the seven men of Acts 6:1-6 deacons?
- A. Of what does the "office of a deacon" consist?
 - 1. "office of a deacon" (1 Timothy 3:10,13) = "serve" (Acts 6:2)
 - 2. There were also qualifications to be met.- 1 Timothy 3:8-13
 - B. Do the men of Acts 6:1-6 meet these requirements?
 - 1. work - Acts 6:1-2
 - 2. qualifications- Acts 6:3
 - 3. selection- Acts 6:3
 - 4. appointment- Acts 6:3
 - C. Either the seven men of Acts 6:1-6 were deacons, or they were appointed to some other, unknown office in the local church which did the work implied in the phrase "office of a deacon."
- III. What, then, is the work of deacons?
- A. The primary task of the seven was to discharge the "daily ministration" by serving tables.- Acts 6:1-3
 - B. But by leaving the apostles free to accomplish "the ministry of the word" it is necessarily implied they were charged with the discharge of the physical duties of the church under the oversight of the apostles.- Acts 6:4
 - C. The elders of the church should devote themselves to shepherding and overseeing and assign the physical details to the deacons.- Acts 20:28
 - D. The preacher should not be used as if he were a deacon (unless he is one). - Acts 20:20
- Conclusion:
- A. The deacons have the valuable task of discharging the details of physical duties of the church thus leaving the elders free to oversee and shepherd the church and the preacher to preach and teach.
 - B. This is a good work that good men should desire.- 1 Timothy 3:13

The Unity of the Spirit

Text: Ephesians 4:1-6

Introduction:

- A. Latest figures indicate there are over 3,000 separate, recognizable religious bodies in America.
- B. This same study reported the fact of division in the church of Christ.
- C. We will answer four questions about the unity of the Spirit.
 - 1. What is it?
 - 2. Is it desirable?
 - 3. Is it possible?
 - 4. How can we attain it?

I. **A Prayer** - John 17:20-21

II. **A Plea** - 1 Corinthians 1:10

III. **A Plan**: The Divine Platform - Ephesians 4:4-6

- A. One Body (unity of relationship) - Ephesians 1:22-23; 1 Corinthians 1:11-13
- B. One Spirit (unity of revelation) - John 16:13; Galatians 1:6-9
- C. One Hope (unity of purpose) - 1 Peter 1:3-5
- D. One Lord (unity of authority) - Acts 10:36; Matthew 28:18; Colossians 3:17
- E. One Faith (unity of doctrine) - Jude 3
- F. One Baptism (unity of entrance requirements) - Romans 6:3-4
- G. One God (unity of worship) - John 4:23-24; Matthew 15:9

Conclusion:

- A. Indeed, the unity of the Spirit is a desirable and achievable goal. - Psalm 133
- B. If we will follow the divine plan, we will attain it. - Ephesians 4:4-6

The Bond of Peace

Introduction:

- A. Once a little country congregation which heated their building with coal became so divided that the two factions met at separate times and maintained separate coal piles for heating the building. A mischievous lad slipped in early one frosty, Sunday morning and scrawled on the chalk board, “One Lord, One Faith, Two Coal Piles.”
 - B. God wants His people to have peace. - Ephesians 4:1-3
 - C. What attitudes can we manifest that will help achieve peace?
- I. We must endeavor to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. - Ephesians 4:3
- A. We can have peace without unity. - Romans 12:18; e.g. ,I get along with my neighbors, none of whom are Christians, but we don't have unity.
 - B. But we cannot have unity without peace.
 - 1. “peace”: “harmony, concord”
 - 2. “bond”: “that which binds together”
- II. To do this, we must walk “a worthy walk.” - Ephesians 4:1-2
- A. “vocation”: “calling” - **ASV, NASB**
 - 1. name we wear - Acts 11:26; child disgracing family name
 - 2. employment - Romans 12:11
 - B. What are the characteristics of a worthy walk?
 - 1. lowliness - Philippians 2:3-8
 - 2. meekness: “Meekness” is “regularly used of animals which have been tamed, and which have learned to accept discipline and control” (William Barclay, **Flesh And Spirit**. 113-14).
 - a. obedience to God - Matthew 11:29; Philippians 2:8
 - b. gentleness to fellows - Matthew 12:20; Colossians 4:6
 - 3. longsuffering: “long-tempered” - James 1:19-20
 - 4. forbearing: “to hold up from retaliation” - 1 Peter 2:23
 - 5. love: active good will - 1 John 3:16-18

Conclusion:

- A. Peace among brethren is a wonderful thing. - song “How Sweet, How Heavenly, Is the Sight”
- B. Are you doing your part to maintain peace among brethren? - Ephesians 4:1-3

"Except They Be Agreed" (Fellowship)

Introduction:

- A. Many preachers today are calling for expanded fellowship.
*If one's unfaithfulness relates to difficult ethical issues, church government, or worship (while not denying one of the foundational doctrines of Christianity.), fellowship may be maintained indefinitely for the sake of exhorting and encouraging in the truth (Rubel Shelly, **I Just Want to Be a Christian**. 73).*
- B. Others have broken bonds of fellowship for unnecessary reasons.
- C. Read Amos 3:1-8 and comment on the text. Explain verse 3.
- D. Can we have fellowship with each other if we do not agree?

I. What is "fellowship"?

- A. meaning: association, joint participation, partnership, sharing
- B. Fellowship in Christ through the gospel is spiritual. - Romans 15:27; Ephesians 1:3
- C. Our fellowship in Christ is primarily with God. - 1 John 1:3
 - 1. The gospel calls men into fellowship with God. - 1 Corinthians 1:9; 2 Thessalonians 2:14
 - 2. The fellowship is broken by walking in darkness. - 1 John 1:5-6
 - 3. It is maintained by walking in the light. - 1 John 1:7
- D. We have fellowship with those who also have fellowship with God. - 1 John 1:7

II. in Faith

- A. "The faith" is the revealed will of God. - Galatians 1:11-12,23
- B. In faith we must have agreement. - 2 John 9-11

III. In Opinion

- A. Opinion is what men think. - Deuteronomy 29:29; cf. Exodus 3:1-5
- B. It includes things allowed but not required - 1 Corinthians 8:8-9
- C. In opinion we must allow each other liberty. - Romans 14:1-3

IV. Love should be the motive for all we do. - 1 Corinthians 16:14

Conclusion:

- A. On September 7, 1809, a little group in Washington, Pennsylvania, calling themselves the "Christian Association of Washington," adopted the "Declaration and Address" of Thomas Campbell. It's call was "In faith unity, in opinion liberty, in all things charity."
- B. We must agree on matters of faith, we should allow each other liberty in matters of opinion, and we should exercise love toward one another in all things.

The What, Who, Why, & How of Worship

Introduction:

- A. Although the Bible tells us Whom and how to worship, it never commands us simply to worship, for man naturally worships something. - Acts 17:22-23
- B. This lesson will answer four questions about worship.

I. **What** is worship?

- A. Old Testament: “shahah”:

to bow down, to bow down before God, to worship, to pay adoration, even without prostration (William Wilson, **Old Testament Word Studies**. 490); cf. Psalm 95:6

- B. New Testament word: “proskuneo”

1. “prop. to kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence” (J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 548)
2. “to make obeisance, do reverence to.... It is used as an act of homage or reverence” (W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 4:235); cf. 1 Corinthians 14:25

- C. It requires prostration of the heart, not of the body. - Luke 18:9-14

- D. Worship is composed of specific acts whereby we show our devotion, love and reverence to God and is distinct from our daily service to Him in all relationships. - Genesis 22:5; Psalm 99:9

II. **Whom** should we worship?

- A. God - Matthew 4:8-10

- B. not:

1. idols - Exodus 20:3-6; Revelation 21:8
2. men - Acts 10:25-26
3. angels - Revelation 22:8-9

- C. Thus, worship is to please God, not ourselves. - Isaiah 58:13-14; 1 Thessalonians 4:1; Hebrews 13:15-16

III. **Why** should we worship?

- A. because God is worthy of our worship - Revelation 4:8-11

- B. because it brings us into fellowship with Him - Psalm 42:1

- C. Thus, the purposes of worship Are:

1. to praise and glorify God - Psalm 111:1; Acts 2:46-47
2. and to edify each other - Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 14:26

IV. **How** should we worship? - John 4:19-24

Conclusion:

- A. It is truly a blessed privilege to be able to worship God. - Psalm 122:1
- B. Let us determine to worship Him in spirit and truth.

True Worship

Introduction:

- A. Many have the attitude that it makes no difference how we worship as long as we worship God.
- B. It does make a difference how we worship. - John 4:19-24
- C. How are we to worship God?
- I. The only acceptable worship is “true” worship. - John 4:23-24
 - A. All true worship consists, not just in outward acts, but in devotion from the heart (“in spirit”). - Romans 12:11
 - B. All true worship is “in truth.” - John 17:17
- II. True worship is “in spirit.”
 - A. **With understanding.** - 1 Corinthians 14:14-15; 11:26-29
 - B. **Orderly** - 1 Corinthians 14:33,40
 - C. **Reverent** - Psalm 89:7; Hebrews 12:28-29
 - D. **Sincere** - Psalm 122:1; 100:1-2; Matthew 6:5
 - E. **Holy** - Psalm 29:2; 1 Peter 2:5
 - F. **Instructional** - Hebrews 10:24-25; 1 Corinthians 14:26
 - G. **Pomp aside** - Romans 8:5-8
- III. True worship is “in truth.”
 - A. **Lord’s Supper** - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26,34
 - B. **Collection** - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
 - C. **Preaching** - Acts 20:7
 - D. **Praying** - 1 Corinthians 14:23,26,15
 - E. **Singing** - 1 Corinthians 14:15

Conclusion:

- A. For our worship to be acceptable to God, it must be true, i.e., “in spirit and in truth.” - John 4:23-24
- B. Is our worship acceptable?

The Lord's Day

Text: Revelation 1:10

Introduction:

- A. Various religious bodies teach that we are to observe the seventh day Sabbath as a holy day.
 - B. The majority of the denominations of Christendom assert that Jesus changed the Sabbath to the first day of the week.
 - C. What is the day of worship under the New Testament?
- I. Are we to remember the Sabbath?
- A. The Sabbath was given exclusively to Old Testament Israel. - Deuteronomy 5:1-3,12-15; Nehemiah 9:13-14
 - B. Jesus removed the Sabbath along with the Old Testament. - Colossians 2:13-17
 1. The Sabbatarians are wrong; the seventh day Sabbath has been removed.
 2. The Catholics and Protestants are also wrong. The Lord didn't change the seventh day Sabbath to the first day; He abolished it.
- II. What is "the Lord's day"? - Revelation 1:10
- A. The accompanying phrase "in the spirit" is found three other times in Revelation and always refers to a vision. - 4:2; 17:3; 21:10; cf. 2 Corinthians 12:2-4
 - B. Thus, this appears to be its meaning here rather than an attitude of worship. - cf. John 4:23
(The prepositional phrases "in the spirit" [Revelation 1:10] and "in spirit" [John 4:23-24] are identical in the Greek; the translators supplied the article "the" in Revelation 1:10.)
 - C. This is the only biblical occurrence of the phrase "the Lord's day."
 - D. Some contend this is another way of saying "the day of the Lord" and refers to the day of judgment of Revelation.
 1. The phrase "day of the Lord" is found 23 times in the Bible and uniformly refers to a day of judgment.
 - a. judgment of ancient nations - e.g., Isaiah 13:6
 - b. Old Testament judgment of Israel - e.g., Amos 5:18
 - c. Old Testament judgment of Jerusalem - e.g., Ezekiel 13:5
 - d. AD 70 judgment of Judah - e.g., Joel 2:31; Acts 2:20
 - e. final judgment - e.g., 2 Peter 3:10
 2. However, there is no proof the phrases "day of the Lord" and "Lord's day" are meant to be identical.
 3. If John had meant to say "the day of the Lord," he could have used that very phrase, which is a formula for a day of judgment, but he did not.
 - E. Rather, this seems to be parallel to 1 Corinthians 11:20.
 1. The "Lord's supper" is the supper that peculiarly belongs to the Lord, in that it is eaten in memory of Him. - 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
 2. The "Lord's day" is the day that peculiarly belongs to the Lord, in that we remember Him on this day.
 - F. The disciples remembered the Lord on the first day of the week. - Acts 20:7
 - G. The Lord's day is the first day of the week.
- III. What is the significance of this day?

- A. The Lord arose from the dead on the first day of the week. - Mark 16:9
 - B. The first day of the week was the beginning of: - Leviticus 23:15-16; Acts 2:1-4; 11:15
 - 1. the kingdom of Christ, -
 - a. The kingdom was to come with power during that generation. - Mark 9:1
 - b. The kingdom and power were to come with the Holy Spirit. - Acts 1:6-8
 - c. The Holy Spirit and power came on the first Pentecost after Jesus' resurrection. - Acts 2:1-4
 - d. Thereafter, the kingdom is spoken of as an historical reality. - Colossians 1:13
 - 2. the reign of Christ, - Acts 2:29-36
 - 3. the preaching of the gospel of the risen Lord, - Acts 2:32,36,38,40
 - 4. salvation in Christ, - Acts 2:40
 - 5. the church of Christ,
 - a. The church of Christ and the kingdom of Christ are the same. - Matthew 16:18-19
 - b. After Pentecost the church is an historical reality. - Acts 2:47; 5:11
 - 6. and the New Testament.
 - a. The New Testament came into force after the death of Christ. - Hebrews 9:15-17
 - b. It was first proclaimed from Jerusalem on Pentecost. - Luke 24:46-49
- IV. What are Christians to do on the first day of the week?
- A. We are to come together to remember Christ by eating the Lord's Supper. - Acts 20:7
 - B. We are also to take the collection for the church on this day. - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
 - C. These are the only peculiar demands the Lord makes of us concerning the first day of the week.
 - 1. The New Testament does not bind a day of rest.
 - 2. We may engage in other acts of worship on any day of the week, including the first day.
 - a. preaching and teaching - Acts 5:42
 - b. praying - James 5:13
 - c. singing - Ibid
- Conclusion:
- A. The Sabbath has been abolished as a day of rest and worship.
 - B. The Lord's day is the first day of the week.
 - C. On this day we are to remember the Lord's death for us by eating the supper that honors Him.
 - D. We are also to take the collection for the church on this day.
 - E. We may engage in other acts of worship on any day of the week.

This Do In Remembrance Of Me

Introduction:

- A. How do we remember great men?
 - 1. birthday
 - 2. permanent monument
 - B. God, in His wisdom, chose an entirely different way for us to remember His Son.- Isaiah 55:8-9; 1 Corinthians 11:23-29
 - 1. His death
 - 2. perishable elements
 - C. What does the New Testament teach about the Lord's Supper?
 - I. Why do we partake of the Supper?
 - A. because Christ instituted it (His dying request) - 1 Corinthians 11:23-25
 - B. because the apostles commanded it - 1 Corinthians 11:23
 - C. because the first century disciples left a binding example of its observance - Acts 2:42
 - II. What is the significance of the Lord's Supper?
 - A. It looks backward, to remember His death.- 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 (nails in steps)
 - 1. The bread represents His body. - Matthew 26:26; cf. John 10:9
 - 2. The cup represents His blood. - Matthew 26:27-28
 - B. It looks forward, until Jesus comes.- 1 Corinthians 11:26
 - C. It looks inward, a self-examination.- 1 Corinthians 11:2'-29 (“unworthily”, “unworthy manner”, **ASV**)
 - D. It looks outward, proclaiming Christ’s death.- 1 Corinthians 11:2. (“show” = “proclaim”)
 - III. How are we to partake of the Lord's Supper?
 - A. In Truth
 - 1. Elements
 - a. essential
 - (1) unleavened bread- Matthew 26:17,26
 - (2) fruit of the vine- Matthew 26:27-29
 - b. non-essential: number of containers- Galatians 2:4-5; Matthew 26:27-29; 1 Corinthians 11:26
 - 2. Time: first day of the week (time of day and number of times on first day are non-essentials) - Acts 20:7
 - 3. Place: Assembly (where assembled is non-essential)- Acts 20:7
 - 4. Participants: Christians- Luke 22:29-30
 - a. But each person must determine for himself whether or not to partake.- Ibid; 1 Corinthians 11:28
 - b. It is not essential for all Christians in the assembly to participate.- 1 Corinthians 11:33, cf. v. 21
 - B. In Spirit- 1 Corinthians 11:24-29; cf. little boy who cried
- ### Conclusion:
- A. By this simple memorial with its perishable elements the Lord's death for our redemption and His return unto glory are tied together, imprinted upon our consciousness and proclaimed to the world throughout all time.- 1 Corinthians 11:26
 - B. Therefore, partake worthily.- 1 Corinthians 11:27

The Privilege of Prayer

Introduction:

- A. One of the fondest memories of my childhood is of “Daddy” Sprott and his prayers.
- B. I often have heard it said, “Christians don’t pray as they used to.”
- C. What does the New Testament teach about Christians and prayer?

I. What is prayer? - 1 Timothy 2:1

- A. supplications: “the expression of personal need” (Thayer. 126)
- B. prayers: “any offering of our desires and wishes to God” (J.A. Bengel, **New Testament Word Studies**. 2:512).
- C. intercession: “seeking the presence and hearing of God on behalf of others” (Vine.2:267).
- D. giving of thanks: e.g., child who forgets to say, “Thank you.”

II. Should Christians pray? - Yes, because:

- A. God hears our prayers. - 1 John 5:14-15
- B. we are so commanded. - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
- C. of the example of others. - Luke 6:12; Acts 12:5
- D. in prayer our burdens are lifted. - Philippians 4:6-7

III. Whose prayer will God hear? - 1 Peter 3:12

A. one whose heart is righteous:

1. believing - James 1:6-7
2. sincere - Matthew 6:5-6
3. humble - 1 Peter 5:6-7
4. reverent - Psalm 111:9
5. unselfish - James 4:3
6. penitent - Acts 8:22
7. forgiving - Matthew 6:14-15

B. one whose life is righteous - 1 John 3:22

IV. How are we to pray? - Luke 11:1

- A. Object: God - Matthew 6:9; cf. Acts 7:59
- B. Avenue: Christ - John 16:24
- C. Nature: According to God’s Will - 1 John 5:14-15
- D. Time: Always - Ephesians 6:18
- E. Place: Everywhere - 1 Timothy 2:8

V. For what should we pray?

- A. praise - Matthew 6:9
- B. supplications
 1. the forgiveness of sins - Acts 8:22
 2. deliverance from temptation - Matthew 6:13
 3. wisdom - James 1:5
 4. comfort in affliction - James 5:13
 5. health - James 5:14-15
 6. material needs - Matthew 6:11

C. intercessions

1. God's will to be done - Matthew 6:10
2. furtherance of the gospel - Colossians 4:2-4
3. needs of others - 1 Timothy 2:1-2; James 5:16
4. welfare of the church - Colossians 1:19

D. thanksgivings - 1 Thessalonians 5:18

Conclusion:

- A. Prayer avails. - 1 John 5:14-15
- B. Therefore, "Pray without ceasing." - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Music in Worship

Introduction

- A. Probably nothing is more unique to the assemblies of churches of Christ nor causes more questions from visitors than the absence of instrumental music from the worship.
 - B. The popular attitude of the day is “It makes no difference how one worships; after all, we all worship the same God.”
 - C. Is the use of instrumental music in worship acceptable to God?
- I. Does it make any difference how one worships God?
- A. Old Testament Examples - cf. Romans 15:4
 - 1. Cain & Abel - Genesis 4:3-5; cf. Hebrews 11:4; Romans 10:17
 - 2. Nadab & Abihu - Leviticus 10:1-3
 - 3. Uzziah - 2 Chronicles 26:3-4,16-21; cf. Numbers 18:1-7; Hebrews 7:14
 - 4. Scribes & Pharisees - Matthew 15:7-9
 - B. New Testament Principle of Acceptable Worship - John 4:19-24; cf. Romans 12:11; John 17:17
- II. Does the Old Testament use of instrumental music in worship justify its use today?
- A. Instrumental music was acceptable under the Old Testament. 2 Chronicles 29:25
 - B. But we cannot justify our practices by the Old Testament. Galatians 5:1-4
 - C. The Book of Psalms is part of the Old Testament. - John 10:34; cf. Psalm 8:6
- III. What kind of music has God authorized in New Testament worship?
- A. Matthew 26:30
 - B. Mark 14:26
 - C. Acts 16:25
 - D. Romans 15:9
 - E. 1 Corinthians 14:15
 - F. Ephesians 5:18-19
 - G. Colossians 3:16
 - H. Hebrews 2:12
 - I. James 5:13
- Conclusion:
- A. Yes, it does make a difference how one worships God.
 - B. The only music in worship God will accept is singing.

Music in Worship

II

Text: Ephesians 5:18-19

Introduction:

A. Tell the story of why the instrument of music was first introduced into the worship in Midway, Kentucky.- "The introduction of the instrument owed its inception to the deplorable singing the congregation did. The singing had degenerated into screeching and brawling that would, as Pinkerton said, 'scare even the rats from worship.'" (Earl I. West, **The Search For The Ancient Order**. 1:311)

B. Is our worship in music what it should be?

What is the New Testament pattern for worshipping God in music?

I. the pattern discovered:

A. Matthew 26:30- "sung a hymn"

B. Mark 14:26- "sung a hymn"

C. Acts 16:25- "sang praises"

D. Romans 15:9- "sing unto thy name"

E. 1 Corinthians 14:15

1. "sing with the spirit"

2. "sing with the understanding"

F. Ephesians 5:18-19

1. "speaking to yourselves in psalms"

2. "hymns"

3. "spiritual songs"

4. "singing"

5. "making melody in your heart"

G. Colossians 3:16

1. "teaching and admonishing one another in psalms"

2. "hymns"

3. "spiritual songs"

4. "singing"

H. Hebrews 2:12- "I sing praise"

I. James 5:13- "sing psalms"

II. the pattern studied (according to the words used):

A. "Sing"

1. "humneo"

a. usages- Matthew 26:30; Mark 14:26; Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12

b. meaning- a verb form of the noun "humnos", meaning "a song of praise addressed to God. .."(Vine. 2:241; so Thayer. 637).

2. "psallo"

a. usages- Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19 ("making melody"); James 5:13

b. meaning:

(1) "... primarily to twitch, twang, then, to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, and hence, in the Sept., to sing with a harp, sing psalms, denotes, in the N.T., to sing a hymn, sing praise..."(Vine. 3:58)

(2) "a. to pluck off, pull out... the hair... b. to cause to vibrate by touching, to twang..., to touch or strike the chord, to twang the strings of a musical instrument so that they gently vibrate ... to play on a stringed instrument, to play the harp ... to sing to the music of the harp; in the N.T. to sing a hymn, to celebrate the praises of God in song. .."(Thayer. 675).

c. Does the word imply the use of an instrument?

(1) Words change their meanings. - e.g. pluck hair as worship

(2) The instrument is specified. - Ephesians 5:19

(3) All were to do it.- Ephesians 5:19

(4) No standard translation includes the instrument.

3. "ado"

a. usages- Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16b. meaning:

(1) "... is used always of praise to God. .."(Vine. 4:35).

(2) "... to sing, chant ... to the praise of any one..."(Thayer. 13).

B. "Psalms": "psalmois"

1. usages- Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

2. meaning- "... a striking, twanging ... spec. a striking the chords of a musical instrument ...; hence a pious song. .."(Thayer. 675).

3. Does the word imply the use of an instrument?

a. Psalms were spoken.- Luke 20:42-43; Ephesians 5:19

b. Psalms were written.- Luke 24:44

c. Psalms were for "teaching and admonishing."- Colossians 3:16 ("grace in your hearts; not a fiddle under your chin")

C. "Hymns ": "humnos"

1. usages- Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16

2. meaning- "... denotes a song of praise addressed to God. .."(Vine. 2:241).

D. "Spiritual Songs": "ode pneumatikos"

1. usages- Ephesians ~TT9; Colossians 3:16
2. meaning: "... 'spiritual songs' are songs of which the burden is the things revealed by the Spirit. .."(Vine. 4:65).

III. the pattern applied: - John 4:23-24

A. type of music:

1. vocal specified- Ephesians 5:18-19
2. instrumental eliminated

B. type of song:

1. "psalms," hymns," "spiritual songs" specified- Ephesians 5:18-19
2. secular songs eliminated

C. purposes:

1. specified:
 - a. toward God: praise - Acts 16:25; Hebrews 2:12
 - b. toward man: teaching - Colossians 3:16
2. entertainment eliminated- Romans 8:5

D. participants:

1. congregation specified- Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16
2. choruses, groups and solos eliminated

Conclusion:

- A. Let us strive to make our worship in music pleasing unto God in every way, so that He will be glorified and we will be edified.
- B. Are you doing your part?

Instrumental Music in Worship

Text: Ephesians 5:18-19

Introduction:

- A. Often visitors to our services wonder why there is no instrument of music. Many think we are either too poor or too cheap to afford it.
 - B. It is, rather, a matter of conviction. I do not believe one can use the instrument of music in worship and walk by faith.- 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - C. Is instrumental music in worship acceptable to God?
- I. Arguments for Instrumental Music Answered:
- A. David played on a harp, and he was a man after God's own heart.
 - 1. David also danced, offered animal sacrifices in worship and had at least eight wives. Why not bring that over?- 2 Samuel 6:15-17
 - 2. The Old Covenant is not our guide today.- Galatians 5:3-4
 - B. The New Testament does not forbid it.
 - 1. Whatever is unauthorized is forbidden.- 2 John 9
 - 2. Can you do it and walk by faith?- 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
 - C. It is only an aid, like song books, pitch pipes, etc.
 - 1. Compare with Noah's ark.- Genesis 6:14; 2 John 9
 - 2. To be expedient, a practice must be lawful.- I Corinthians 10:23
 - D. It is a matter of "Christian liberty."- cf. I Corinthians 8:8-9; James 2:12
 - E. There are harps in Heaven.- Revelation 5:8; 14:1-2 (cf. **ASV, NASB**); 15:2
 - F. The book of Psalms was not abrogated with the law of Moses.- Luke 24:44
 - 1. cf. John 10:34; Psalm 82:6
 - 2. cf. John 15:25; Psalm 35:19
 - G. The Psalms require an instrument.- Luke 24:44; Ephesians 5:19
 - H. I think instrumental music is pretty (I like it).- So do I, but I also like strawberries on the Lord's table; cf. Colossians 2:20-23
 - I. The word "psallo" means to pluck on an instrument.
 - 1. No standard translation so renders it.- cf. Romans 15:9; I Corinthians 14:15; Ephesians 5:19; James 5:13 from KJV, ASV, RSV, NASV, And NIV
 - 2. If so, instrument is specified.- Ephesians 5:19
 - 3. If pluck, why only one playing piano or organ?
- II. Arguments against Instrumental Music:
- A. violates law of faith- 2 Corinthians 5:17; Romans 10:17
 - B. violates law of worship- John 4:24; 17:17; Matthew 15:9
 - C. violates law of unity- I Corinthians 1:10; 1 John 1:3,7
 - D. violates authority of Christ- Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9

Conclusion:

No, instrumental music in worship is not acceptable to God.

The Collection

Introduction:

A. Some members want to balance the church budget by giving less and spending less. B. This illustrates the necessity of preaching on giving. - Acts 20:26-27

C. What is the New Testament pattern for financing the work of the local church? - 1 Corinthians 16:1-2

I. What? - “the collection for the saints”

A. Some contend the church should only take a collection for needy saints.

B. Others contend the church should only take a collection when a need arises.

C. Many passages authorize the local church to have a treasury. - e.g., 2 Corinthians 11:8

D. Other passages also authorize other uses for the church’s money. - Ibid

E. When all the lost are won to Christ, all needy saints are cared for, all Christians have been built up to the stature of Christ, and Christians no longer need to assemble to worship, **then** there will be no need for a collection.

F. This is the only passage that shows **how** the church is to raise its money.

G. Thus, this passage is the New Testament pattern for how the local church is to raise its money. - 2 Timothy 1:13

1. This is an apostolic command. - “as I have given orders”; cf. 1 Corinthians 14:37

2. It is general in scope. - “to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also”

H. Thus, it is wrong for the church to raise money in any other way. - 2 John 9

II. When? - “upon the first day of the week”

A. There should not be a collection for the church on any other day.

B. There should be a collection for the church every first day of the week. - “On the first day of every week” (NASB)

III. Who? - “each one of you”

A. The “you” are the members of “the church of God which is at Corinth.” - 1 Corinthians 1:2

B. The members of each local church are responsible for financing the work of that local church.

C. Each one of us as a member of this local congregation has fellowship in the collective work of this church to the extent he gives of his means toward these endeavors. - 2 Corinthians 8:4

IV. How? - “lay something aside”

A. Some contend this is simply a private laying up at home.

B. But Paul specifically calls this a “collection.” - verse 1

We find it used chiefly of religious collections for a god, a temple, etc., just as St. Paul uses it of his collection of money for the ‘saints’ at Jerusalem. (Adolf Deissman, **Light from the Ancient East**. 105), so Kittel, **Theological Dictionary of the New Testament**. 4:282-283.

C. Storing up at home would violate Paul’s purpose - “that there be no collections when I come.” - verse 2

D. The phrase “lay something aside” emphasizes the individuals members are to purpose ahead how much to give, rather than to give haphazardly. - cf. 2 Corinthians 9:7a

V. How Much? - “storing up as he may prosper”

A. The Old Testament rule was the tithe. - Hebrews 7:5

B. Christ gives us principles to go by. - 2 Corinthians 8:12; 9:6-7

VI. Why? - “that there be no collections when I come.” - verse 2 (an orderly arrangement for the finances of the local church so that no emergency collections are needed)

Conclusion:

A. Are you aware of what we are trying to do as a congregation? Are you trying to help meet these goals?

B. We can do so much! - Matthew 9:36-38

C. Are you having fellowship in this great endeavor?

Proper Attitudes for Proper Giving

Text: 2 Corinthians 8:1-5

Introduction:

- A. Tell the story of the man who wanted his billfold baptized. He had been covetous and said it needed baptizing as well.
 - B. The attitude of the rich young ruler toward his riches kept him out of heaven. - Mark 10:17-22
 - C. Our attitudes toward money can save or damn us. - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - D. What attitudes should govern our contribution to the church?
- I. Improper attitudes lead to "sparing" giving. (How can we harvest bountifully if we sow sparingly?) - 2 Corinthians 9:5-7
- A. covetousness: "a gift exacted by importunity and conferred with grudging, a hardwring gift"(Analytical Greek Lexicon; e.g., Christmas gift for boss)
 - B. grudgingly: from sorrow, from grief; e.g., man who "grudgingly" buys wife an anniversary present
 - C. of necessity: under compulsion, from distress or pain; Do we give to keep from going to hell or to save the lost?
- II. Proper attitudes lead to liberal giving.
- A. joy- 2 Corinthians 8:1-2
 - 1. It is a joy to receive. - 1 Timothy 6:17; e.g., small child at Christmas
 - 2. It is a greater joy to give. - Acts 20:35; e.g., parents of that child
 - B. willingness - 2 Corinthians 8:3,10-12; 9:1-2; cf. Exodus 35:4-9; 36:5-7
 - C. dedication to God- 2 Corinthians 8:5; Galatians 2:20; e.g., Daddy Sprott finding \$5 on way to church; He was sad because, in the midst of raising 10 children on the ranch during the Depression, he had no money to give. He thought finding the money was providential and put it in the collection. He wanted to help the preacher who had driven 80 miles from San Antonio to preach.
 - D. love- 2 Corinthians 8:8,24; How will a man who loves his family spend his hard-earned cash?
 - E. bountifulness: to receive blessings, sincere generosity - 2 Corinthians 9:5-6
 - 1. God blessed Israel when they gave. - Proverbs 3:9-10
 - 2. He will bless us when we give properly. - 2 Corinthians 9:8 - 11
 - 3. Do we believe him?- Numbers 23:19
 - F. purpose - 2 Corinthians 9:7
 - G. cheerfulness - 2 Corinthians 9:7
- Conclusion:
- A. The Lord is more interested in how we give than in how much we give. - Mark 12:41-44
 - B. But if we give with the right attitudes, we will give liberally. - 2 Corinthians 8:1-2
 - C. **First give yourself to the Lord.** - 2 Corinthians 8:5

The Most Valuable Thing In the World

Text: Matthew 13:44-46

Introduction:

- A. Explain the surface meaning of the parables.
 - B. If you could become the possessor of the most valuable thing in the world, would you expend the necessary time and effort to do so?
 - C. How can you secure for yourself the most valuable thing in the world?
- I. What is the most valuable thing in the world?
- A. It is not wealth. - 1 Kings 10:1-7,14-29; Ecclesiastes 2:11,18-19
 - B. It is not pleasure. - 1 Kings 11:1-8; Ecclesiastes 2:1-2
 - C. It is the kingdom of heaven. - text; Matthew 16:18-19
- II. How valuable is the kingdom of heaven?
- A. Its value is not apparent to all. - text; Romans 8:5
 - B. But to those who are spiritually minded, its value is priceless.- Ephesians 5:25; 1:3,22,23; Matthew 16:26-27
- III. How is it secured?
- A. Some find it by chance.- Matthew 13:44; cf. John 4:3-29
 - B. Others seek it. - Matthew 13:45; Acts 8:26-39
 - C. All must sacrifice everything in order to secure it. - text; Hebrews 11:24-26
- IV. How do some fail to secure it?
- A. Some degrade its value. - Acts 28:22
 - B. Some wait for the price to come down. - Acts 24:25
 - C. Some admire it from afar. - Acts 26:28
 - D. Some fail to make the necessary sacrifice. - Luke 14:33

Conclusion:

- A. The most valuable thing in the world is the kingdom of heaven.
- B. If you will secure this treasure as your own, it will bring you boundless joy. - Matthew 13:44
- C. Will you not determine to pay the price?

The Cost of Discipleship

Text: Luke 14 25-35

Introduction:

A. Multitudes of Jesus' day, failed to count the cost of discipleship. - John 6:66

C. What does it cost to be a disciple of Christ?

I. Why should we count the cost? - Luke 14:35

A. The Lord teaches us to count the cost.- Luke 14:28-33

B. the tragedy of falling back- Luke 14:34-35

II. What does the Lord demand of his disciples?- Matthew 16:24

A. Deny himself- Luke 14 33; Galatians 2:20; Luke 14:26; John 19:25-27; Matthew 6:24;
10:34-37

B. Take up his cross.- Luke 9:23

1. suffer persecutions- Matthew 10.24-25; 2 Timothy 3:12

2. not be ashamed- Mark 8:38; e.g., man who drank coke

C. Follow me

1. Continue in Jesus' word.- John 8:31-32

2. Be like Jesus.- Luke 6:40

Conclusion:

A. Does the return justify the investment?- Mark. 10:28-30

B. Will you not determine to pay the price?

I Have Been Crucified With Christ

Introduction:

- A. Tell about the baptisms of Debbie and Linda and their subsequent lives.
 - B. The difference is, one was crucified, whereas the other merely got wet. - Galatians 2:20
 - C. What does it mean to be crucified with Christ?
- I. How is one crucified with Christ? - Romans 6:3-5,17-18
- II. What happens when one is crucified with Christ?
- A. In His crucifixion, Jesus died. - John 19:16-18,30-34
 - B. When one is crucified with Christ he dies to:
 - 1. sin. - Romans 6:6
 - 2. self. - Philippians 3:7
- III. What happens after one is crucified with Christ?
- A. After Christ died and was buried, He arose to a new life. - Romans 6:9
 - B. After one dies and is buried, he arises to a new life. - Galatians 2:20; Romans 6:11
- IV. How complete is this union with Christ?
- A. "Christ liveth in me." - Galatians 2:20
 - 1. by faith - Ibid; 2 Corinthians 5:7; Galatians 1:23,11-12
 - 2. by becoming like Him - Luke 6:40
 - B. He is my life. - Philippians 1:21
- V. Why should I be crucified with Christ?
- A. to be made free from sin - Romans 6:17-18
 - B. to live with Him - Romans 6:8,23
 - C. because He loved us - Galatians 2:20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
- Conclusion:
- A. Dear sinner friend, will you not be buried with Christ? - Romans 6:3-4
 - B. Dear Christian, does Christ live in you? - 2 Corinthians 13:5
 - C. Are you crucified with Christ? - Galatians 2:20

Let Us Rise Up and Build

Text: Nehemiah 2:17-18

Introduction:

- A. Give the background of the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.
 - B. This event holds great lessons for us. - Romans 15:4; Hebrews 12:22-23
 - C. What lessons can we learn from the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem?
 - I. The Jews overcame formidable obstacles to rebuild the walls. - Nehemiah 2:10,19-20; John 17:14
 - A. mockery - Nehemiah 4:1-3; Matthew 10:24-25
 - B. threat of war - Nehemiah 4:7-23; Jude 3
 - C. sin within the city - Nehemiah 3:5; 5:1-13; 1 Corinthians 5:6
 - D. compromise - Nehemiah 6:1-4,17-19; Ephesians 5:11
 - E. lies - Nehemiah 6:5-9; Matthew 5:11-12
 - F. temptation - Nehemiah 6:10-13; 1 Peter 3:16
 - II. But Nehemiah and the Jews finished the walls! - Nehemiah 6:15-16
 - III. How did they accomplish such a great task?
 - A. faith in God - Nehemiah 2:18; 6:16; Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20-21; Hebrews 4:12
 - B. prayer (7 prayers of Nehemiah are recorded in these 6 chapters) - 1 John 5:14-15
 - C. A Will to Work - Nehemiah 2:18; 4:6; Titus 2:14
- Conclusion:
- A. We have a great work to do in building up the Lord's church. - Nehemiah 6:3
 - B. Let us rise up and build.

I Am Debtor

Introduction:

- A. When a baby is born in the US, its share of the national debt is over \$14,000.
- B. Paul owed an even greater debt than this. - Romans 1:14
- C. Do we owe such a debt? If so, how can we pay it?

I. Do we owe such a debt?

- A. Paul had been brought in debt to Christ because of what Christ had done for him, i.e., called him to the apostleship and saved him by His grace. - 1 Timothy 1:12-15
- B. We have likewise been brought into debt. - 1 Timothy 1:16
 - 1. Jesus has saved us by His grace. - 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - 2. He called us to be His disciples. - Luke 19:10; 6:40; Mark 1:16-18

II. How can we pay this debt?

- A. Paul recognized that, though he could never repay the debt he owed, it brought him under obligation to take the gospel to all. - 1 Corinthians 9:16-17; Romans 1:14-17
- B. Likewise, we:
 - 1. can never repay the debt we owe. - Luke 17:10
 - 2. have been brought under obligation to present to the people of our community:
 - a. the gospel - 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18
 - b. an informed people - 1 Peter 3:15
 - c. a united people - John 17:20-21
 - d. a Christ-like people - Matthew 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. We can never repay the debt we owe to the Lord. - e.g., debt to my mother; 1 Timothy 5:4
- B. But we should give a lifetime of dedicated service in recognition of the debt.

Do You Love Me More than These?

Text: John 21:15-17

Introduction:

- A. Tell the story of the mother with two sons: one professed his love with words and flowers; the other demonstrated his love by obedience and helpfulness. Who really loved his mother?
- B. We must love Christ.- 1 Corinthians 16:22 (phileo); James 1:12 (agapao); 1 Corinthians 13:13
- C. Do we really love Christ?

I. analysis of text

A. background

- 1. Peter had boasted of superior love.- Matthew 26:31-35
- 2. He had even tried to prove his love was greater.- John 13:6-9; 18:10; 21:1-8 (3 displays)
- 3. But Peter had denied the Lord three times.- Matthew 26:69-75

B. the text (Read from **NIV**)

- 1. three addresses: “Simon, son of Jonah”(not the honorable name Jesus had given him - John 1:42)
- 2. three questions
 - a. “do you love (agapao) Me more than these?”(“agapao”: “active good will”)
 - b. “do you love (agapao) Me?”
 - c. “do you love (phileo) Me?”
- 3. three answers:
 - a. “Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo) You.”
 - b. “Yes, Lord; You know that I love (phileo) You.”
 - c. “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love (phileo) You.”
- 4. three commands
 - a. “Feed My lambs.”
 - b. “Tend My sheep.”
 - c. “Feed My sheep.”
 - d. The three repetitions indicated Jesus had forgiven Peter.
 - e. But they also were to teach Peter that the proof of love for Christ is obedience and service, not brag and show.- John 14:15

II. Do we love Christ as we should?

- A. We must love him more than we love family.- Matthew 10:34-37
- B. We must love him more than recreation.- 2 Timothy 3:4
- C. We must love him more than money.- Mark 10:17-25
- D. We must love him more than life.- Luke 14:26

Conclusion:

- A. If we would be saved, we must love the Lord above all else. - Luke 14:33
- B. Do we love the Lord as we should?

Let Us

Introduction:

- A. Tell about Dad telling the members in Gordon that he didn't think 1 of 10 of them would make it to heaven.
 - B. We all face the danger of apostasy.
 - C. How can we remain faithful to Christ? - Hebrews 10:19-31
- I. "Let us draw near" - Hebrews 10:22
- A. What does it mean to "draw near"? - Hebrews 4:14-16; 1 Thessalonians 5:17 (**Prayer** the response of **Faith**)
 - B. How should we draw near?
 - 1. "true heart" - Matthew 6:5-6
 - 2. "full assurance of faith" - James 1:6-7; 1 John 5:14-15
 - C. Upon what basis should we draw near?
 - 1. "hearts sprinkled" - Hebrews 9:14
 - 2. "bodies washed" - 1 Peter 3:21
- II. "Let us hold fast" - Hebrews 10:23
- A. Hold what? - "the confession of our hope" (**NKJV**) - Hebrews 3:6,14; Romans 8:24-25 (**Steadfastness** the response of **Hope**)
 - B. Why hold fast? - "for he is faithful that promised"; cf. Hebrews 6:13-20
- III. Let us consider one another" - Hebrews 10:24
- A. How do we do this? - Hebrews 10:25 (**Attendance** the response of **Love**)
 - B. Why should we do this?
 - a. We show our love for each other. - verse 24
 - b. We are edified. - verse 24
 - c. It is commanded. - verses 24-25
- Conclusion:
- A. The way to the holiest is clear for those who heed. - Hebrews 10:19
 - B. But terrible punishment awaits backsliders. - Hebrews 10:26-31
 - C. Are you doing all you can to remain faithful?

The Vine and the Branches

Introduction:

- A. It is popular to wear T-shirts and jewelry and display buttons and stickers to show faith.
- B. Such signs prove little. - Matthew 23:5
- C. There is a true test of discipleship. - John 15:1-8
- D. How can we be true disciples of Christ?

I. What is the meaning of this metaphor?

A. the Vine

- 1. Israel was a figure of the true vine. - Hebrews 9:24; Jeremiah 2:21
- 2. Christ is the true vine. - John 15:1

B. the Husbandman

- 1. God the Father is the husbandman. - John 15:1
- 2. He cares for the vine and the branches. - John 15:2
- 3. The vine and the branches are for His glory. - John 15:8; 17:4; Ephesians 1:12

C. the Branches:

- 1. are not denominations.
 - a. no branches for hundreds of years
 - b. no fruit for hundreds of years
- 2. are individual disciples. - John 15:4-8
- 3. are all the same kind of branch. - Acts 11:26; 1 Corinthians 1:10-13

II. We are true disciples if we glorify the Father. - John 15:8

A. We glorify the Father by bearing fruit. - Ibid

B. How do we bear fruit?

- 1. by being purged (pruned) - John 15:2-3; e.g., corn, Hope watermelons; Psalm 119:9; Ephesians 5:26; 2 Corinthians 7:1
- 2. by abiding in the vine - John 15:4-5; Galatians 2:20; Hebrews 3:12-14
- 3. by His word abiding in us - John 15:7; 2 Timothy 3:16-17

C. What fruit are we to bear?

- 1. good fruit - Matthew 12:33-35
- 2. the fruit of righteousness - Philippians 1:11
- 3. the fruit of the Spirit - Galatians 5:22-23
- 4. the fruit of souls - Romans 1:13

Conclusion:

- A. What if we are not true disciples? - John 15:2,6
- B. What if we are true disciples of Christ? - John 15:7; 4:35-36
- C. Friend, are you a true disciple of Christ?

The Christians' Race

Introduction:

- A. Tell about the Isthmian games at Corinth.
 - B. The apostle Paul compares our lives as Christians to the contests in these games. - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - C. The principles he teaches instruct us how to reach heaven. - 1 Corinthians 9:24-25
 - D. How can we be successful in running the Christians' race?
- I. We must strive lawfully. - 2 Timothy 2:5
- A. It is of no value to strive in the wrong place.
 - 1. The Christian's prize belongs only to those in Christ. - Ephesians 1:3,22-23; 4:4
 - 2. A good moral life outside Christ is of no avail. - Acts 10:1-2,22; 11:14
 - B. There are entrance requirements. - Romans 1:16; 10:9-10; 2:5; 6:3-4
 - C. Within the stadium there are rules which must be followed. - Colossians 3:17; 2 John 9
- II. We must run in such a way as to obtain the prize. - 1 Corinthians 9:24
- A. Be temperate in all things. - 1 Corinthians 9:25,27
 - B. Lay aside every weight. - Hebrews 12:1
 - C. Run with patience. - Hebrews 12:1
 - D. Keep the goal in sight. - 1 Corinthians 9:26; Philippians 3:13-14

Conclusion:

- A. Those who won the Isthmian games received a corruptible crown and fleeting glory.
- B. If we run the race successfully, we shall receive a glorious, incorruptible crown. - 1 Corinthians 9:25; 2 Timothy 4:7-8
- C. So run, that ye may obtain.

Examine Yourself

Introduction:

- A. In preparing for an important exam, wise students will test themselves.
- B. Paul calls for Christians to test themselves. - 2 Corinthians 13:5
- C. Are you ready for the judgment?

I. Background

- A. You can know how you stand. - 1 John 5:13; Ephesians 5:17; text
- B. There is an objective standard. - John 12:48
 - 1. pass
 - a. "in the faith" - Galatians 1:11-12,23; Colossians 1:21-23; 1 Peter 2:2; 2 John 9
 - b. "Jesus Christ is in you" - Colossians 1:27
 - (1) faith - Ephesians 3:17
 - (2) obedience - 1 John 3:24
 - (3) life - Galatians 2:20
 - C. Cheating is futile. - Hebrews 4:12-13

II. The Exam

- A. love - John 13:34-35; Matthew 5:43-48
- B. obedience - 1 John 2:3-6
- C. purity of life - 1 John 2:28-29

Conclusion:

- A. The Lord knows how you stand.
- B. He will be your judge. - John 5:22
- C. Are you ready for finals?

Soldiers Of Christ

Introduction:

- A. The world is much concerned with carnal warfare. - e.g., Bosnia
- B. But there is a far more serious war going on at this time than any carnal one.- Ephesians 6:12
- C. Christians are the soldiers of Christ in this great conflict. - 2 Timothy 2:3
- D. How can you be "a good soldier of Jesus Christ"?

I. What kind of war do we fight?

- A. It is spiritual, not carnal. - 2 Corinthians 10:3-5
- B. The combat arrays Christ and His disciples against Satan and his henchmen.- Ephesians 6:10-12
- C. It is a war in which no quarter can be given. - Ephesians 5:11; II John 9-11
- D. There are no neutrals. - Matthew 12:30
- E. We have an objective. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4

II. How can we prepare for this warfare?

- A. We must recognize and obey our leader. - Hebrews 2:10; Colossians 3:17
- B. We must put away all entanglements. - 2 Timothy 2:4
- C. We must put on armor. - Ephesians 6:13-18
 - 1. loins girt about with truth - John 8:32; 17:17
 - 2. the breastplate of righteousness- Titus 2:11-12
 - 3. feet shod with the preparation of the gospel- 1 Peter 3:15
 - 4. the shield of faith - Hebrews 3:12-13
 - 5. the helmet of salvation - I Thessalonians 5:8
 - 6. the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God - Hebrews 4:12
 - 7. with all prayer- I Thessalonians 5:17-18

III. What are we to do as soldiers?

- A. Fight- 1 Timothy 6:12; Jude 3
- B. Stand fast - 1 Corinthians 16:13; the story of Thermopylae
- C. Endure hardships - 2 Timothy 2:3; 3:12
- D. Watch - 1 Peter 5:8; Romans 16:17

Conclusion:

- A. There is herein a call for both saint and sinner.
 - 1. Saints, fight! - 1 Timothy 6:12
 - 2. Sinners, enlist voluntarily for the fight. - Revelation 22:17
- B. A crown awaits the victors. - 2 Timothy 4:7-8
- C. Let us march together to triumph. - 1 Corinthians 15:57

Hospitality

Introduction:

- A. Tell of Sunday Ayandare's hospitality to Albert Dabbs and me and his refusal to accept money.
- B. This sort of hospitality should be a characteristic of every Christian. - 1 Peter 4:8-9
- C. What does the Bible teach about hospitality?

I. What is hospitality?

A. definition:

- 1. *philoxenia* (noun): "love of strangers" (Vine. 2:235)
- 2. *philoxenos* (adjective): "generous to guests" (Thayer. 654)

B. examples

- 1. Old Testament - Hebrews 13:2; Genesis 18:1-8
- 2. New Testament
 - a. Lydia - Acts 16:15
 - b. Philippian jailer - Acts 16:33-34
 - c. Aquila and Priscilla - Acts 18:1-3

II. Why should we be hospitable?

- A. It is our duty. - Romans 12:13
- B. It brings us unforeseen rewards. - Hebrews 13:2; e.g. Rick Lanning's parents keeping preacher
- C. It demonstrates love. - 1 Peter 4:8-9; Hebrews 13:1-2

III. To whom should we show hospitality?

- A. NOT just to our friends, family, and wealthy neighbors - Luke 14:12; e.g., Rocky and Ginger keeping me
- B. BUT to:
 - 1. the poor and needy - Luke 14:13-14
 - 2. visitors to our assembly - Hebrews 13:2
 - 3. fellow Christians - 1 Peter 4:9
 - 4. visiting preachers - 3 John 5-8

IV. How should we show hospitality?

- A. fervently - Romans 12:11,13
- B. cheerfully - 1 Peter 4:9

Conclusion:

- A. The Lord will richly reward our hospitality. - Matthew 10:40-42
- B. But if we fail to be hospitable, He will condemn us. - Matthew 25:31-46
- C. Let us begin today to measure up!

The Christian & Civil Government

Text: Romans 13:1-7

Introduction:

- A. Our nation began its course with the recognition of God as supreme Ruler.
We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights Governments are instituted among Men... (The Declaration Of Independence).
 - B. Yet religious people, even Christians, have had extreme difficulty through the years determining the proper relationship between civil government and Christians.
 1. Some say the Christian is to have nothing to do with civil affairs.
 2. Others say the church and government can meddle in one another's affairs.
 - C. What is the relationship of the Christian to the civil government which rules him and to the civil state of which he is a citizen?
- I. Civil government and the civil state are ordained of God. - Romans 13:1-2 ; John 19:11 (no particular kind of government; just government)
- A. definitions:
 1. civil state: "... an organized body of people living with in a defined territory and having the power to make and enforce law without the consent of any higher authority" (**Magruder's American Government.** 18).
 2. civil government: "... the agent through which the state exerts its will and accomplishes its ends. It consists of the machinery and the personnel through which the state is ruled (governed)" (Ibid. 20).
 - B. God ultimately rules the nations. - Daniel 4; Revelation 19:11-16
 - C. Rulers are God's ministers. - Romans 13:3-6
 - D. Even the basest of men may be God's ordained rulers. - Daniel 4:17; Romans 9:17
- II. Civil government has three God ordained purposes.
- A. to punish the evil - Romans 13:3-4; I Peter 2:14; Ecclesiastes 8:11
 - B. to praise the good - Romans 13:3; 1 Peter 2:14
 - C. to avenge evil - Romans 13:4; Luke 18:2-5; Amos 5:12
- III. The Christian is a citizen of two nations ("dual citizenship").- Mark 12:17
- A. He is a citizen of a civil state. - Acts 22:24-29
 1. One is either born or naturalized a citizen of a civil state (Magruder. 250-1).
 2. A Christian may
 - a. exercise the rights he has as a citizen of a nation. - Acts 16:16-24,35-39; 22:23-29; 25:1-12
 - b. serve in government office. - Romans 16:23
 3. The civil state does not have the right or responsibility to decide religious questions or to meddle in church affairs. - Ephesians 1:22-23; Acts 5:29
 - B. He is a citizen of the kingdom of God.- Ephesians 2:19
 1. This citizenship is gained by the new birth.- John 3:5
 2. This is a spiritual kingdom.- John 18:36; Luke 17:20-21

3. The church has neither the responsibility nor right to meddle in civil affairs.- John 18:36
*(The political priest and the partisan preacher who align the church with the political administration of civil and secular government are in the true sense disturbers of the civil peace and of civil society.... Political Christianity is a contradiction in terms [Foy E. Wallace, Jr., **The Sermon on the Mount and the Civil State.** 152].)*
- IV. Christians have certain God given obligations to the state of which they are citizens.
- A. Be subject. - Romans 13:2-5; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13-14
1. We must obey even laws we do not like. - Mark 12:13-17
 2. There s only one exception. - Acts 5:29
- B. Pay taxes. - Romans 13:6-7
- C. Honor (even the basest of men). - Romans 13:7; Daniel 4:17
- D. Pray for. - 1 Timothy 2:1-2
- V. May a Christian be a police officer or a soldier (They stand or fall together, for both involve the use of force to uphold the laws of the state)?
- A. The civil state has the God-given right and responsibility to use force to uphold its just laws.- Romans 13:3-4 (Christians have the right to participate in any proper function of civil government.)
- B. Christians are not forbidden to use force or even to take life in a lawful capacity.
1. The definition of the outward act of killing (forbidden killing) is the same in both Old & New Testaments. - Matthew 5:21-22
 2. What killings forbidden?
 - a. not accidental killing - Numbers 35:22-25
 - b. not the just administration of the death penalty - Exodus 21:12-14
 - c. not legitimate warfare - Numbers 31:1-7; 1 Samuel 15:1-3
 - d. intentional murder, the shedding of innocent blood - Numbers 35:20-21
 3. Although Christians must not take personal vengeance, civil government is God's appointed agency for vengeance. - Romans 12:17-21; 13:4
Peace in the world between nations, as between individuals, is the outcome of justice established by orderly and organized society, and applied through the functions of civil and penal law (Wallace. 218).
- C. The apostle Paul made use of the armed power of the civil state. - Acts 23:12-33
- Conclusion:
- A. You, as a Christian, have dual citizenship.- Acts 22:27; Ephesians 2:19
- B. Therefore, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's."- Mark 12:17

The Bible in Business

Introduction:

- A. For too many, the Bible is for Sunday but not to be brought into the business world.
- B. The Bible guides the Christian's life in every relationship. - Colossians 3:17
- C. What principles does the Bible provide to guide us in business?
- I. We have the obligation to make an honest living. - Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10
- II. We have the right to:
 - A. buy, sell and trade - Acts 5:1-4
 - B. go into business - Acts 18:1-3
- III. Bible principles will guide us to both righteousness and success in business.
 - A. Put the Lord first. - Matthew 6:33
 - B. Do not be covetous. - Luke 12:13-21; 1 Timothy 6:6-10
 - C. Work diligently. - Proverbs 6:6-11; 24:30-34
 - D. Be honest. -Romans 12:17; Ephesians 4:28; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10
 - E. Treat others as you want to be treated. - Matthew 7:12
 - F. Employers and employees: Be fair with each other. - Ephesians 6:5-9; Colossians 3:22 - 4:1
 - G. Be generous with the worthy poor. - Ephesians 4:28; 1 Timothy 6:17-19; Acts 20:34-35
 - H. Do not share in the sins of wicked people. - 2 Corinthians 6:14
 - I. Do not even give an appearance of compromise with sin. - Matthew 5:16

Conclusions:

- A. If these business principles would be consistently, diligently applied in the business world, all economic woes would vanish.
- B. Christians, such righteous practices must begin with us. - Matthew 5:16

Christmas

Text: Galatians 4:10-11

Introduction:

- A. I was asked by a little girl, "Is it wrong for me to sing 'Silent Night' and other religious Christmas carols in our school's Christmas pageant?"
 - B. The popular plea is "Put Christ back into Christmas," but we ask, "Was He ever there to begin with?"
 - C. Should we observe Christmas?
- I. Should we observe Christmas as a religious holy day?
- A. some Bible principles:
 1. We must have scriptural authority for all that we do. - Colossians 3:17; John 4:23-24; 17:17
 2. We dare not allow human tradition to be our spiritual guide.- Matthew 15:1-9
 - B. the origin of Christmas:
 1. The time of Christ's birth is unknown.- Luke 2:8; "... the Jews sent out their flocks into the mountainous and desert regions during the summer months, and took them up in the latter part of October or the first of November, when the cold weather commenced. While away in these deserts and mountainous regions, it was proper that there should be some one to attend them to keep them from staying, and from the ravages of wolves and other wild beasts. It is probable from this that our Savior was born before the 25th of December, or before what we call Christmas. At that time it is cold, and especially in the high and mountainous regions about Bethlehem., But the exact time of his birth is unknown; there is no way to ascertain it. By different learned men it has been fixed at each month of the year. Nor is it of any consequence to know the time; if it were, God would have preserved the record of it. Matters of moment are clearly revealed; those which he regards as of no importance are concealed" (Albert Barnes, **Notes On The New Testament**. 2:18-19).
 2. Christmas is of pagan and Catholic origin.- e.g. librarian in El Dorado; "Scholars do not know the exact date of Christ's birth. For more than 300 years, people observed His birthday on various dates. In AD 354, Bishop Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun. Christians honored Christ instead of Saturn, as the Light of the World. The Christians of Egypt celebrated Christmas on January 6, and many members of the Eastern Orthodox Church still observe this date"(The World Book Encyclopedia. 3:416).
 - C. Therefore, Christians should NOT observe Christmas as a religious holy day because:
 1. It is unauthorized. - 2 John 9
 2. We are forbidden to remember special holy days. - Colossians 2:14-17; Galatians 4:10-11
 3. The only day spiritually special to Christians is the first day of the week.- Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2
 4. We are to remember the death of Christ, not His birthday. - I Corinthians 11:26

II. Should we observe Christmas socially as a national holiday?

A. Paul's teaching on matters of liberty:

1. A Christian may socially observe customs that some view as religious. - 1 Corinthians 8:4;10:25-27
2. However, three important principles must be observed.
 - a. We must not cause an unbeliever to think we are worshipping. - 1 Corinthians 10:27-29
 - b. We must not cause a weak brother to stumble. - 1 Corinthians 8: 9
 - c. We must seek the spiritual good of others in all that we do. - 1 Corinthians 10:31-33
3. These principles specifically apply to the remembering of days. - Romans 14:5-6
 - a. A social practice is not sinful simply because it has a religious background. - e.g. names of days of the week; "Sunday-Sun's day, Monday-Moon's day, Tuesday-Tiw's day, Wednesday-Woden's day, Thursday-Thor's day, Friday-Frigg's day, Saturday-Seterne's day, these being the god of the sun, moon, sky and war, war, thunder, goddess of the sky, and god of seed sowing, respectively. Ency. Britannica"(Dave Bradford, **Provoker** [Dec. 11, 1975]. 3).
 - b. Binding the non-observance of matters of liberty s just as wrong as binding their observance. - e.g., Is it wrong to do on December 25 what may be done on July 29?

B. Paul's example on a matter of liberty- Acts 21:18-26

Conclusion:

- A. The religious observance of Christmas as the birthday of Christ is wrong and sinful.- Galatians 4:10-11
- B. The social observance of Christmas as a national holiday is a matter of liberty.- Romans 14:5

Partakers of the Divine Nature

Introduction:

- A. Often when people do wrong, they blame it on human nature: e.g., "I'm just human";
"That's human nature."
 - B. Our nature is what we make it. - Ephesians 2:3; 2 Peter 1:4
 - C. If we are to be saved, we must "be partakers of the divine nature." - 2 Peter 1:2-11
 - D. How can we become partakers of the divine nature?
- I. What is the "divine nature"?
- A. Some elements of the divine nature are unconditional (acquired by birth). - Genesis 1:27; Hebrews 12:9
 - B. But by sin responsible people acquire the nature (character) of Satan. - Ephesians 2:1-3
 - C. But we must acquire the nature (character) of God. - Ephesians 4:22-24
- II. How do we become like God in character?
- A. Escape corruption. - 2 Peter 1:4 (5 steps to Christ)
 - 1. What is "corruption"? - 2 Peter 1:4; 1 John 2:15-17
 - 2. How do we escape?
 - a. by the knowledge of God - 2 Peter 1:2-3
 - b. through the gospel - Romans 1:16
 - B. Give all diligence. - 2 Peter 1:5-7 (7 steps to heaven; the octave of a life of praise to God)
 - 1. faith (assumed) - Hebrews 11:6; 2 Corinthians 5:7
 - 2. virtue (moral excellence, moral courage) - Genesis 39
 - 3. knowledge - 1 Peter 2:2; Hebrews 5:12-14
 - 4. temperance (self-control, self-government, discipline) - 1 Corinthians 9:24-27
 - 5. patience (steadfastness, endurance) - James 5:11; Job ch's. 1-2
 - 6. godliness (reverence toward God, attitude which seeks to please God) - 1 Samuel 3:1-10
 - 7. brotherly kindness (warmhearted affection for the brethren) - Ephesians 4:32
 - 8. charity (love, active good will)
 - a. crowning point of our character - 1 Corinthians 13:13; Colossians 3:14
 - b. reflection of Father's character - Matthew 5:44-45
 - c. how exemplified - 1 John 5:3; 3:16-18
- Conclusion:
- A. What if we develop this character? - 2 Peter 1:8
 - B. What if we fail to do so? - 2 Peter 1:9
 - C. What should we do? - 2 Peter 1:10-11

Discerning Good and Evil

Introduction:

- A. If you were the witness to a crime and were called upon to identify the criminal from among the suspects in a line-up, how would you do it? - identifying characteristics
- B. As Christians, we have the grave responsibility to identify sin. - Hebrews 5:12-14
- C. How can we discern good and evil?

I. The Realm of Faith - Matthew 28:18; Romans 10:17; Colossians 3:17

A. Two Relationships

- 1. to God (spiritual) - Matthew 22:34-38
- 2. to man (morals) - Matthew 22:39-40
 - a. family - Ephesians 5:22,25; 6:1-4
 - b. business - Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:22 - 4:1
 - c. community - Matthew 5:16; 1 Corinthians 10:31-33; Romans 12:17-18
 - d. civil government - Romans 13:1,7

B. Three Principles

- 1. Is it authorized? - 2 John 9
 - a. specifically
 - (1) relationship to God: e.g., kind of music in worship - Ephesians 5:18-19
 - (2) relationship to man: e.g., husband head of wife - Ephesians 5:23
 - b. generically
 - (1) relationship to God: e.g., pitch pipe for leading singing - Ephesians 5:18-19
 - (2) relationship to man: e.g., husband buy wife flowers - Ephesians 5:25
- 2. Is it my duty? - James 4:17
 - a. relationship to God: e.g., assemble to worship - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - b. relationship to man: e.g., pay taxes - Romans 13:7
- 3. Is it forbidden?
 - a. specifically
 - (1) relationship to God: e.g., sabbath keeping - Colossians 2:14-17
 - (2) relationship to man: e.g., fornication - Hebrews 13:4
 - b. in principle
 - (1) relationship to God: e.g., Christmas as holy day - Galatians 4:10-11
 - (2) relationship to man: e.g., popular dancing - Galatians 5:19-21

II. The Realm of Opinion (Liberty)

A. Everything we say, do or think falls into one of three categories.

1. required - Matthew 28:20
2. sinful - 1 John 3:4
3. opinion (liberty): allowed but not required - Romans 14:5; 1 Corinthians 8:8-9; 7:38

B. Four New Testament passages tell us how to decide what is expedient (helpful, profitable) in the realm of opinion (liberty). - Romans 14; 1 Corinthians 6:12; 8:1-13; 10:23-33

1. Before it can be a matter of opinion (liberty, expediency), it must be lawful. -
1 Corinthians 6:12; 10:23; e.g., instrumental music in worship, gambling as a means to raise money
2. We should not contend for opinions. - Romans 14:1-2
3. We must not make our opinions a test of fellowship. - Romans 14:3
4. We must not lead one who is weak to violate his conscience. - Romans 14:15;
1 Corinthians 8:9-13; 10:25-33
5. We must not hurt our influence for good. - 1 Corinthians 14:16
6. We should seek peace. - Romans 14:19
7. We must seek to edify others. - Romans 14:19; 1 Corinthians 10:23-24
8. One should not violate his own conscience. - Romans 14:20,23
9. No one may bind his conscience on another. - Romans 14:22; Galatians 2:3-5
10. We should try to please others rather than ourselves. - Romans 15:1-3
11. We must not be enslaved to anything. - 1 Corinthians 6:12
12. We should do all to the glory of God. - 1 Corinthians 10:31
13. We should always seek the salvation of others. - 1 Corinthians 10:33

C. Four other principles help determine what is expedient in the realm of opinion (liberty).

1. We should not intentionally place ourselves in situations where we are tempted to sin. -
Matthew 6:13; 1 Peter 2:11
2. We must not let things of the world hinder our service to Christ. - Matthew 6:33
3. We should avoid companions who weaken us. - 1 Corinthians 15:33
4. We must not be in relationships that cause us to share in the sins of others. -
2 Corinthians 6:14 - 7:1; Ephesians 5:11

Conclusion:

- A. Our responsibility is to avoid sin. - 1 Corinthians 15:34
- B. To do this we must apply these principles.

A Living Sacrifice

Introduction:

- A. Tell of 6 year old Karen Barnes wanting to ride her bicycle to school because “everybody else is doing it.”
- B. We all face the temptation to be conformed to the world.
- C. How can we lead lives acceptable to God? - Romans 12:1-2

I. A Living Sacrifice - verse 1

- A. “beseech”: (*parakalo*) - to call to one’s side, admonish, exhort, appeal to, urge, urge to pursue a course of action”
- B. “by”: the grounds of the appeal, all that went before in the epistle
- C. “mercies” (plural a Hebraism): pity, compassions for the ills of others, manifestations of pity
- D. “present your bodies a living sacrifice”
 - 1. allusion to the sacrifices of the Old Testament (Leviticus 4-5; Numbers 28-29)
 - a. Required sacrifices in Israel, apart from those for specific sins, were annually 601,093 lambs, 112 bullocks, 32 rams, and 18 kids of the goats.
 - b. Yet this veritable river of blood could never take away one sin. - Hebrews 10:4
 - c. Only the blood of Christ could do this. - Hebrews 9:13-14
 - d. Rather than a dead animal sacrifice, God wants me to present my body to Him as a living sacrifice.
 - (1) “holy”
 - (a) undefiled - Leviticus 22:20
 - (b) set apart from sin and to God, pure
 - (2) “acceptable to God”: only such a sacrifice is acceptable to God - Deuteronomy 17:1
- E. “reasonable service”
 - 1. “reasonable” (*logiken*) - pertaining to the mind, rational, spiritual
 - 2. “service” (*latreian*): the service of God, especially according to Old Testament requirements

II. Not Conformed but Transformed - verse 2

- A. “Do not be conformed to this world”
 - 1. “conformed”: fashioned or shaped like another”
 - 2. “this world” - 1 John 2:15-17
- B. “be transformed by the renewing of your mind.”
 - 1. “transformed”: changed into another form - Matthew 17:1-2
 - 2. “renewing of your mind” - Ephesians 4:22-24
- C. “prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God” (“prove”: to test, examine, to see if a thing is genuine or not, demonstrate) - Matthew 5:16

Conclusion:

Will you not be transformed, so that you might be an acceptable, living sacrifice to God?

Forgiving One Another

Introduction:

- A. Tell how holding a grudge almost destroyed Johnny.
- B. How many of us hold a grudge toward another person? - Ephesians 4:31-32
- C. What should our attitude be toward those who do wrong to us'?

I. Should we hold a grudge?

- A. definition: "a feeling of deep-seated resentment or ill will" (**Webster's Third New International Dictionary**, unabridged. 1:1005)
- B. We should never hold a grudge. - Ephesians 4:31-32; e.g., Homer Hailey's attitude toward the man who beat him up

II. Should we seek personal vengeance?

- A. definition: "punishment ... to avenge an injured person ... to inflict punishment on" (Thayer. 194).
- B. We should never seek personal vengeance. - Romans 12:17-21

III. Should we forgive them?

- A. What is biblical forgiveness?
 - 1. definition: "primarily, to send forth, send away ..., to remit... (a) debts... these being completely canceled..."(Vine. 2:122)
 - 2. God's forgiveness is the model for ours. - Matthew 6:12
 - 3. When God forgives:
 - a. He forgets. - Hebrews 8:12
 - b. He restores lost fellowship. - Revelation 3:19-20
- B. Should we forgive those who wrong us? - Matthew 18:21-35
- C. Upon what basis should we forgive?
 - 1. on same basis God forgives us - Matthew 6:12
 - a. He seeks us. - Luke 19:10
 - b. We must seek Him. - Acts 17:27
 - c. We must repent. - Acts 3:19
 - 2. When one has been wronged.
 - a. The one wronged should seek the sinner. - Matthew 18:15-17
 - b. The sinner should seek the one wronged. - Matthew 5:23-24
 - c. The one who sinned must repent. - Luke 17:3-4

Conclusion:

- A. If Joseph could forgive his brothers, we can forgive each other. - Genesis 37; 50:14-21
- B. If God can forgive us, we can forgive each other. - Ephesians 4:32
- C. "If any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye." - Colossians 3:13

Worldliness

Introduction:

- A. Tell about watching the ships come through the Houston Ship Channel in Baytown.
- B. As a ship must be in the water, but the water must not be in the ship; so Christians must be in the world, but the world must not be in us. - Titus 2:11-14
- C. What should our attitude be toward worldliness?

I. What is worldliness?

- A. To be worldly is to be conformed to the world. - Romans 12:1-2
- B. This includes things that are **not** sinful in themselves. - 1 John 2:15-17
 - 1. The "world" here does not mean the natural creation, for it is not of God. - cf. Acts 17:24; 1 John 2:16
 - 2. Nor is it the people of the world, for we must not love this world. - cf. John 3:16; 1 John 2:15; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
 - 3. Rather, it is sin and its allurements. - 1 John 2:16; cf. Genesis 3:6; Ephesians 2:1-2
- C. But, if we place the material things of the natural creation or our relationships with people of the world ahead of God, we are worldly. - Matthew 13:22; 2 Timothy 4:10

II. Christians must not be worldly. - Titus 2:11-14; 1 John 2:15-17

III. How can we overcome worldliness? - e.g., fighting the flu

- A. prevention (vaccination)
 - 1. spiritual mindedness - Colossians 3:1-4
 - 2. Bible study - Psalm 119:11
 - 3. prayer - Ephesians 6:10-12,18
 - 4. church attendance - Hebrews 10:24-25
 - 5. sound preaching - Titus 2:1,11-15
- B. cure
 - 1. repentance (inoculation) - Revelation 3:19
 - 2. corrective discipline (amputation) - 1 Corinthians 5:3-6

Conclusion:

- A. Christian, we cannot love both God and the world. - James 4:4
- B. We shall reap the results of our choice. - Galatians 6:7-8
- C. Will you not choose God and spurn the world?

Do Not Love the World

Text: 1 John 2:15-17

Introduction:

- A. Tell of seeing ocean going cruise ship when Hawkins were here - The ship must be in the water, but the water must not be in the ship.
 - B. We must maintain the right attitude toward the world.- text
 - C. What should our attitude be toward the world?
- I. One cannot love both God and the world.- 1 John 2:15; James 4:4
- II. What is the world?
- A. not God's creation- Acts 17:24; Colossians 2:20-23
 - B. not the people of the world - John 3:16
 - C. sin and its allurements- John 17:14-16
- III. What is in the world? - 1 John 2:16
- A. lust of the flesh- Romans 8:5; Galatians 5:16-17
 - B. lust of the eyes - 2 Peter 2:13-14
 - C. pride of life - 1 Corinthians 1:26-29
- IV. How does the world allure? - James 1:13-15
- A. temptation of Eve - Genesis 3:6
 - B. temptation of Jesus - Matthew 4:1-11; Hebrews 4:15
- V. Why not love the world?- 1 John 2:17; Galatians 6:7-8
- Conclusion:
- A. We cannot love both God and the world.- 1 John 2:15
 - B. We can choose God and life or the world and decay.- 1 John 2:17
 - C. Which shall it be?- Joshua 24:15

Flee Also Youthful Lusts

Introduction:

- A. Paul warns us to flee something and to pursue something else. - 2 Timothy 2:22
- C. What should young people flee and what should they pursue?
- I. "Flee also youthful lusts" ("flee": "*seek safety in flight* 3. in a moral sense flee from, avoid, shun"[Arndt & Gingrich. 863]) - cf. Genesis 39:1-12
 - A. fornication - 1 Corinthians 6:18; Hebrews 13:4; Matthew 19:9
 - B. lewdness - Galatians 5:19-21
 - "unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence ... wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc." (Thayer. 79-80)
 - 1. shamelessness (immodest dress) - 1 Timothy 2:9-10; Revelation 3:18; Genesis 3:7-11,21
 - 2. filthy words - Ephesians 4:29; Matthew 12:36-37
 - 3. indecent bodily movements (dancing) - cf. Mark 6:17-28
 - 4. unchaste handling of males and females (dancing, "making out")
- II. follow ("*to run swiftly in order to catch some person or thing, to run after* 5. metaph. with acc. of thing, to pursue i.e. *to seek after eagerly, earnestly endeavor to acquire*"(Thayer. 153))
 - A. righteousness: the character or quality of being right or just before God - Romans 6:12-13
 - B. faith - 2 Corinthians 5:7; Romans 10:17
 - C. charity - 1 John 3:16-18
 - D. peace - Hebrews 12:14
 - E. with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart - 1 Corinthians 1:2; Hebrews 10:22,24-25; 1 Corinthians 15:33

Conclusion:

- A. We must flee sin with all our might.
- B. We must be equally ardent in pursuing righteousness.
- B. Are you among those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart? - Hebrews 10:22

Lie Not

Introduction:

- A. Construct two situations and ask which is wrong.
 - 1. bold, self-serving lie
 - 2. “little, white lie”
 - B. The Lord tells us not to lie. - Ephesians 4:25
 - C. Men have invented ways to soften or circumvent this command.
 - 1. Situation Ethics
 - 2. mental reservation
 - D. definition: “In its very essence, a lie is something said with the intent to deceive” (ISBE. 3:1887).
 - E. What kinds of lies are acceptable to God?
- I. There are different kinds of lies.
- A. Bold, Self-Serving - Genesis 27:19-20
 - B. Half-Truth - Genesis 20:1-13
 - C. Evasion of Truth - Genesis 4:9; e.g., not declaring all income to IRS
 - D. Acted Out - Genesis 37:1-2
 - E. Failure to Keep an Agreement - Genesis 31:41
 - F. Rash Promise - Judges 11:29-40; e.g., parents’ promises to children
 - G. Slander - Proverbs 10:18
 - H. Flattery - Proverbs 29:5
 - I. Hypocritical Life - 1 John 1:6
 - J. False Teaching - 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12
- II. Are any of these lies acceptable to God?
- A. Where did lies originate?
 - 1. not from God - Titus 1:2; Ephesians 4:20-25
 - 2. from Satan - John 8:44; Genesis 3:1-6, 22-24
 - B. God hates lies. - Proverbs 6:16-19
 - C. So must we. - Psalm 119:104
 - D. We are to speak the truth not lies. - Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9
 - E. ALL liars are condemned. - Revelation 21:8
- Conclusion:
- A. God hates ALL lies.
 - B. We must put away ALL lying or be condemned.

Gossip

Introduction:

- A. Some animals are small but dangerous.
- B. The tongue is also small but dangerous. - Proverbs 18:21
- C. One of the chief dangers of the tongue is gossip.
- D. What does the Bible teach about gossip?

I. What is “gossip”?

- A. idle, careless talk about others - 1 Timothy 5:13
 - 1. “tattlers”
 - a. “to indulge in empty and foolish talk” (Thayer, p. 655)
 - b. “talk nonsense (about), bring unjustified charges against” (Arndt 6 Gingrich, p. 870)
 - 2. “busybodies”: “meddling in other persons’ affairs” (Vine. 1,:61); cf. Proverbs 26:17
- B. malicious speech about others - 2 Corinthians 12:20
 - 1. “backbitings”: “slander, defamation” (Arndt 6 Gingrich. 413)
 - 2. “whisperings”: “secret slander” (Vine, IV, 212); often done by insinuation

II. Why should we not gossip?

- A. It brings trouble on the gossip. - Proverbs 21:23
- B. It stirs up strife. - Proverbs 26:20-21
- C. It hurts the subject. - Proverbs 26:22
- D. God hates it! - Proverbs 6:16-19

III. How can we avoid gossip?

- A. Ask four questions before we say something about another.
 - 1. Is it true? - Ephesians 4:25 (Are you sure?)
 - 2. Will it do any good to tell it? - Ephesians 4:29
 - 3. Will it help all involved to tell it? - Ibid
 - 4. Have you spoken to the person himself? - Galatians 6:1
- B. Remember the power of the tongue. - Proverbs 18:21

Conclusion:

- A. The one who engages in gossip is being a fool. - Proverbs 10:18
- C. Let us determine to keep our lips pure.

Murmuring

Introduction:

- A. Once I spent a miserable week in the home of a preacher who complained almost constantly about almost everything (born in the objective case and the kickative mood and weaned on a sour pickle).
 - B. The apostle Paul warns against this very attitude. - Philippians 2:14
 - C. What should our attitude be toward murmuring?
- I. “murmur”: “grumble, murmur as a signal of displeasure ... against someone.... speak complainingly about someone” (W.F. Arndt & F.W. Gingrich, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 163)
- II. Why is murmuring wrong?
- A. To murmur against those who do God’s work is to murmur against God. - Exodus 16:2,7-8; Numbers 16:11; Acts 20:28; 1 Timothy 5:19-20 (Why is it that those who do the least complain the most about those who work the hardest?)
 - B. To murmur about our material condition is to murmur against God. - Exodus 16:1-3,7; James 1:17
 - C. To murmur against God shows:
 - 1. ingratitude - 1 Thessalonians 5:18 (Do we complain about the thorns or give thanks for the roses?)
 - 2. rebellion - Numbers 14:1-3,9; Deuteronomy 1:26-27
 - 3. unbelief - Numbers 14:11; Psalm 106:24-26; Hebrews 3:7-12
 - 4. disobedience - Numbers 14:22
- III. What are the results of murmuring?
- A. We tempt the Lord. - Exodus 17:1-3
 - B. We provoke the Lord. - Numbers 14:11
 - C. We bring upon ourselves destruction. - Numbers 14:27-32,36-37; 16:41-49; 1 Corinthians 1:10-12
- Conclusion:
- A. What kind of church do we want: one filled with complaining and arguing or one filled with gratitude and peace? If every member were just like you, which would it be?
 - B. Brother, sister, heed the command. - Philippians 2:14

Lewdness

Introduction:

- A. It does little good to condemn a sinful practice if we do not understand the principle that makes it sinful. - e.g., Elmo, who condemns dancing but defends mixed swimming
- B. Both these practices are lasciviousness. - Galatians 5:19-21
- C. How may we be guilty of lasciviousness?

I. What is “lewdness”?

- A. “shamelessness” - cf. our “open,” i.e., shameless, society; “shame” = “hang-up”
“The prominent idea is shameless conduct...” (Vine. 2:310).
- B. anything which leads to unlawful sexual desires - “sensuality” (NASB; Moulton & Milligan. 84)
 - 1. “follow the inclination to sensuality” (Arndt & Gingrich. 114)
 - 2. ***unbridled lust, excess, licentiousness, lasciviousness, wantonness, outrageousness, shamelessness, insolence... wanton (acts or) manners, as filthy words, indecent bodily movements, unchaste handling of males and females, etc.*** (Thayer. 80).

II. How is lewdness commonly manifested?

- A. dancing - 1 Peter 4:3-5
 - 1. Dancing involves “indecent bodily movements” and “unchaste handling of males and females.”
 - 2. “Indecent bodily movements” and “unchaste handling of males and females” is lewdness.
 - 3. Therefore, dancing is lasciviousness.
- B. moral filth in magazines, TV, movies (“unbridled lust”) - Matthew 5:27-28; Mark 7:21-23
- C. dirty jokes and filthy language (“filthy words”) - Ephesians 5:3-4; Matthew 12:34-37
- D. immodest dress (“shamelessness”) - 1 Timothy 2:9-10; cf. Revelation 3:18; Genesis 3:7,10-11,21
- E. necking and petting (“unchaste handling of males and females”) - Ephesians 4:17-19

III. Teenagers might complain, “But there’s nothing fun left to do!”

- A. There are more innocent recreational activities than sinful.
- B. Some are only sinful if we behave or dress wrong.
- C. Are you willing to make the necessary sacrifices for Christ? - Luke 14:33

Conclusion:

- A. Lewdness is a cancer that is eating out the life of our society and the Lord’s church from within.
- B. Our lives can either contribute to the problem or be examples to lead others to Christ.
- C. Flee also youthful lusts.

Modest Dress

Introduction:

- A. Dad used to say, "Some women don't wear enough clothing to wad a .22 caliber rifle!" I wonder what he would say now!
- B. Tell about A.W.'s annual sermon on modesty.
- C. How does the law of Christ require women to dress?
- I. The dress of women is to be "modest," not necessarily "modern." - 1 Timothy 2:9
- II. The Scriptures give principles, not specific rules, whereby women should determine modesty. - 1 Timothy 2:9-10; cf. Hebrews 5:14
 - A. shamefacedness: a sense of shame - Jeremiah 6:15
 - 1. Nakedness is shameful. - Exodus 32:25; Revelation 3:18
 - 2. Nakedness includes scanty attire. - Job 22:6
 - 3. God covered Adam's and Eve's nakedness. - Genesis 3:7-10,21; cf. Isaiah 47:1-3
 - 4. Thus, the principle of shamefacedness applies to men as well as to women. - Galatians 5:19-21
 - B. sobriety: sound judgment, self-restraint, moderation, decency - Titus 2:4-5
 - C. "not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array" - cf. 1 Peter 3:3-4
 - D. "which becometh women professing godliness"
 - 1. Is your dress proper for "a woman professing godliness" or "the attire of a harlot"? - Proverbs 7:10
 - 2. How do your clothes affect men? - 2 Samuel 11; Matthew 5:27-28; 18:6-7

Conclusion:

- A. Christian, does your clothing reflect godly character, or does it cause others to stumble and bring shame upon the Lord's church'?
- B. Dress in such a way that the reflection of godly character will draw others to Christ. - Matthew 5:16

Dancing

Introduction:

- A. It is embarrassing to even watch the news or TV commercials because of the shameless emphasis on sex.
- B. Our society is parallel to the pagan society in the first century. - Ephesians 4:17-19
- C. One of the most common manifestations of lasciviousness today is the social dancing. of unmarried couples.
- D. Proposition: The social dancing of unmarried couples, as commonly practiced in our society, involves sin.

I. Proof of Proposition

A. First Argument - Hebrews 5:12-14

1. The social dancing of unmarried couples, as commonly practiced in our society, involves “indecent bodily movements” and “unchaste handling of males and females.” - truism; What if they turned off the music?
2. “Indecent bodily movements” and “unchaste handling of males and females” is “lewdness” (Thayer. 79-80).
3. Therefore, the social dancing of unmarried couples, as commonly practiced in our society, involves lewdness.

B. Second Argument

1. The social dancing of unmarried couples, as commonly practiced in our society., involves lewdness.
2. Lewdness is a sin. - Galatians 5:19-21
3. Therefore, the social dancing of unmarried couples, as commonly. practiced in our society, involves sin. - Ephesians 5:11

II. Arguments in Defense of Dancing Answered

A. The Bible says, “There is a time to dance.” - Ecclesiastes 3:4

1. The modern social dance was unknown in biblical times. - “Of the social dancing of couples in the modern fashion there is no trace” (ISBE. 2:1170).
2. Three kinds of dancing are mentioned in the Bible (Which is the closest to modern social dancing?).
 - a. public rejoicing - 1 Samuel 18:6 (sexes separate, not amusement); e.g., rejoicing at end of WW II
 - b. worship - Psalm 149:3; 2 Samuel 6:14-16
 - c. lustful dances - Exodus 32:19-25; Mark 6:17-29 (idolatry, nakedness, murder)

B. “I don't think evil”

1. A man who says he can dance without thinking evil is either more than a man, less than a man, or a liar. - Proverbs 6:27
2. What about your influence on others? - Matthew 5:16
3. Girls, what about your partner? - Matthew 18:6-7

C. "The prom is a 'once-in-a-lifetime' deal."

1. King Ahasuerus' feast was a "once-in-a-lifetime" deal, but Queen Vashti refused to sin, even though it cost her the throne. - Esther ch. 1
2. It is a "once-in-a-lifetime" opportunity to show your friends what you are made of. - Daniel ch. 3

D. "There's nothing else to do."

1. What you mean is, you want to do this more than you want to engage in the many innocent activities available.
2. Parents, we should provide wholesome activities for our young people. - Ephesians 6:4

E. "All my friends go to the dances."

1. Make some better friends. - 1 Corinthians 15:33
2. Be a good influence on your friends. - Matthew 5:16

F. "You can't be popular if you don't go to the dances."

1. Whoever said being a Christian is popular? - John 15:18-19
2. Do you have the courage of your convictions or not? - 2 Peter 1:5; cf. Genesis 39:1-20

G. "I just watch; I don't actually dance." - Would you go to a pot party and just watch?; cf. Ephesians 5:11

Conclusion:

- A. Joseph was just a teenager when he had the moral courage to resist the advances of Potiphar's wife.
- B. Young people, the social dancing of unmarried couples, as is commonly practiced in our society, involves sin.
- C. Young people need to have the moral courage to refuse to go to the dances.

Beware of Covetousness

Introduction:

- A. A young man once asked me, "How much is your dad worth?" The very question was offensive to me. It implied my father's value could be measured in dollars.
 - B. Is financial success not the criteria most people use to judge one's worth?
 - C. Jesus taught that to so measure one's worth is to be guilty of covetousness. - Luke 12:13-21
 - D. Why should we beware of covetousness?
- I. What is "covetousness"?
- A. definition: "greedy desire to have more" (Thayer)
 - B. It is to be ever discontent with the amount of "things" we possess. - 1 Timothy 6:6-10; e.g., What houses do you look at when you go for a drive? Why do we look for hours at a catalog?
 - C. It is a form of idolatry. - Colossians 3:5-6; e.g., meetings of sales groups
- II. The Master gave us a good reason to beware of covetousness. - Luke 12:13-15
- A. Jesus was asked to be a civil judge of material affairs. - v. 13
 - B. He refused. - v. 14; cf. John 18:36
 - C. He grasped the opportunity to teach a great lesson. v. 15; cf. Matthew 16:26-27; cf. "Whoever finishes with the most toys wins."
- III. He vividly illustrated this lesson by means of a parable. - vv. 16-20
- A. Jesus concluded the parable by calling the rich farmer of the story a "fool." - v. 20
 - B. Why was the wealthy farmer a fool?
 - 1. NOT because of:
 - a. lack of business ability - vv. 16-19
 - b. thievery or dishonesty - v. 16
 - 2. Because:
 - a. He was SELFISH. - vv. 17-19; "I" used six times; "my" five times; e.g., student who asked, "What's in it for me?"
 - b. He TRUSTED WEALTH. - vv. 17-19; Do you think money will bring security?
 - c. He FORGOT REAL JOY. - v. 19; "soul" = stomach; Do you think money will bring happiness?
 - d. He FORGOT GOD. - vv. 18-19; Has money become the god of your life?
 - e. He FORGOT DEATH. - vv. 19-20; Were you to die tonight, how much would your money benefit you?
 - 3. The wealthy farmer was a fool because he could not see past the material things of life.
 - a. He made elaborate preparation for physical comfort and financial security.
 - b. But he neglected to provide for the most valuable thing he possessed, his immortal soul.
- Conclusion:
- A. One who "layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" is a fool.
 - B. Wherefore, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness."

Gambling

Introduction:

A. Text: Colossians 3:5-6

B. Is it right to gamble?

I. What is gambling?

A. definition: the act or practice of betting: the act of playing a game and consciously risking money or other stakes on its outcome (**Webster's Third New International Dictionary** [unabridged] 932).

B. not to be confused with risks in business

1. legitimate business: when one profits, others profit.

2. gambling: one profits by the loss of others

II. Is gambling a legitimate way to gain wealth?

A. How shall we determine the right ways to gain wealth?

1. If unlimited, we may gain it in any manner: stealing, fraud, etc.

2. If limited, Scriptures set the limits. - Colossians 3:17

B. The Scriptures authorize four means of gaining wealth.

1. work - Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12

2. fair exchange - Acts 5:3-4

3. investment - Matthew 25:14-30

4. love - Acts 20:35; Ephesians 4:28

C. There is a pattern: All authorized means of gaining wealth help others. Conversely stated, no one gains at the loss of others. The principle of love, the highest moral principle, is always followed. - 1 Corinthians 13:13; 1 John 4:8

D. Gambling fits none of these and violates at least three.

1. wealth without work

2. something for nothing

3. taking what others do not want to give

III. Gambling is condemned in principle.

A. The New Testament often condemns in principle what it does not specifically forbid. - e.g., "lewdness"; Galatians 5:19-21

B. What New Testament principles does gambling violate?

1. unselfish love

a. We must love all people. - Matthew 5:43-48

b. Love is manifested by concerned giving. - 1 John 3:16-18

c. We must not be selfish, but seek what is best for others. - Matthew 7:12; Philippians 2:4

2. desire to earn what we receive - 2 Thessalonians 3:8

3. basis of gambling: "covetousness," the "greedy desire to have more" (Thayer. 516) - Colossians 3:5-6; 1 Timothy 6:6-10

IV. What about gambling for a worthy cause? - Romans 3:8

Conclusion:

A. No, it is not right to gamble; it is a sin. - Colossians 3:5-6

B. We must carefully abstain from it and oppose it in all its forms. - Ephesians 5:11

Drinking

Introduction:

- A. Tell of preacher friend in Rogers who was almost fired for preaching on social drinking.
- B. Alcohol is the most chronically abused drug in our nation. - Proverbs 20:1
- C. Many Christians, especially our young people, wonder whether or not they should go along with the crowd and become drinkers.

Should we drink alcoholic beverages?

- I. Should we get drunk.- Ephesians 5:18; Galatians 5.19-21
- II. Should we drink socially? - 1 Peter 4:3-5 (“banquetings” = “drinking parties” [NKJV]; “drinking which is not of necessity excessive” [R.C. Trench, **Synonyms of the New Testament**].)
- III. Should we drink moderately in the privacy of our homes? - Hebrews 5:12-14
 - A. two principles to help us make a good decision.
 - 1. When in doubt, don’t. - Romans 14:23
 - 2. Flee sin, don’t see how close you can come to it. - 1 Peter 5:8
 - B. Six facts to help us make a good decision:
 - 1. It is a medical fact that those who drink alcohol alone are on the road to alcoholism.
 - 2. The Lord demands sobriety of his people. - 1 Thessalonians 5:4-8 (“Sober”: “signifies to be free from the influence of intoxicants” (Vine. 4:44).
 - 3. The Bible warns against the use of alcohol in any quantity.- Proverbs 20:1; 23:29-35
 - 4. The use of alcohol (even in moderate amounts) impairs moral judgment.- Proverbs 31:4-5; 4:23
 - 5. It will ruin your influence for good.- Matthew 5:16
 - 6. It is an enslaving habit.- 1 Corinthians 6:12
 - C. a question to encourage honesty: How many limit drinking to “an occasional drink in the privacy of my home”? Is this not just the foot in the door?

Conclusion:

- A. Contrast the advertisement with stark reality.
- B. Alcohol is our public enemy number one.
- C. Don’t let alcohol deceive you to your eternal sorrow and ruin.- Proverbs 20.1

Respect of Persons

Introduction:

- A. Tell about the brother in Arizona who thought Southerners were terrible for being prejudiced against black people while he himself was prejudiced against Indians.
- B. Respect of persons is a problem common to all societies. - James 2:1
- C. What should be my attitude toward people of different fleshly backgrounds?

I. God is no respecter of persons. - Romans 2:11

- A. definition: ***partiality**, the fault of one who when called on to requite or give judgment has respect to the outward circumstances of men and not to their intrinsic merits, and so prefers, as the more worthy, one who is rich, high-born, or powerful, to another who is destitute of such gifts* Thayer. 551).
- B. The New Testament applies this principle to:
 - 1. race/ethnic/national differences - Acts 10:34-35
 - 2. social differences - Galatians 3:28
 - 3. different sexes - Ibid
 - 4. economic differences - James 2:5

II. Thus, God:

- A. is the God of all. - Romans 3:29
- B. holds all accountable for their sins. - Romans 2:12
- C. loves all. - John 3:16
- D. wants all to be saved. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- E. sent His Son to die for all. - 1 John 2:2
- F. sends the gospel to all. - Mark 16:15; Romans 1:16
- G. Shall judge all by the same standard. - Romans 2:4-11,16

III. We must be like God. - Ephesians 4:22-24; Acts 11:9

IV. Thus, we must:

- A. Take the gospel to all. - Mark 16:15
- B. Receive all faithful brethren all nations, races and tongues. - Romans 15:7
 - 1. into spiritual fellowship. - James 2:1-9
 - 2. into social association. - Acts 11:2-3

Conclusion:

- A. If Saul of Tarsus, a Hebrew of the Hebrews, could become the Apostle Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, we can learn to accept others of different backgrounds.
- B. The sin of respect of persons will cause one to be lost. - James 2:9-10
- C. Wherefore, "receive ye one another."

Take Heed Lest You Fall

Text: 1 Corinthians 10:1-13

Introduction:

- A. The people of God often become complacent.- cf. Matthew 3:9
 - B. The example of Israel should warn us of this danger.- 1 Corinthians 10:1,11,12
 - C. In what ways are the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness an example for us?
- I. God blessed ALL Israel. - 1 Corinthians 10:1-4; Ephesians 1:3
- A. They and we were in bondage. - Exodus 2,3; Romans 6:17, 23
 - B. Moses led, and Christ leads. - Exodus 3; Hebrews 2:10
 - C. They and we were delivered through baptism.
 - 1. It was a burial. - verses 1,2; Romans 6:4
 - 2. It was a deliverance. - Exodus 14; Romans 6:17-18, 3-4
 - 3. It was a final seal.- Exodus 14:31; Romans 6:3
 - 4. It was the beginning of a journey by divine call.- Exodus 3:7-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:13,14
 - D. They ate and we eat spiritual meat.- Exodus 16; John 6:35,63
 - E. They drank and we drink of Christ.- Exodus 17; John 4:13-14
- II. But with many of them God was not well-pleased.- 1 Corinthians 10:5; Numbers 1:46; 26:63-65
- A. because they lusted after evil things - 1 Corinthians 10:6; Numbers 11; Philippians 3:13-14
 - B. because they were idolaters - 1 Corinthians 10:7; Exodus 32; Colossians 3: 5
 - C. because they committed fornication - 1 Corinthians 10:8; Numbers 25; Matthew 5:27,28
 - D. because they tempted Christ - 1 Corinthians 10:9; Numbers 21:4-9; Hebrews 3:7-13
 - E. because they murmured - 1 Corinthians 10:10; Numbers 14; Philippians 4:4-7
- Conclusion:
- A. Why recount these things? - 1 Corinthians 10:11
 - B. What is the lesson?- 1 Corinthians 10:12
 - C. Is there any hope? - 1 Corinthians 10:13

For All Have Sinned

Introduction:

- A. The fact all people sin has always troubled men. - e.g., development of Calvinism
- B. What does the universal nature of sin mean to us? - 1 John 1:8 - 2:2
- I. It **does** mean we cannot be saved on the basis of our own goodness. - Romans 3:23; 6:23; Luke 17:10
- II. It does **not** mean we “have to sin.”
 - A. arguments used to uphold “have to sin” theory refuted
 - 1. lack of ability - 1 Corinthians 10:13
 - 2. fulfill scripture - 1 John 1:8 - 2:1; 3:8 (confuses foreknowledge with predestination)
 - B. proof we do not have to sin
 - 1. Jesus did live without sin. - cf. 1 Corinthians 15:20
 - a. He was made like us. - Hebrews 2:17
 - b. He endured every kind of temptation we endure. - Hebrews 4:15
 - c. He was tempted as man not as God. - James 1:13
 - d. He lived in a terribly wicked generation. - Matthew 12:39; 23:33
 - e. He knew nothing to avoid sin I cannot know. - John 21:17; Psalm 119:11; Ephesians 5:17
 - f. We are to live as He lived. - 1 Peter 2:21-22; 1 John 2:6
 - 2. God is just. - Romans 8:3
 - 3. We sin through choice. - James 1:13-15

Conclusion:

- A. Yes, dear friend, we have all sinned. - 1 John 1:8,10
- B. But don't try to excuse yourself by saying we have to.
- C. Turn from your sin. - Acts 3:19; 8:22
- D. Turn to Christ. - Romans 6:23

Just One Little Sin

Introduction:

- A. Sample problems help students understand math.
- B. The example of Simon clarifies the problem of “just one little sin.” - Acts 8:5-24
- C. Will just one little sin cause a child of God to be lost?

I. Simon’s Situation

- A. Simon was saved.
 - 1. He believed and obeyed just as the other Samaritans.- Acts 8:12-13
 - 2. He met the Lord's requirements for salvation.- Mark 16:16
 - 3. He “continued with Philip.”- Acts 8:13; cf. 2:42
- B. Simon sinned.- Acts 8:14-19
- C. Simon fell.- Acts 8:20-23

II. Simon’s Possible Excuses

- A. He was a babe in Christ.- Acts 8.13-14
- B. He was walking in the light.- Acts 8:13
- C. He fell through human weakness.- Acts 8:18-19
- D. He was ignorant.- Acts 8:20
- E. He sinned only one time.- cf. Genesis 3:6,22-24; 2 Samuel 6:1-7; Hebrews 2:1-3; James 2:10
- F. He was humble. - Acts 8:24

III. Peter’s Remedy- Acts 8:22; cf. 1 John 1:9; James 5:16

Conclusion:

- A. Just one little sin, unrepented, will indeed cause you to be lost. - Acts 8:3
- B. If sin stains your soul, apply the remedy.

Sins of Ignorance

Introduction:

A. Many brethren teach that we can be forgiven of sins of ignorance without coming to a knowledge of and repenting of them. - “David realized that he had weaknesses - that he wasn’t capable of understanding and recognizing everything that was amiss in his life His request was that he might be cleansed (continuously (sic), of inadvertent and ignorant sins that he might commit while his general character was that of commitment and service to God” (Robert Waters, “Psalms 19:12).

B. Will God forgive His erring children of sins committed in ignorance without their coming to a knowledge of them, repenting of them, and confessing them?

I. What is the issue?

A. Not:

1. whether or not we may sin in ignorance - Leviticus 4:1-2
2. whether or not we may be forgiven of sins of ignorance - Luke 23:34; Acts 2:22-23,36-38
3. whether or not we have to remember every act of sin - Luke 15:11-24; e.g., adulterer
4. whether or not we have to specifically mention every sin in confession - Luke 18:9-13

B. Is: Must we repent of and confess our sins to be forgiven of them? - Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10; 1 John 1:9

*Hence if a man is a worker in the Lord’s vineyard and his life as a whole is one of obedience to the law of Christ, he does need to worry about the mistakes he might make which he does not realize, for the blood of Christ will take care of it and wash them away (E.M. Zerr, **Commentary** [6:279]).*

II. Old Testament Teaching Concerning Sins of Ignorance

A. The Law Concerning Sins of Ignorance - Leviticus 4 & 5; Number 15:22-29

1. The people did sin through ignorance. - Leviticus 4:1-3,13,22,27; 5:15; Numbers 15:24-29
2. Though they were ignorant, they were guilty. - Leviticus 4:13,22,27; 5:1-3,17
3. They had to meet the divine terms of pardon. - Leviticus 4:3,14,23,28; 5:15,18-19

B. Other Old Testament Teaching on Sins of Ignorance

1. Genesis 20:1-7
2. 1 Kings 13
3. Hosea 4:6

III. New Testament Teaching Concerning Sins of Ignorance

A. Blind Leading Blind - Matthew 15:14

B. Servant Who Knew Not - Luke 12:47-48

C. Those Who Crucified Christ - Luke 23:34; Acts 3:17; 1 Corinthians 2:8; cf. Acts 2:22-23,36-41,47

D. Simon - Acts 8:18-23

E. Saul of Tarsus - Acts 23:1; 26:9; 1 Timothy 1:13,15; Acts 9:4-6; 22:16

F. Israel- Romans 10:1-3

G. Gentiles - Ephesians 2:1-3; 4:17-18

H. Eve - 1 Timothy 2:14

I. Hebrews 9:7

J. False Teachers - 2 Peter 2:12

IV. What about Psalm 19:12?

- A. David did not ask God to contradict the law under which he lived.
- B. The context shows we CAN know our sins. - Psalm 19:7-11; cf. 119:11
- C. "Secret" does not denote "ignorant." - 2 Samuel 12:12
- D. David sinned "secretly" in that:
 - 1. He attempted to hide his sin. - 2 Samuel 11
 - 2. He did not realize its consequences (David's Watergate). - 2 Samuel 12:1-14
 - 3. He did not sin in high-handed rebellion, as Saul did. - Psalm 19:13; cf. 2 Samuel 12:1-13
- E. Saul sinned presumptuously in that he rebelled. - 1 Samuel 15:1-23; cf. Deuteronomy 17:12-13
- F. His sin was great in that he lost the kingdom. - 1 Samuel 15:24-31

V. What keeps us from knowing our sins?

- A. NOT:
 - 1. inadequacy of God's word - Psalm 119:9
 - 2. inability to comprehend - Ephesians 5:17
 - 3. inability to realize what we have done - Matthew 15:18-19

B. BUT:

- 1. failure to study - Psalm 119:11
- 2. failure to examine ourselves - 2 Corinthians 13:5
- 3. pride - Proverbs 30:12-13
- 4. desire to justify ourselves - 2 Peter 2:1-2,18-19
- 5. love of money - 2 Peter 2:3
- 6. desire for popularity - John 12:42-43
- 7. comparing ourselves with others - 2 Corinthians 10:12
- 8. too much confidence in men - 1 Corinthians 4:6

VI. Consequences if Answer to Question Is "Yes."

- A. Places a Premium on Ignorance - Matthew 15:14
- B. Unscripturally Broadens Fellowship - 1 John 1:7
- C. Means Forgiveness Without Repentance - Matthew 21:28-29

VII. Questions:

- A. Which sins may we commit in ignorance and not be held guilty? - Romans 1:24-32; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-21
- B. If some sins or ignorance are excused, why not all?
- C. How does one tell which are and which aren't?

VIII. Answer to the Problem:

- B. The honest of heart will come to a knowledge of their sins, repent of them, and confess them. - Matthew 7:7-8; 2 Samuel 12:1-13
- C. The dishonest will not. - 2 Thessalonians 2:10-12

Conclusion:

- A. No, God will not forgive any sins until the sinner comes to a knowledge of his sins and repents of them. - Acts 3:14-19; 8:20-23
- B. Will you be honest and humble enough to see your sins and repent of them?

Imputed for Righteousness

Introduction:

- A. The central mechanism by which the Calvinistic concept righteousness is to work is imputation.

*But in each and every case alike imputation is simply the act of setting to one's account; and the act of setting to one's account is in itself the same act whether the thing set to his account stands on the credit side or the debit side of the account.... the three-fold doctrine of imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, of the sins of the people to the redeemer, and of the righteousness of Christ to His people - at last came to its rights as the core of the constitutive doctrines of Christianity - the sinfulness of the human race, the satisfaction of Jesus Christ, and justification by faith. The importance of the doctrine of imputation is that it is the hinge on which these three great doctrines turn, and the guardian of their purity (Benjamin B. Warfield, **Biblical and Theological Studies**. 263,266).*

- B. Some brethren are now teaching that the righteousness of the life of Christ is imputed to the Christian.

- C. The purpose of this lesson is to examine the doctrine of imputed righteousness. - Romans 4:3-12

I. The Issue: What does God put down to the Christian's account?

- A. the personal righteousness of Christ or
B. the Christian's own faith

II. What are the consequences of the Calvinistic doctrine of imputed righteousness?

- A. once saved, always saved: "When our position depends upon Christ's merits instead of our own, we have no need to fear" (Gordon Clark, **What Do Presbyterians Believe?**. 125). - cf. Philippians 2:12
B. Obedience becomes unnecessary. - cf. Matthew 28:20; 1 John 3:7
C. It destroys the Bible doctrine of forgiveness. - 1 John 1:9

III. What does the Bible teach about imputation?

- A. Our own faith is imputed to us, not the personal righteousness of Christ. - Romans 4:3,5,9
B. This does not eliminate the necessity of our obedience. - Romans 4:2-5; Genesis 15:6; cf. James 2:21-24
1. Paul spoke of the law of Moses.
 - a. The Jews first thought the gospel was for the Jews only. - Acts 11:19
 - b. The conversion of Cornelius convinced them otherwise. - Acts 11:18
 - c. Many still thought it was necessary to keep the law of Moses and be circumcised. - Acts 15:1,5
 - d. Had they been correct in binding the law, perfect obedience would have been requiring, thus, salvation would have been earned, a matter of boasting. - Galatians 3:10 (curse of the law)
 - e. These Judaizers laid great stress on their physical relationship to Abraham. - Luke 3:8; John 8:33

f. Paul showed that salvation was not through the law of Moses. - Romans 3:27-28;
Galatians 3:16-17

g. Abraham was Paul's case in point of righteousness without the law of Moses or
circumcision. - cf. Genesis 15:6

2. James referred to obedience by faith in the gospel. - cf. Luke 17:10

C. God does not overlook any of our sins, but forgives them, by means of our obedient faith,
and declares us truly righteous. - Romans 4:6-8; Psalm 32:1-2,5; 51:1-4; 2 Samuel 12:9,13

Conclusion:

A. The Bible doctrine of imputed righteousness is that God counts us righteous by forgiving
our sins on the basis of obedient faith, so that we are actually righteous.

B. Alien sinner, you must believe and obey to be righteous. - Romans 10:4; Mark 16:16

C. Erring child, you must meet the terms of pardon. - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9; James 5:16

The Christian and the Cleansing Blood

- I. The purposes of the book of First John
 - A. are to show the basis of fellowship in Christ and - 1 John 1:3
 - B. to give Christians joy and confidence in their salvation. - 1 John 1:4; 5:13
- II. The basis of this fellowship is God's nature: perfect light. - 1 John 1:5
- III. If our walk does not correspond to His nature, we do not have fellowship with Him. - 1 Jn. 1:6
 - A. Darkness is ignorance and evil. - John 12:35; 3:19-20
 - B. Light is truth and righteousness. - John 3:21
- IV. The means of fellowship is the Christian's walk, a reflection of the nature of God (We must live as He is.). - 1 John 1:7
 - A. Walking in the light is the daily manner of life of one who follows Christ. - John 8:12
 - B. Is this walk continuous and constant and include sins of ignorance and weakness?
 1. Pertinent Questions
 - a. Are sins of ignorance and weakness acts of light or darkness?
 - b. Are such acts "in the light, as he is in the light"?
 - c. Does God have such sins?
 2. But we do have sin. - 1 John 1:8
 - a. This does not mean we are presently sinning. - 1 John 3:8
 - b. It does not mean we are presently guilty of sin. - 1 John 1:9
 - c. It does mean we have sinned and are not righteous on the basis of a sinless life. - 1 John 1:10
 - d. It does not mean we will inevitably sin in the future. - 1 John 2:1
 - e. It does mean we have an advocate and propitiation available if we sin. - 1 John 2:1-2
 3. Other uses of the verb "walk" in the present tense agree.
 - a. "walk by faith" - 2 Corinthians 5:7 ("walk" - present indicative); How many times can we ignorantly worship with instrumental music and still be walking by faith?
 - b. "Walk in the Spirit" - Galatians 5:16 ("Walk" - present indicative); How many times can a man commit adultery through ignorance or weakness and still be walking in the Spirit?
 - c. "walk in love" - Ephesians 5:2 ("walk" - present indicative); How many times can you slander a brother through ignorance or weakness, for example, falsely accuse him of denying the deity of Christ, and still be walking in love?
 - d. "walk as children of light" - Ephesians 5:8 ("walk" - present indicative); How many times can you utter blasphemy through weakness, for example, curse by the Lord because mud was spattered on a new suit, and still walk as children of light?
 - e. "walk in wisdom toward them that are without" - Colossians 4:5 ("walk" - present indicative); How many times could you drink beer with your neighbor through ignorance or weakness and still be walking in wisdom toward them that are without?

- f. “walk worthy of God” - 1 Thessalonians 2:12 (“walk” - present infinitive); How many times can a doctor perform an abortion through ignorance or weakness and still be walking worthy of God?
 - g. “walk honestly toward them that are without” - 1 Thessalonians 4:12 (“walk” - present subjunctive); How many times can a Christian in the retail trade cheat a customer through weakness or ignorance and still “walk honestly toward them that are without”?
 - h. “walk after his commandments” - 2 John 6 (“walk” - present subjunctive); How many times can a church send money to an orphanage and its members still “walk after his commandments”?
 - i. “walk in truth” - 3 John 4 (“walk” - present participle); How many times can a respected brother who has been preaching the truth many years teach that the righteous life of Christ is imputed to the Christian and still “walk in truth”?
4. Thus, walking in the light is the characteristic manner of life we are to live, not continual, constant, uninterrupted walk, and does not include any sin of any kind for any reason.
- C. Being cleansed of all sins is the result of this walk. - 1 John 1:7
- D. Are humble, sincere Christians constantly and continuously cleansed of sins of ignorance and weakness?
- 1. Facts
 - a. “walk” - present subjunctive
 - b. “have” - present indicative
 - c. “cleanseth” - present indicative
 - d. “confess” - present subjunctive
 - 2. Observations
 - a. “Fellowship” is just as continuous as cleansing. Whatever sinners are cleansed are in fellowship with God and His people.
 - b. This cleansing is from “all sins,” not just sins of ignorance, weakness, and inadvertence. It includes worshipping with an instrument of music, adultery, slander, blasphemy, drinking alcoholic beverages, abortion, cheating customers, institutionalism, and preaching false doctrine.
 - c. Consistently, the continuous cleansing position means no sin of any kind affects fellowship with God or His people as long as the sinner lives “a humble, penitent, prayerful life, making a sincere effort to obey God at all times” (Eugene Britnell, **The Sower**, January, 1982).
 - d. “Cleanseth” is no more continuous than “confess.” The cleansing is dependent upon the confessing and takes place when and only when the confessing does.
 - e. John does not say, “Confess our sinfulness,” “confess that we sin,” or confess (?) “IF I have sinned”; he says “confess our sins.”

f. One cannot confess sins he does not know he has committed.

(1) “lit., to speak the same thing..., to assent, accord, agree with, denotes... (b) to confess by way of admitting oneself guilty of what one is accused of, the result of inward conviction, I John I.9...” (W.E. Vine, **An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words**. 1:224).

(2) “1. prop. *to say the same thing* as another, i.e. *to agree with, assent...* 2. univ. *to concede*, i.e.... *to confess*, i.e., to admit or declare oneself guilty of what one is accused of ... 1 Jn. 1:9...” (J.H. Thayer, **A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament**. 446).

g. “Confess” is used by synecdoche, a figure of speech in which “a part is put for the whole.” (E.W. Bullinger, **Figures of Speech Used in the Bible**. 640). The one condition of pardon stands for all.

(1) e.g., John 3:16

(2) It includes repentance and prayer. - Acts 8:22

h. One cannot repent of sins of which he is ignorant.

i. One cannot claim to have repented if his life has not changed at all. - Matthew 21:28-29

j. The answer to the question is, “NO.”

Conclusion:

A. The doctrine of continuous cleansing is pernicious error that places a premium on ignorance, unscripturally broadens fellowship, and promises pardon to unrepentant sinners.

B. To be cleansed of the guilt of sin, the erring child of God must repent of his sins, confess them to God in prayer, and pray for forgiveness.

Eternal Life

Introduction:

- A. The great promise that we have in Christ is eternal life. - John 10:27-28
- B. Calvinists teach the present possession of eternal life by Christians as a basis for the doctrine of the Perseverance of the Saints
- C. Some brethren teach eternal life is presently possessed.
- D. When do Christians come into actual possession of eternal life?

I. What is “eternal life”?

- A. “eternal”: 1. *without beginning or end, that which always has been and always will be....* 2. *without beginning....* 3. *without end, never to cease. everlasting.... gives prominence to the immeasurableness of eternity...* (Thayer. 20-21).

B. “life”

- 1. Spiritual life is more than existence. - John 5:28-29
- 2. It is the opposite of spiritual death. - 1 John 3:14
- 3. Spiritual death is the result of separation from God’s fellowship. - Genesis 2:16-17; 5:4-5; 3:22-24; James 2:26; Isaiah 59:1-2
- 4. Spiritual life is fellowship with God. - 1 John 1:3; 5:12

C. Thus, eternal life is fellowship with God which is endless in duration.

II. arguments which demonstrate eternal life is a future possession

- A. Any passage which demonstrates the possibility of apostasy proves eternal life is a future possession. - e.g., Galatians 5:4
- B. Many passages plainly teach it is a future possession. - Matthew 25:46; Mark 10:30; Luke 18:30; John 12:25; Romans 2:6-7; 6:22
- C. We have eternal life in hope. - Titus 1:2; 3:7; Romans 8:24-25

III. Do some passages teach the present possession of eternal life? - John 3:15-16,36; 5:24; 6:47,54; 10:28; 1 John 5:11-13

- A. How had God made Abraham a father of many nations? - Genesis 17:5 (in promise)
- B. How had God given Joshua Jericho? (right of inheritance)
- C. How had a child been born? - Isaiah 9:6 (promise)
- D. How had Christ shed His blood? - Matthew 26:28 (promise)

IV. Some brethren argue that “eternal life” refers to quality, not quantity, and is presently possessed but can be forfeited. - e.g., a gold coin may be long lasting but not possessed very long

- A. Life is a relationship, not an object to be carried in one’s pocket.
- B. “Life” refers to quality; “eternal” to quantity.
- C. If eternal life can be forfeited now, why not in heaven? - Matthew 25:46; cf. Luke 16:26
- D. If eternal life can be lost, what about eternal destruction? - Matthew 25:46
- E. If eternal life can be forfeited, can God forfeit His eternal existence? - 1 Timothy 1:17
- F. To actually “have” eternal life is to “inherit” it. - Matthew 19:17; Mark 10:17

Conclusion:

- A. Christians presently possess life, fellowship with God, which can be broken by sin. - Romans 6:11
- B. We live in hope of eternal life, endless fellowship with God, which can never be terminated. - Romans 6:22-23
- C. Do you have this life and this hope?

The Progressiveness of Sin

Text: Psalm 1

Introduction:

- A. Tell how to boil a live frog.
- B. This is the very principle Satan uses to snare Christians. - Ephesians 6:11
- C. How does a person go progressively deeper into sin?

I. principle - Psalm 1

A. theme: righteous vs. ungodly

B. outline:

- 1. the blessedness of the righteous - vv. 1-3
 - a. his character described negatively - v. 1
 - b. his character described positively - v. 2
 - c. the blessed result - v. 3
- 2. the ungodly - vv. 4-5
 - a. his character - v. 4a
 - b. the result - vv. 4b-5
 - c. the reason for the contrast - v. 6

C. verse 1: the progressiveness of sin

- 1. walketh - ungodly
- 2. standeth - sinners
- 3. sitteth - scornful

D. e.g., teenage boy leaving the Lord

II. applications

- A. preaching - 2 Timothy 4:1-5
- B. attendance - Hebrews 10:24-25
- C. social gospel - 2 John 9

Conclusion:

- A. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty."
- B. It is also the price of righteousness. - 1 Peter 5:8

Impossible to Renew

Introduction:

- A. What a tragic plight when the doctors say, "We can do no more; death is inevitable."
- B. The Great Physician warns that some patients are terminal. - Hebrews 6:4-8
- C. What is the plight of one who falls away from Christ?

I. Past Condition - Hebrews 6:4-5

- A. "were once enlightened": said only of true followers of Christ - cf. John 8:12
- B. "have tasted of the heavenly gift"
 - 1. tasted - Hebrews 2:9
 - 2. heavenly gift - John 6:33; Romans 6:23
- C. "were made partakers of the Holy Ghost" - Romans 8:14
- D. "have tasted the good word of God" - James 1:21
- E. "the powers of the world to come"
 - 1. powers - Hebrews 2:3-4
 - 2. world to come - 2 Peter 3:13

II. Present Condition - Hebrews 6:6

- A. "If they shall fall away" - cf. Hebrews 4:11
 - 1. lose one's faith - Hebrews 3:12; cf. verse 1
 - 2. leave the faith - Galatians 5:4
- B. "they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh" - cf. Matthew 27:15-26
- C. "put him to an open shame" - cf. Matthew 27:27-31,39-44

III. Plight: Impossible to Renew - Hebrews 6:4-6

- A. This does not mean a fallen sinner cannot return to the Lord. - 1 Timothy 1:15; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9
- B. But one can become so hardened of heart it is impossible to reach him. - cf. Acts 28:24-27
- C. Such an apostate is "nigh unto cursing" - Hebrews 6:7-8

Conclusion:

- A. What a dreadful plight - beyond the hope of salvation!
- B. Christian, do not slip away from Christ. - Hebrews 3:12
- C. Sinner, repent before your heart becomes too hardened to respond.

Be Sure Your Sin Will Find You Out

Introduction:

- A. Text: Numbers 32:23
- C. How do our sins find us out?
 - I. We cannot hide our sins by:
 - A. careful concealment - Genesis 37; 42 - 45; 44:16; 50:15-21; Hebrews 4:13
 - B. refusal to admit - 1 Samuel 15:1-23
 - C. lapse of time - Ecclesiastes 8:11; cf. Genesis 44:16; 47:28
 - D. good deeds - Titus 3:5; Luke 17:10; e.g., Hollywood stars who live sinful lives but lead in benevolent organizations
 - E. death - Ecclesiastes 12:14; e.g., Numbers 27:1-3
 - F. a generally righteous life - Ezekiel 18:24
 - II. We must eventually face the consequences of our sins. - Galatians 6:7-8
 - A. often in this life - Numbers 20:7-12; Deuteronomy 34:1-7
 - B. certainly in eternity - 2 Corinthians 5:10
 - III. Only the blood of Christ will erase the guilt of sin. - Hebrews 9:13-14
 - IV. How can we receive the benefits of His blood sacrifice?
 - A. alien sinner - Acts 3:19; Romans 5:9-10; 6:3-4
 - B. erring child of God - Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9
 - V. There is no sin so vile or life so depraved but that God will forgive if we will repent. - Acts 26:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:15

Conclusion:

- A. Numbers 32:23

Perfection

Introduction:

A. charge of perfectionism:

*But I use the term 'neo-perfectionism' to describe that doctrine that holds that the imperfect Christian (one who admittedly sins, as all of us do - 1 John 1:8), must perceive perfectly his own faults in order to confess perfectly to God.... That is why I call it **new perfectionism** - it is not sinlessness, but perfect perception of sin (Eugene Britnell, **The Sower** (May-June, 1985).*

B. The Bible certainly teaches us to be perfect. - Matthew 5:48

C. How are we to be perfect?

I. Perfection is not just an unreachable goal to be pursued ("to reach the unreachable star") but a command to be obeyed.

A. patriarchal age - Genesis 17:1

B. law of Moses - Deuteronomy 18:13

B. law of Christ - Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 13:11

C. The Bible gives examples of people who were perfect.

1. Noah - Genesis 6:9

2. Job - Job 1:1,8; 2:3

II. What then does it mean to be perfect?

A. The New Testament verb most commonly translated "perfect" means "**1. complete, bring to an end, finish accomplish.... 2. bring to an end, bring to its goal or to accomplish in the sense of overcoming or supplanting of an imperfect state of things by one that is free fr. objection.... e. make perfect...**" (Arndt & Gingrich. 817).

B. To be perfect is NOT to:

1. never sin.

a. Noah - Genesis 9:20-21

b. Job - Job 9:20; 42:1-6

c. David

(1) He determined to behave in a perfect way. - Psalm 101:2

(2) But he certainly sinned!

2. remember every act of sin or even every sin one has ever committed. Doubtless the prodigal son did not recall each instance of sin during his profligate life, but he did turn away from all sins and confess all sins. - Luke 15:11-32

3. have perfect knowledge of the Bible.

4. earn heaven. - Philippians 3:15; 1 Timothy 1:12-16

5. be self-righteous. - Titus 3:4-7

C. To be perfect is to:

1. be forgiven of all one's sins - Hebrews 10:1-4,12-14
 - a. on the basis of:
 - (1) the grace of God - Titus 3:7
 - (2) the blood sacrifice of Christ - Hebrews 10:14
 - (3) the Scriptures - 2 Timothy 3:16-17
 - a. by means of:
 - (1) faith - Hebrews 11:6-7
 - (2) works of faith - James 2:22
 - (3) compliance with the divine terms of pardon - Hebrews 10:19-22
2. have sincere, undivided loyalty - Philippians 3:13-15; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:9; 1 Kings 15:14; 2 Kings 20:3
3. be willing to sacrifice all for the Lord - Matthew 19:16-22
4. know God's word - Colossians 1:28; Hebrews 5:12-6:3
5. keep the commandments of God - 1 Chronicles 29:19
6. be diligent in good works - Hebrews 13:21
7. live a holy life - 2 Corinthians 7:1
8. suffer - 1 Peter 5:10
9. be patient - James 1:4
10. have Christ-like character - Matthew 5:48; Luke 6:40; Ephesians 4:13; Colossians 3:12-14; 1 John 4:17

Conclusion:

- A. Brother, sister, are you perfect? - 2 Corinthians 13:11
- B. Let us go on unto perfection. - Hebrews 6:1

That You May Know

Introduction:

- A. We can have confidence in our salvation. - 1 John 4:17-18; 5:13
- B. How can we have confidence in our salvation?

I. Basis: God is:

- A. loving (He wants all to be saved.) - John 3:16; 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- B. gracious (He has done all He can consistent with His nature and ours to effect our salvation.) - Romans 8:31-32
 - 1. His holiness - 1 Peter 1:15-16; 1 John 1:5-6
 - 2. our free will - Revelation 22:17
- C. long-suffering (He gives us ample opportunity to repent.) - 2 Peter 3:9
- D. faithful - Titus 1:2
- E. able - 2 Timothy 1:12; 1 Corinthians 10:13
- F. accessible - 1 John 2:1-2; Hebrews 4:14-16
- G. active - 1 John 5:14-15

II. Means: Our Walk in the Light - 1 John 1:7

- A. We can know God's will. - 1 John 2:20; Ephesians 3:4; 5:17
- B. We can avoid sin. - 1 John 2:1; 3:8; 5:3
- C. We can know our sins. - 1 John 1:8; Matthew 15:18-20; Romans 3:20
- D. We can know enough to go to heaven.
 - 1. There is danger in ignorance. - Matthew 15:14
 - 2. We need to mature. - Hebrews 5:12 - 6:1
 - 3. But there is security at various levels of maturity. - Philippians 3:15-16
- E. We don't have to understand everything in the Bible. - Romans 14:1-3
- F. When we are unsure, we can refrain from a practice. - Romans 14:23
- G. The sincere seeker will be successful. - Matthew 7:7-8; John 7:17; Hebrews 11:6

Conclusion:

- A. Tell of the little girl who was unafraid though aboard a sailing ship in a terrible storm because her daddy was the captain.
- B. If we lack confidence in our salvation, either we lack faith in God, know we are not living right, or both.
 - 1. lack faith in God - Hebrews 11:6
 - 2. know we are not living right - 1 John 3:20-21
- C. Doubting soul, have faith in the captain of your salvation!
- D. What joy this will bring. - 1 John 1:4
- E. When I come to the end of the journey, I want to have the confidence, peace and joy I saw in Dad the last time I saw him alive.

The Sovereignty of God & Man's Free Will

Introduction:

A. The theology of Protestant denominationalism is based on Calvinism.

If in your investigation, you probe into the history and influence of Calvinism, you will discover that its doctrines have been incorporated into the majority of the great creeds of the Protestant churches (David N. Steele and Curtis C. Thomas, **The Five Points of Calvinism**).

B. This theology is now influencing many Christians.

C. The basis and foundation of Calvinism is the tenet that the sovereignty of God rules out man's free will.

*For to Calvinism there is really only **one** point to be made in the field of soteriology: the point that **God saves sinners**: **Saves** does everything, first to last, that is involved in bringing man from death in sin to life in glory.... sinners do not save themselves in any sense at all* (Ibid. 23).

D. Can the sovereignty of God be reconciled with man's state as a free moral agent?

I. God is sovereign. - Acts 17:24; 1 Corinthians 10:26

II. If God's sovereignty means man has no choice as to whether he will believe or disbelieve, obey or disobey, then:

A. Man cannot err, for everything we do is ordained of God. - James 5:19-20; cf. Jeremiah 7:31; 19:5; 32:35

"The Scriptures not only teach that God predestined certain individuals unto eternal life, but that all events, both small and great, come about as the result of God's decree" (**Five Points**, 37).

B. When we sin we both fulfill and violate God's will. - Titus 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 10:13

C. God is the ultimate source and cause of all sin. - James 1:13-14

D. God will destroy sinners for doing what He made them do and rejecting what they could not accept. - Psalm 89:14

III. God's sovereignty is **not** incompatible with man's free will (It exalts the power of God to realize He is capable of creating a creature with free will.).

A. God has ordained human action, but men violate these ordinances continually. - Titus 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

B. God changes His decrees concerning man to fit human action (i.e., His decisions to bless or curse are conditioned upon obedience or disobedience). - Ezekiel 18:21-31; Jonah 3:1-4,10

IV. Man is a free moral agent.

A. You can choose your own way in life. - Joshua 24:15; Acts 2:40; Revelation 22:17

B. But you are responsible for the choice you make and must bear the consequences of your decision. - Deuteronomy 30:11-20; Romans 2:2-11

Conclusion:

A. God in His sovereignty purposed and worked out the plan of human salvation. - Romans 11:34-36

B. We must exercise our own free will to either accept or reject that salvation. - Revelation 22:17

Total Hereditary Depravity

Introduction:

- A. For many years gospel preachers have waged a vigorous fight against those who teach inherent total depravity.
 - B. Yet this very attitude has permeated the minds of many Christians. - “On the one hand, **because God is God**, sin must be punished. On the other hand, **because man is man**, he has always sinned” (Edward Fudge, **The Grace of God**. 8).
 - C. Are we by inherent nature sinners? - Ezekiel 18:20
- I. What is “inherent total depravity”?
- A. *When Calvinists speak of man as totally depraved, they mean that man’s nature is corrupt, perverse, and sinful throughout.... The natural man is enslaved to sin; he is a child of Satan, rebellious toward God, blind to truth, corrupt and unable to save himself or to prepare himself for salvation.... Consequently, man’s will is no longer free (i.e., from the dominion of sin) as Adam’s will was free before the fall (The Five Points of Calvinism. 25)*
 - B. When brethren contend man cannot keep God’s law, they are also denying free will.
- II. The doctrine of total hereditary depravity violates scriptural teaching concerning:
- A. the justice of God. - Ezekiel 18:2-3,20
 - 1. A child may bear the consequences of his parents’ actions but not the guilt.
 - 2. If we inherit Adam’s guilt, why not Noah’s righteousness? - Genesis 6:8-9; cf. 1:28; 9:1
 - B. the definition of sin. - 1 John 3:4
 - C. the nature of children. - Matthew 18:1-4; 19:13-15; Mark 10:14-16; Psalm 106:37-38; 1 Corinthians 14:20
 - D. the source of sin. - Ecclesiastes 12:7; Hebrews 12:9; James 1:13-14,17
 - E. the nature of Christ. - Hebrews 2:14-17; 4:15 (Doctrine of Immaculate Conception, 1854)
 - F. the possibility of degeneration. - 2 Timothy 3:13
 - G. reconciliation. - 2 Corinthians 5:18-20
- Conclusion:
- A. We are all born into this world safe and innocent from sin. - Matthew 18:3
 - B. But we have sinned and were lost. - Romans 3:23; 6:23
 - C. To be saved, we must believe in and obey the Savior. - Romans 6:23; Acts 16:31; Hebrews 5:8-9

Unconditional Election

Introduction:

A. If Calvinism be true, we may as well go home, close this building, forget about preaching the gospel and simply live our lives in abject terror.

B. This is true because of the Calvinistic doctrine of unconditional election.

C. Did God unconditionally choose before the world all individuals to be either saved or lost?

I. The Bible does teach a doctrine of “predestination” and “election.”

A. God did “predestinate” certain things. - Ephesians 1:3-11

1. “to mark out beforehand, to determine before, foreordain” (Vine. 1:305)

2. “decide beforehand” (Thayer. 541)

B. He has an “elect.” - 1 Peter 1:1-2 (“picked out, chosen” - Vine. 2:21; so Thayer. 197)

C. He did “foreknow.” - Romans 8:29

D. He did “choose.” - Ephesians 1:4

II. But the Bible does **not** teach the unconditional election of individuals.

A. Unconditional Election:

The doctrine of election declares that God, before the foundations of the world, chose certain individuals from among the fallen members of Adam’s race to be the objects of his undeserved favor. These, and only these, He purposed to save.... His eternal choice of particular sinners unto salvation was not based upon any foreseen act or response on the part of those selected, but was based solely on His own good pleasure and sovereign will. This election was not determined by, or conditioned upon, anything that man would do, but resulted entirely from God’s self-determined purpose (Five Points. 30).

B. the Bible’s teaching concerning choosing - Ephesians 1:4

1. “in him”

2. “that we should be holy”

C. differences

1. The predestination of Calvinism involves the **unconditional** election of **particular individuals** to be saved and others to be lost.

2. The predestination of the Bible involves an elect **group** (the church) of saved to which **all** may be added **conditioned upon** their faith in and obedience to the gospel. - Ephesians 3:9-10; Acts 2:47; Revelation 22:17

III. Why is the doctrine of unconditional election false?

A. It makes God a respecter of persons. - Acts 10:34-35; Romans 2:11; 10:12-13; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25; 1 Peter 1:17

B. It means God wills the damnation of people. - Ezekiel 18:32; 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9

C. It makes a mockery of the Lord’s invitation. - Matthew 11:28-30; Revelation 22:17

D. It makes the work of Satan absurd. - 1 Peter 5:8

E. It denies that human action is the basis of God’s judgment. - 2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:12-13

Conclusion:

A. Your election is based upon your faith in and obedience to the gospel. - 2 Thessalonians 2:13- 14

B. Will you accept His invitation and become one of God’s elect? - Revelation 22:17

Limited Atonement

Introduction:

- A. What would you say if I told you that God doesn't really love **all** the world and that Christ died **only** for a chosen few?
- B. This is exactly what the Calvinistic doctrine of limited atonement teaches.
"Christ died only for the elect, and purchased redemption only for the elect; and in no sense did he die for the rest of the race" (Expository Comments in **Presbyterian Confession of Faith**).
- C. Why is the doctrine of limited atonement false?
 - I. It limits the love of God.
 - A. Christ died for as many people as God loves. - Romans 5:8
"... the love exhibited on Calvary is itself a distinguishing love and not a love that is indiscriminately universal" (John Murray, Presbyterian, **Redemption - Accomplished and Applied**. 79).
 - B. God loves the whole world. - John 3:16-17
 - II. The people for whom Christ died may be lost. - Romans 14:15; 1 Corinthians 8:11; 2 Peter 2:1
 - III. It denies God's desire that all be saved. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4; 2 Peter 3:9
 - IV. It makes a farce of the Great Commission. - Mark 16:15; Matthew 28:19; Titus 2:11-12
 - A. Why preach to the elect; they will be saved anyway?
 - B. Why preach to the non-elect; they will be lost anyway?
 - V. The Scriptures repeatedly state in unmistakable language that Christ died for all mankind, without either **distinction** or **exception**.
 - A. John 1:29
 - B. John 3:16-17
 - C. John 6:33
 - D. John 6:51
 - E. John 12:32-33
 - F. Romans 5:18
 - G. 2 Corinthians 5:14-15
 - H. 2 Corinthians 5:19
 - I. 1 Timothy 2:5-6
 - J. Hebrews 2:9
 - K. 1 John 2:1-2
 - L. 1 John 4:14

Conclusion:

- A. God be thanked, the "good news" of Christ - redemption through His blood - is for **all the human race!**
 - 1. God loves all.
 - 2. Christ died for all.
 - 3. All who will may come go Him.
- B. Will you come? - Matthew 11:28-30

Irresistible Grace

Introduction:

- A. The majority of those in Christendom ascribe a direct, supernatural influence to the Holy Spirit in conversion.
- B. No Bible believer questions the fact the Holy Spirit plays a role in conversion. - John 3:5
- C. The question is **how**:
 - 1. direct, supernatural?
 - 2. through the influence of the gospel
- D. Does the Bible teach the doctrine of irresistible grace?

I. What is the doctrine of irresistible grace?

*Simply stated, this doctrine asserts that the Holy Spirit never fails to bring to salvation those sinners whom He personally calls to Christ.... The **gospel invitation extends a call** to every one who hears its message.... But, this outward general call extended to the elect and non-elect alike, will not bring sinners to Christ.... Therefore, the **Holy Spirit**, in order to bring God's elect to salvation, extends to them **a special inward call** in addition to the outward call contained in the gospel message.... the grace which the Holy Spirit extends to the elect cannot be thwarted or refused, it never fails to bring them to true faith in Christ! (**Five Points**. 48-49).*

II. What are some fallacies of the doctrine?

- A. It is based upon the false doctrine of total hereditary depravity. - Ezekiel 18:20
- B. It is based on the false doctrine of unconditional election. - Acts 10:34-35
- C. It denies the free moral agency of man. - Joshua 24:15; Revelation 22:17
- D. It teaches that the Holy Spirit and God's grace cannot be resisted in bringing man to salvation.
 - 1. The Holy Spirit can be resisted. - Acts 7:51
 - 2. God's grace can be frustrated.
 - a. To turn back to the law of Moses is to frustrate the grace of God. - Galatians 2:21
 - b. Some turned back to the law. - Galatians 4:21
 - c. Therefore, some frustrated the grace of God.
- E. It denies the power of God's Word to produce faith in the sinner. - John 20:30-31; Romans 10:17
- F. It denies the sufficiency and power of God's Word to save the sinner. - Romans 1:16; James 1:21
- G. It negates the importance of man's obedience (basis of doctrine of salvation by faith only). - Matthew 7:21; Hebrews 5:8-9
- H. It denies human responsibility. - 2 Corinthians 5:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 11:9

Conclusion:

- A. The Holy Spirit saves sinners by the influence of the Word. - John 6:63
- B. Each person has the ability of His own free will to either accept or reject God's Word.
- C. Will you accept the Spirit's invitation? - Revelation 22:17

Perseverance of the Saints

Introduction:

- A. "If you seek it, you can't find it; if you find it, you can't get it; if you get it, you can't lose it; if you lose it, you never had it!" (summary of Calvinistic teaching on salvation by Brother C.R. Nichol)
- B. Of the five points of Calvinism, the one that is still most commonly advocated by denominational people is the perseverance of the saints.
- C. Why is the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints wrong?

I. definition:

True believers do fall into temptations, and they do commit grievous sins, but these sins do not cause them to lose their salvation or separate them from Christ.... The Westminster Confession of Faith gives the following statement of this doctrine: 'They whom God hath accepted in his Beloved, effectually called and sanctified by his Spirit, can neither totally nor finally fall away from a state of grace: but shall certainly persevere therein to the end, and be eternally saved (Five Points. 56).

II. practical result:

We take the position that a Christian's sins do not damn his soul! The way a Christian lives, what he says, his character, his conduct, or his attitude toward other people have nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul... All the prayers a man may pray, all the Bible he may read, all the churches he may belong to, all the services he may attend, all the sermons he may practice, all the debts he may pay, all the ordinances he may observe, all the laws he may keep, all the benevolent acts he may perform will not make his soul one whit safer; and all the sins he may commit from idolatry to murder will not make his soul in any more danger. The justification of the human soul is through the atonement of Christ and not through the efforts of man. The way a man lives has nothing whatever to do with the salvation of his soul (Sam Morris, Pastor, First Baptist Church, Stamford, Texas, "Do A Christian's Sins Damn His Soul).

III. Some Arguments Which Demonstrate the Possibility of Apostasy

- A. The Bible warns children of God against falling. - 1 Corinthians 10:12; Hebrews 3:12; 4:11
- B. The Bible says some children of God did fall. - Acts 8:12-23; Galatians 5:4
- C. The Bible tells us how to keep from falling. - 2 Peter 1:2-11
- D. The Bible tells us what to do if we fall. - 1 John 2:1-2; 1:9
- E. The Bible shows the result of falling. - Romans 11:22; Hebrews 6:4-6; 10:26-39; 2 Peter 2:20-22
- F. The Bible teaches we will be judged according to our works. - Romans 2:5-11; 8:13; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Galatians 6:7-8; Revelation 20:13
- G. Even the Apostle Paul was concerned that he might fall. - 1 Corinthians 9:27

Conclusion:

- A. The way you live has **much** to do with the salvation of your soul.
- B. "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Wedding Ceremony

Text: Genesis 2:18-24

Introduction:

Friends, we are gathered in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, in order to join this man and this woman in the bond of holy wedlock and to send them forth with our prayers and blessings. Let us look briefly at marriage as God ordained it.

I. Definition: Marriage is an institution ordained of God for the honor and happiness of mankind, in which one man and one woman enter into a bodily and spiritual union, pledging each to the other mutual love, honor, fidelity, sympathy, forbearance and comradeship, such as would assure an unbroken continuance of their wedlock so long as both shall live.

II. This relationship should be held in honor by all. - Hebrews 13:4

III. Basis: The very basis for this marriage should be mutual love. - Ephesians 5:25; Titus 2:4-5

IV. Permanence: God intended from the very beginning that marriage be a life-long relationship between one man and one woman. - Matthew 19:3-9

Conclusion:

Your marriage can either be your greatest source of happiness this side of heaven or your greatest cause of misery this side of hell. Whether your marriage will be one of joy and permanence or of despair and separation will be determined by whether you follow the law of the Lord concerning marriage or not. If each of you will live a life of faithfulness to God and to each other, your marriage will be your highest, most secure of all earthly sources of joy, peace and comfort. Our sincere prayer is that you will always turn to the Word of God to find the answers to life's problems and thus grow closer to God and to one another as the years pass.

Prayer

Gracious Father, we praise You for your wise and gracious provisions for us. Especially we praise You for your wisdom and love in instituting the marriage relationship. We humbly thank You for this man and this woman and their mutual love. We pray they might realize the importance of the decision they have made and the covenant they are about to enter. May they each day fulfill their obligations to You and to each other and thus be granted a life of love and joy and the hope of eternal life. In the name of Jesus Christ, Your only begotten Son, we pray. Amen.

Ceremony

To the Groom: Do you, _____, take _____ to be your lawful wedded wife, to have and to hold, to love, cherish, honor and provide for, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, forsaking all others, until death do you part?

To the Bride: Do you, _____, take _____ to be your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, to love, cherish, honor and obey, in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, for better or for worse, forsaking all others until death do you part?

To the Groom: What token do you give in commemoration of this pledge?

To the Bride: What token do you give in commemoration of this pledge?

To both: Please join your right hands. Forasmuch, then, as you, _____, and you, _____, have consented together in holy wedlock and have pledged your love and faithfulness to one another, I now pronounce you husband and wife. What, therefore, God has joined together, let not man put asunder.

Ladies and Gentlemen, I present to you Mr. And Mrs.

The Nature of Marriage

Introduction:

- A. *Changes of a profound nature are under way in American family life.... This ferment has convinced some social scientists that the 'death of the family' is at hand. Ferdinand Lundberg, author of 'The Coming World Transformation,' says the family is 'near the point of extinction.'*(US News & World Report, April 16,1973, p. 71)
- B. Christians are faced with the crucial choice of following God's plan for marriage or conforming to the world. - Romans 12:2
- C. What is the nature of marriage?

I. Origin: Divine (First Divine Institution) - Genesis 2:18-24

- A. We should study God's will for it, not human philosophy about it.
- B. Man does not have the right to change it.
- C. Man does not have the right to alter its relationships to suit himself or society.
- D. Man does not have the right to enter or leave it at will; God determines who can enter or leave.

II. Definition: Bodily & Spiritual Union of Man and Woman

A. Characteristics

- 1. Bond (Covenant) - Malachi 2:14
 - a. terms - 1 Corinthians 7:2; Matthew 19:9
 - b. promises (mutual agreement) - Luke 1:26-27,34
 - c. ratification (meeting legal requirements) - Galatians 3:15; John 2:1-11
- 2. Binding - Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39
- 3. Bonding (New Relationship) - Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6;

- B. Description: *Marriage is an institution ordained of God for the honor and happiness of mankind, in which one man and one woman enter into a bodily and spiritual union, pledging each to the other mutual love, honor, fidelity, sympathy, forbearance, and comradeship, such as would assure an unbroken continuance of their wedlock so long as both shall live* (H. Leo Boles).

III. Purposes

- A. Companionship - Genesis 2:18
- B. Procreation - Genesis 1:27-28
- C. Avoid Fornication - 1 Corinthians 7:2

IV. Number of Mates: One (Monogamous, Heterosexual) - Matthew 19:4-5; cf. 1 Samuel 1:1-7

V. Duration: Lifetime - Romans 7:2; Matthew 22:23-30

VI. Result: Happiness - Genesis 1:25-28,31; Proverbs 18:22

Conclusion:

- A. Rather than seeking to alter God's plan, we should in faith conform to it. - Hebrews 13:4
- B. Marriage can either be the greatest source of happiness this side of Heaven or the greatest cause of misery this side of Hell. Whether your marriage will be one of joy and permanence or of despair and separation will be determined by whether or not you follow the law of the Lord concerning marriage.

God's Plan for Husbands

Text: Ephesians 5:22-33

Introduction:

A. Man is intended to fill the role of leadership and guidance and to provide for the welfare of his household. Manhood reaches its highest richness and glory in the happy fulfilling of these responsibilities.

B. What is God's plan for man in his role as husband?

I. "head of the wife" (**LEAD**) - Ephesians 5:22-24

A. This does not mean:

1. men are superior to women. - 1 Corinthians 11:3
2. men should physically punish their wives. - Ephesians 5:23

B. Headship is a duty rather than a privilege. - e.g., 1 Timothy 5:8,14; Ephesians 6:4

1. If the man abdicates his headship, the family will be adversely affected.
2. The husband cannot be gone constantly and discharge this responsibility.

C. While decisions concerning the home are the responsibility of the husband, he should counsel with his wife. - 1 Timothy 5:14 (He should not tell her how to keep house.)

II. "love your wives" - Ephesians 5:25-33

A. **LEAVE** parents (Forsake anything but the Lord for her.) - Ephesians 5:31; Matthew 10:34-37

B. **CLEAVE** to the wife. - Ephesians 5:31

1. Please her, not himself. - 1 Corinthians 7:3-5,33
2. Recognize his need for her. - 1 Corinthians 11:11-12
3. Be jealous only in a godly sense (possessive but not suspicious). - 2 Corinthians 11:2; Song of Solomon 8:6
4. Seek her good. - Ephesians 5:28-29
5. Do not be bitter. - Colossians 3:19
6. Be faithful to her. - Hebrews 13:4
7. Understand her. - 1 Peter 3:7

Conclusion:

When a young lady marries, she, in a very real sense, commits the keeping of her life to the young man she loves and trusts. He is her head and guide. Husbands need to be sure they are worthy of that love and trust. It is an awesome responsibility.

God's Plan For Wives

Text: Genesis 2:18-24

Introduction:

- A. Today's society in the greater part both ignores and rebels against God's design for women. - "Women come out of the house! You have everything to gain!" ("The New Feminism," **Ladies Home Journal**, August, 1970, pp. 64-65)
 - B. This stands in stark contrast to God's plan. - Titus 2:4-5
 - C. What is God's plan for wives?
- I. Woman was created for a peculiar purpose: to be a "help meet" for man. All the woman's peculiar responsibilities are the result of this special purpose. - Genesis 2:18-24
- II. Because of her purpose, the wife is to be in subjection to her husband. - Ephesians 5:22-24
- A. She should "reverence" (show respect to) her husband. - Ephesians 5:33
 - B. There is only one exception to her submission; she must obey God rather than man. - Colossians 3:18
- III. Because of her purpose, the wife is to love her husband. - Titus 2:4
- A. She should try to please him rather than herself. - 1 Corinthians 7:34
 - B. She should not "nag" him. - Proverbs 19:13; 21:9,19
 - C. She will recognize that she belongs to her husband, not to herself. - 1 Corinthians 7:2-5
 - D. She will keep herself pure from defilement with other men. - Proverbs 12:4
 - E. If her husband is an unbeliever, she will lead such a pure life as to influence him toward the truth. - 1 Peter 3:1-4
- IV. Because of her purpose, she is to be a "keeper at home."
- (In 1890 4.6% of American women who were married worked outside the home. The divorce rate was 6%. In 1986 59% of the women in the labor force are married. The divorce rate is 48%.)
- A. The wife is a queen in her home, with the guidance of everyday domestic affairs in her hands.
 - 1. "keepers at home" - Titus 2:4-5 (older women to teach the younger)
 - a. "home-workers" (Marshall)
 - b. "working at home" (Vine. 2:228)
 - c. "keeping at home and taking care of household affairs" (Thayer. 442)
 - d. "take proper care of their families" (MacKnight. 490)
 - 2. "guide the house" - 1 Timothy 5:14 ."house despot (ruler.); the management and direction of household affairs" - Vine. 2:185); cf. Genesis 39:1-6
 - B. She should exercise intelligence and good judgment in the affairs of the home. - Proverbs 11:22; 19:14; 31:16,24,26
- Conclusion:
- A. Wives, strive to be a virtuous woman. - Proverbs 31:10-27
 - B. The rewards of such a life are truly great. - Proverbs 31:28-31

God's Plan for Fathers

Text: Ephesians 6:4

Introduction:

- A. What do you think of a man who will allow his children to starve?
- B. Yet, many fathers, who provide all material things to their children, are cheating them in ways even worse than physically starving them.
- C. What are the responsibilities of a father to his children?

I. Spiritual Responsibilities - Ephesians 6:4

- A. “provoke not your children to wrath”: “irritate, exasperate”(Analytical Greek Lexicon; “to irritate beyond measure” (Young's Analytical Concordance)
 - 1. by being cutting and discouraging in speech - Proverbs 15:1; 25:11
 - 2. by being unfair, cruel, or overly demanding - Colossians 3:21; e.g., providing no alternatives to bad recreation
 - 3. by showing partiality - Genesis 37:3-4,26-35
 - 4. by cruel teasing - Genesis 21:9; cf. Galatians 4:29
- B. “nurture” - “the whole training and education of children [which relates to the cultivation of mind and morals, and employs for this purpose now commands and admonitions, now reproof and punishment....” - Thayer. 473; “stresses training by act” - Vine. 1:30.
 - 1. example of life - 2 Chronicles 14:2-5; 20:31-32
 - 2. restraint from wrong - 1 Samuel 2:12-17,22-25,27-36; 3:11-14; 4:12-22
 - 3. punishment for wrongdoing - Proverbs 13:24; 29:15, Hebrews 12:7-9
- C. “admonition”: “lit., a putting in mind.... is ‘the training by word,’ whether of encouragement, or, if necessary, by reproof or remonstrance....” - Vine. 1:30. - Genesis 18:17-19; Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 22:6

II. Material Responsibilities - Luke 2:52

- A. Provide their material needs. - 1 Timothy 5:8
- B. Teach them responsibility. - Lamentations 3:27

Conclusion:

- A. Fathers, are we giving our children the guidance they need and deserve, or are we cheating them out of the kind of daddy every child should have?
- B. Let us pray for the wisdom we need to properly guide our children. - Judges 13:8,12; James 1:5

God's Plan for Mothers

Text: Titus 2:4-5

Introduction:

- A. Mothers and motherhood have been praised in every land in every age.
 - 1. "The hand that rocks the cradle rules the world." (anonymous)
 - 2. "Men are what their mothers have made them." (Emerson)
 - 3. "The future destiny of the child is always the work of the mother." (Napoleon)
 - 4. "The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom." (Henry W. Beecher)
 - 5. "If you would reform the world of its errors and vices, begin by enlightening its mothers." (Simmons)
 - 6. "One good mother is worth a hundred schoolmasters." (anonymous)
- B. Mothers, do you live up to these tributes?
- C. What is God's plan for mothers?
- I. It is proper for young women to desire to marry and become mothers. - 1 Timothy 5:14; Psalm 113:9
- II. Love should be the controlling emotion in the mother's dealings with her children. - Titus 2:4; cf. 1 Kings 3:16-27
- III. Love will lead a mother to deal with her children in the way the Lord directs.
 - A. She will raise her children herself, rather than turning them over to a baby-sitter. - 1 Timothy 5:14; Proverbs 29:15; cf. Exodus 2:1-12; Acts 7:20-25
 - B. She will, above all else, impart unto them faith. - e.g., 2 Timothy 1:5
 - 1. by teaching them God's law - 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Proverbs 31:26 (My grandmother, "Mama Sharp," taught my Dad the stories of Old Testament characters as he pulled grass in the vegetable garden as a preschooler. He became one of the great preachers of lessons from the Old Testament of his generation.)
 - 2. by setting the right kind of example before them - Ezekiel 16:44
 - 3. by correcting them when they do wrong - Proverbs 29:17 (not by the use of idle threats, which are simply lies)
 - C. She will not show partiality to any child. - Genesis 25:28; 27:1-45
 - D. She will willingly work in their behalf. - Proverbs 31:13,15, 17,19,21,25,27

Conclusion:

- A. The following quotation, from the pen of James R. Cope, is perhaps the most beautiful tribute to a mother I have ever read. He wrote it on the occasion of his mother's 84th birthday. I have never been able to read it publicly without choking up.

"She Is 84"

That's my mother. September 18 is her 84th birthday. Not alert as she once was and almost blind, she lives near Cookeville, Tennessee, with my sister who tenderly cares for her. Her form is stooped and weakened, her brow creviced. Silver threads run majestically among the chestnut locks which my baby fingers caressed more than fifty years ago. Tired and wrinkled hands, once callused by physical toil in kitchen, vegetable garden, lawn, and even the barn before she taught me how to milk the cows, bespeak a heart that lost sight of self in loving service for those she mothered. And flowers, always flowers, flowers everywhere! Those hands loved to plant them as she bestowed the beauty of her soul upon the landscape for others to enjoy. "When I saw her last, I studied carefully those hands that never wrought evil to any man, woman, or child."

I was reminded of the poem, 'Beautiful Hands,' by Ellen M.H. Gatos. I share it here with you, dear reader.

*'Such beautiful, beautiful hands,
They're neither white nor small,"
And you, I know, would scarcely think
That they were fair at all.
I've looked on hands whose form and hue
A sculptor's dream might be,
Yet these are aged, wrinkled hands
Most beautiful to me.*

*'Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
Though heart were weary and sad
Those patient hands kept toiling on
That the children might be glad.
I almost weep when looking back
To childhood's distant day!
I think how these hands rested not
When children were at their play.*

*'Such beautiful, beautiful hands!
They're growing feeble now,
And time and pain have left their mark
On head, and heart and brow.
Alas! Alas! the nearing time--
And the sad, sad day to me,
When 'neath the daisies, out of sight,
Those hands must folded be.*

*'But, oh! beyond the shadowy lands,
Where all is bright and fair,
I know full well those dear old hands
Will palms of victory bear;
Where crystal streams, through sadless years
Flow over golden sands,
And where the old are young again,
I'll clasp my mother's hands.'*

B. Would that all mothers so lived before their children that they should be so blessed. - Proverbs 31:28a

God's Plan for Children

Text: Ephesians 6:1-3; Colossians 3:20

Introduction:

- A. There is a tendency in our age to excuse young people and children for their misbehavior and to blame to their parents.
 - B. But God holds each person responsible for his own actions.- Ezekiel 18:20
 - C. What are the responsibilities of children to their parents?
- I. OBEY - Ephesians 6:1; Proverbs 1:8-9; 15:5; 23:22; Luke 2:51
- A. Why should children obey their parents?
 - 1. It is right. - Ephesians 6:1
 - 2. It is well-pleasing to the Lord. - Colossians 3:20; cf. Deuteronomy 21:18-21
 - B. What limits are there to the children's responsibility to obey their parents?
 - 1. "in all things" - Colossians 3:20
 - 2. "in the Lord" - Ephesians 6:1; cf. Acts 5:29
- II. HONOR - Ephesians 6:2-3
- A. Why should children honor their parents? - Exodus 20:12; Ephesians 6:2-3
(The obedience of childhood rendered to a wise Christian rule forms in the young the habit of self-control, self-respect, diligence, promptitude, faithfulness, and kindness of heart, which are the best guarantees for happiness and success in life. - David Lipscomb)
 - B. How do children honor their parents?
 - 1. by being respectful in words and actions - Leviticus 19:32
 - 2. by being helpful - 1 Samuel 17:12-15,34-35; cf. Matthew 13:55 with Mark 6:3
 - 3. by living in such a way as to reflect honor upon them - Luke 15:18-19
 - 4. by providing .or their needs when they cannot - Exodus 20:12; Mark 7:9-13; 1 Timothy 5:3-4,16; e.g., Genesis 45:9-13,23; 46:29; 47:11-12; 49:28 - 50:14; John 19:26-27

Conclusion:

A dutiful child secures the blessings of God, both here and hereafter. Obedience practiced in the home forms habits of promptitude, self-control and self-respect which are important conditions of success and prosperity. Even though it is a child's duty to obey, God, in his goodness, attaches a special blessing to every act of unselfish obedience. (Edgar J. Dye)

Divorce

Introduction:

- A. Divorce is a devastating problem in our country. - 1986 US divorce rate: 48% (Statistical Abstract of the US, 1988)
- B. This problem long ago invaded the Lord's church.
 - 1. churches filled with divorced people, many unscripturally so
 - 2. division over divorce
- C. The response of many preachers and elders is woefully inadequate.
 - 1. pop psychology
 - 2. positive Christianity
 - 3. unscriptural theories
- D. What does the Lord teach about divorce?

I. Background

- A. God's original plan for marriage was that one man and one woman live together as husband and wife throughout life. - Genesis 2:21-24
 - 1. This is not:
 - a. fusing of two bodies or
 - b. loss of personal identity.
 - 2. It is:
 - a. close and intimate union and
 - b. permanent bond upon the basis of mutual agreement and sexual union.
- B. The Law of Moses relaxed God's original plan. - Deuteronomy 24:1-4
 - 1. Moses allowed divorce for loss of favor because of "some uncleanness."
 - a. This was:
 - (1) "shame, filthiness, anything unclean... any defect found in a woman..."
Brown-Driver-Briggs-Gesenius. 653.)
 - (2) "The words suggest some immodest exposure or failure in proper womanly reserve"
(Cambridge Bible Commentary)
 - b. This was NOT fornication. - Deuteronomy 22:22
 - 2. This was because of the hardness of their hearts. - Matthew 19:7-8
 - 3. But God still hated divorce. - Malachi 2:13-16

II. The Law of Christ Concerning the Permanence of the marriage Tie

- A. The general law concerning marriage is: only death should separate the partners. (When the marriage is terminated for any reason other than death, at least one person sins.)
 - 1. Matthew 19:3-6
 - 2. Mark 10:3-9
 - 3. Romans 7:2

4. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

a. The passage does not allow separation without remarriage.

(1) This would contradict the other passages. - cf. John 17:17

(2) It would violate the wedding vows. - Ephesians 4:25

(3) It is a tacit admission that sin is present.

(4) It violates the rule concerning separation in this very context. - 1 Corinthians 7:2-5

(5) It places upon the partner the temptation to commit adultery. - Matthew 5:31-32;
18:6-7

(6) The one doing the separating will almost assuredly remarry. - 1 Corinthians 7:5

b. The passage specifically forbids both the husband and the wife to separate.

c. The "But ... if" clause does not allow separation, but shows how to handle a sinful situation. - cf. 1 John 2:1

d. If possible they should reconcile (the fruits of repentance). - cf. Matthew 3:8

e. If this is impossible, they must "remain unmarried."

5. 1 Corinthians 7:39

B. There is one exception to the general law. (And this involves sin on the part of one mate.)
The innocent party may divorce the guilty party for the cause of fornication.- Matthew
5:31-32

1. "fornication": "sexual immorality" (NKJV)

a. "of illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer. 532)

b. "of every kind of unlawful sexual intercourse"" (Arndt & Gingrich. 699)

2. Fornication on the part of one's mate must actually be the cause of the putting away, not
an after-the-fact excuse for remarriage.

Conclusion:

God has ordained but three institutions: the home, the civil state, and the church. Of these three, the home is the most ancient. Furthermore, the family is, to a large extent, the basis of the latter two. The home is the building-block of any nation. When a nation's families are strong, that country has real strength; when its homes dissolve, the nation decays. The young people who will determine the future of the Lord's church in this country will largely succeed or fail on the basis of the type of home in which they were reared. If divorce kills the American family, how long can our nation or the Lord's church in this country last? Pray God if perhaps America, especially God's people in this beloved land, may wake up before it is too late!

Remarriage

Text: Matthew 19:3-9

Introduction:

- A. Most people who divorce marry again. - *The rate of Americans entering their first marriage had declined for nearly a quarter century - but in the last decade remarriages have shown an increase of 40 per cent (US News & World Report. August 14, 1972).*
 - B. The greatest tragedy is, many children of God are being involved, thus permanently ruining their lives.
 - C. What is God's law concerning remarriage?
 - I. Marriage is a divinely ordained and regulated relationship. - Genesis 2:18-24; Malachi 2:14; Matthew 19:4-6
 - II. Thus, the only ones who have the right to marry are those to whom God has given the right. - Colossians 3:17; cf. 1 Corinthians 7:10-11
 - III. The general principle is that God has given all people the right to marry. - 1 Corinthians 7:2
 - IV. But this general principle has exceptions. - cf. Matthew 4:6-7
 - A. Divorced people do not have the right to marry. - Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11
 - B. The exception has one exception: the innocent party (one who has put away his mate because that mate is guilty of fornication) has the right to remarry. - Matthew 19:9
 - V. Thus, three and only three classes of people have the right to marry:
 - A. one who has never been married - 1 Corinthians 7:2
 - B. one whose mate is dead - Romans 7:2-3; 1 Corinthians 7:39
 - C. the innocent party (as before defined) - Matthew 19:9
- Conclusion:
- A. Only two classes of people have the right to remarry.
 - 1. one whose mate is dead
 - 2. the innocent party (as before defined)
 - B. For any other divorced person to remarry is to be guilty of adultery. - Matthew 19:9
 - C. No adulterer can inherit the kingdom of God. - Galatians 5:19-21
 - D. Let us, therefore, cleanse ourselves. - 2 Corinthians 7:1

Unscriptural Theories About Divorce and Remarriage

Text: Colossians 2:8-10

Introduction:

- A. Ships belong in the water, but the water does not belong in the ships.
 - B. Christians are to be in the world, but the world must not be in us. - John 17:11,14,16
 - C. The world has entered the church by means of false human theories designed to justify unscriptural second marriages. - text
 - D. What are some theories currently popular which circumvent the law of Christ concerning divorce and remarriage and why are they wrong?
- I. False Position One: There is no scriptural divorce and remarriage.
- A. If Matthew 19:9 does not apply today, it never did apply, for the adulterer under the law of Moses was to be put to death, not put away. - Deuteronomy 22:22
 - B. Jesus' teaching on earth was preparatory to the kingdom. - Matthew 4:23; e.g. 5:28; 18:15-17
- II. False Position Two: The Guilty Party (one who has been put away by his innocent mate because he is guilty of fornication) may scripturally marry another mate with divine approval.
- A. Supporting Argument One; If one is free, both are free.
 - 1. This is mere human reasoning. God has given only the innocent party the right to remarry. - Matthew 19:9
 - 2. One mate may be free from a covenant relationship, while the other is still bound by the law of the relationship. - Mark 6:17-18; cf. contract with professional athlete
 - 3. This places harsher penalties on an innocent mate put away for an unscriptural cause than on the guilty fornicator.
 - B. Supporting Argument Two: Fornication dissolves the marriage relationship and frees both to remarry.
 - 1. Answers "1" and "3" above apply here.
 - 2. What if the innocent party, ignorant of the guilty party's fornication, has sex relations with him? Is the innocent party then committing adultery?
- III. False Position Three: The Law of Christ on Divorce and Remarriage does not apply to the alien.
- A. Supporting Argument One: The alien is not under law.
 - 1. If aliens are sinners, they are under law. - Romans 5:13
 - 2. Aliens are sinners. - Romans 3:23
 - 3. Therefore, aliens are under law.
 - B. Supporting Argument Two: Aliens are under a "law written on the heart" (i.e., conscience) rather than the law of Christ. - cf. Romans 2:14-15
 - 1. If this be so, the conscience of the alien is a safe guide, and, as long as the alien follows his conscience, he will not sin. - cf. Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:15
 - 2. "Nature" in Romans 2:14 refers to "long, customary practice," not to an inborn sense of right and wrong. - cf. 1 Corinthians 11:14; Ephesians 2:3
 - 3. Christ rules over all people, including aliens. - Matthew 28:18; Ephesians 1:19-23
 - 4. The Standard of Judgment
 - a. All people will be judged by the law to which they are accountable. - Romans 2:12

- b. All people who live during the gospel age will be judged by the law of Christ. - John 12:48; Romans 2:16
 - c. Therefore, all people who live during the gospel age are accountable to the law of Christ.
5. All people, including aliens, are subject to the law of Christ. - Acts 17:30-31
- IV. False Position Four: When two people in an adulterous marriage are baptized (or, in the case of two Christians, confess the sin of adultery), they are forgiven and may continue living together.
- A. John the Baptist
- 1. John baptized for the remission of sins. - Mark 1:4
 - 2. Why did he not tell Herod to be baptized and to continue living with Herodias? - Mark 6:17-18
- B. To be forgiven of adultery, one must repent of adultery.
- 1. Neither baptism nor confession of sins are valid unless preceded by repentance. - Acts 2:38; 8:22
 - 2. If one repents of a sin, he gives up that sin. - Matthew 12:41; Jonah 3:10
 - a. may one repent of stealing and keep on stealing?
 - b. May one repent of drunkenness and keep on drinking?
 - c. May one repent of adultery and keep on committing adultery?
 - 3. Thus, if baptism or confession of sins is to benefit the adulterer, he must give up his adultery.
- C. That which is adultery before baptism is adultery afterwards. - 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:17-24
- V. False Position Five: If a Christians is divorced by a nonChristian, the Christian is free to remarry. - cf. 1 Corinthians 7:12-15
- A. The word “bondage” (v. 15. is never used in the Scriptures to refer to the marriage bond.
- 1. “... make a slave of; reduce to bondage; subject to...”(Thayer. 158).
 - 2. “... to reduce to servitude, enslave, oppress by retaining in servitude...” (Bagster. 107.. - cf. 2 Peter 2:19
- B. The word “bound,” which does refer to the marriage bond and its permanence, is used in verses twenty-seven and thirty-nine and is a different Greek word with a different meaning. - cf. Romans 7:2

C. What does the passage teach?

1. “Bondage” here is a strong word indicating that the law of the Lord has not made marriage a state of slavery for the believer.
2. Even the most loving husband may not be able to sustain the home if the unbeliever, who refuses to submit to the law of Christ, decides to leave.
3. In such cases the believer is not obligated by the marriage bond to make provisions for the one that departed; i.e., he is not in bondage to the unbeliever, so he is not obligated to forsake the Lord in order to preserve the marriage union.
4. The believer is not to initiate the separation but need not resist it and try to enforce union upon the unbelieving companion or have an unequal yoke forced upon himself.
5. If the unbeliever insists and deserts in spite all peaceful efforts to preserve the marriage, peaceful acquiescence to the inevitable is the only righteous solution open to the Christian.

(The material on 1 Corinthians 7:15-16 was taken from a sermon outline by Edgar J. Dye, entitled “A Study of I Cor. 7:15.”)

VI. False Position Six: If my mate divorces me and later remarries, I am free to “mentally divorce” that mate and to remarry. - cf. Matthew 5:32

Conclusion:

A. We must not:

1. be taken captive by false, human theories or
2. allow the world to enter our lives through unscriptural divorce and remarriage.

B. As Christians, we must be separate from all such false doctrine and sin.

C. Let us purify ourselves!

The Great Commission

Introduction:

- A. Tell about condition of Nigeria. What is their greatest need?
- B. The Great Commission is the divine outline of the mission of the Lord's church. - Mark 16:14-20
- C. What is the mission of the church of Christ?

I. Authority Which Dictates - Matthew 28:18; John 12:48

- A. The Great Commission was primarily directed to the apostles. - Mark 16:14-15
- B. But it secondarily applies to all Christians. - Matthew 28:19-20

II. Need Which Compels - Mark 16:16

- A. One cannot be saved unless he has been lost. - e.g., drowning man; Romans 3:23; 6:23
- B. The gospel alone can save the lost. - Romans 1:16

III. Love That Directs

- A. The Limited Commission was to the Jews only. - Matthew 10:5-7
- B. But our love must be for all. - Matthew 5:43-48
- C. God wants all to be saved. - 1 Timothy 2:3-4
- D. Salvation in Christ is for all. - Acts 10:34-35
- E. The Great Commission is to all. - Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15

IV. Message Proclaimed

- A. Facts to Believe - Luke 24:44-46; Romans 1:4; Mark 16:16
- B. Commands to Obey - Luke 24:47; Mark 16:16; Matthew 28:19-20
- C. Promise to Receive - Mark 16:16; Luke 24:47

V. Promise That Sustains - Matthew 28:20; Mark 16:17-18

- A. The Lord was with them. - Mark 16:19-20
- B. He will be with us. - Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20-21

Conclusion:

- A. The mission of the church is to take the gospel to the world.
- B. The first century church fulfilled the Commission. - Colossians 1:5-6,23
- C. Our generation is now presented with opportunities and resultant responsibilities perhaps never seen since that generation.
- D. What will we do?

Local Evangelism

Introduction:

- A. By and large, churches of Christ today are failing to reach the lost.
According to Flavil Yeakley and Mac Lynn of David Lipscomb, whereas the church of Christ was the fastest growing religious body in the US from 1945 to 1965, from 1965 to 1980 the church actually lost membership, and there are more people who call themselves members of the church of Christ who do not attend anywhere than who do attend (**Why Churches Grow**. iv, v, l).
- B. The church in Jerusalem is the pattern for local church evangelism. - Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7
- C. What can we learn from the church in Jerusalem about local evangelism?
- I. The church was composed of members who were truly converted and faithful to Christ. - Acts 2:41-42
- II. They attracted others to Christ by their:
 - A. mutual love - Acts 2:44-45
 - B. unity - Acts 2:46-47
 - C. godly lives - Acts 5:1-11,14
- III. They used every scriptural means available to preach the word. - Acts 5:42
- IV. They let preachers preach and teach the word rather than be tied down with mundane duties. - Acts 6:1-2; cf. 2 Timothy 1:11
- V. They met and vanquished false teachers in public controversy. - Acts 6:9-10
- VI. They let no obstacles hinder them from preaching the word. - Acts 8:1-4
- VII. The only organization they employed in the work of evangelism was the local church. - Acts 11:22

Conclusion:

- A. If we want to have success in reaching the lost locally, we need to follow the original pattern, the most successful local church in the history of God's people at reaching the lost, the church in Jerusalem.
- B. Now, will we put these principles into practice or be content to drift along while our friends and neighbors are lost?

Let's Go Fishing for Men

Introduction:

A. Although Joe Pollack had little education and could not teach, he was perhaps the most successful worker at personal evangelism with whom I have ever labored.

B. The call to discipleship is a call to become fishers of men. - Mark 1:16-18

C. Why should I be a fisher of men?

I. Self-preservation - John 15:1-8

II. Accomplish God's Will - 1 Timothy 2:3-4 (What can one person do?)

III. Value of Soul

A. How much is one soul worth? - Matthew 16:26-27

B. What will happen if they do not hear the gospel? - 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

C. Will we just let them die? - e.g., man stabbed in Seattle; Matthew 9:36-38

IV. Emulate Christ - 1 Peter 2:21; Luke 19:10

V. Meet Responsibility - Matthew 28:18-20

VI. Enjoyment - Philippians 4:1; 3 John 4

VII. Not impossible - Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20-21; Tell how Joe was so successful at personal evangelism.

Conclusion:

A. Indeed, the harvest is ready! - John 4:35-36

B. Brethren, let's go fishing for men!

Into All the World

Introduction:

- A. We live in exciting times, as old barriers of tyranny come down and liberty sweeps the globe. - e.g., watching the Berlin wall come down
 - B. The greatest thrill this offers are the new opportunities to take the gospel to the world. - Mark 16:15
 - C. What is our responsibility toward taking the gospel to other places, and how can we discharge this obligation?
- I. The Lord wants the gospel to be taken to the whole world. - Mark 16:15
- II. The first century church is our model. - Philippians 3:17
- A. Jerusalem
 - 1. They were preeminently successful in local evangelism. - Acts 2:41,47; 4:4; 5:14; 6:7
 - 2. But they had been spiritually near-sighted. - Acts 1:8
 - 3. After they were scattered, their evangelistic success was complete. - Acts 8:1
 - a. Members of the church went everywhere preaching. - Acts 8:4-5,26-31,35,40; 9:31; 10:34-35; 11:19-21
 - b. The church sent evangelists elsewhere. - Acts 11:22-24
 - B. Antioch
 - 1. Paul and Barnabas were very successful in Antioch. - Acts 11:25-26
 - 2. But they were sent to preach in foreign lands. - Acts 13:1-3
 - C. Through such efforts the gospel was taken to the known world in one generation. - Colossians 1:5-6,23; cf. Mark 16:15
- III. If we follow their example, we can do the same in our generation. - Philippians 2:13; Ephesians 3:20-21
- A. attitude: zeal for lost souls - Acts 8:1-4
 - B. means: preach the word - Acts 11:19-21
 - C. organization: local church - Acts 11:22

Conclusion:

- A. If the first century church could take the gospel to the whole world in one generation without the printing press, radio, television, automobiles, and airplanes; what should we do with all these means at our disposal?!
- B. Our generation faces opportunities and subsequent responsibilities greater than any generation since the first century.
- C. Will we be the greatest success story since the first century or the biggest failure in history?

Congregational Cooperation for Evangelism

Introduction:

- A. “Non-institutional” Christians are often accused of being opposed to “congregational cooperation.”
 - 1. In the famous Harper-Tant Debate, E.R. Harper alleged he had proven the Herald of Truth was scriptural by affirming congregational cooperation was scriptural.
 - 2. At the Nashville meeting in 1987, “non-institutional” brethren were referred to as “anti-cooperation.”
- B. I believe that local churches of Christ may cooperate with each other in evangelism. - 2 Corinthians 11:8-9
- C. But I believe there is a New Testament pattern for congregational cooperation which we must follow.
- D. What is the New Testament pattern for congregational cooperation for evangelism?

I. Terms Defined:

- A. “pattern”: “the pattern placed before one to be held fast and copied, model” (Thayer. 645; cf. 2 Timothy 1:13)
- B. “cooperation”: “joint operation: common effort or labor” **Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language**, Unabridged. 501.; e.g., city clean-up campaign
 - 1. “joint effort”: collective cooperation
 - 2. “common effort or labor”: independent, concurrent cooperation

II. Autonomy is the New Testament pattern for the local congregation in all its activities.

- A. Elders are to be appointed in every church. - Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5
- B. The elders oversee only the work of the church where they are members. - Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-3

III. The principle of autonomy specifically applies to cooperation among churches for evangelism. (independent, concurrent cooperation)

- A. A church may send teaching to other churches. - Acts 11:22-23; Colossians 4:16
- B. A church may send teaching anywhere. - 1 Thessalonians 1:8
- C. A church has the right and obligation to support its own preacher(s). - Romans 1:7,15; 1 Corinthians 9:11,14
- D. A church may act alone in supporting a preacher in another place. - Philippians 4:15-16
- E. Several churches may independently and directly send wages to a preacher working in another place. - 2 Corinthians 11:8

IV. The pattern of autonomy applied to cooperation among churches for evangelism necessitates independent, concurrent cooperation.

- A. No church acted as an agent for another church (Agency necessitates subordination.).
- B. No church assumed the oversight of any part of the evangelistic work of another church/or other churches.
- C. The equality of each congregation relative to oversight was maintained.

Conclusion:

- A. Gospel preachers through the years have correctly pleaded, “We must do God’s work in God’s way.”
- B. “God’s work in God’s way” in the area of congregational cooperation for evangelism is the autonomy of each local church expressed in independent, concurrent cooperation.
- C. Let us
 - 1. Militantly oppose all efforts to change or supplant this pattern and
 - 2. Aggressively take the gospel to the lost through carrying out this pattern.

Contending for the Faith

Introduction:

- A. Positive Christianity is the cry of the hour.
- B. The inspired writer, by contrast, summons the saints to battle. - Jude 3
- C. What is our responsibility to the faith?

I. The faith is our true creed. - Jude 3; Galatians 1:23; cf. Romans 10:8,17

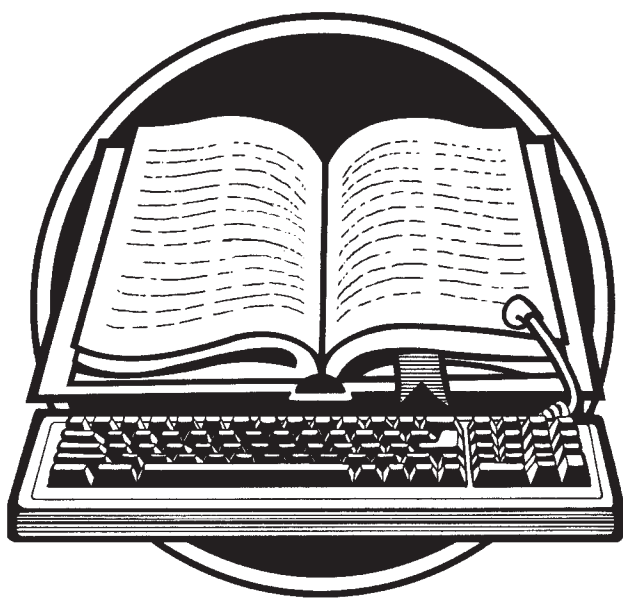
II. As such it is

- A. unique: “**the** faith” - Jude 3; Ephesians 4:5
- B. final and complete: “**once**” - Jude 3; cf. Hebrews 9:27-28; Galatians 1:6-9
- C. divine in origin: “**delivered**” - Jude 3; Galatians 1:11-12
- D. for all Christians: “**to the saints**” - Jude 3; 1 Corinthians 1:2; Ephesians 3:1-6

III. Our responsibility is to “**earnestly contend for the faith.**” - Jude 3; cf. 1 Corinthians 16:13-14

Conclusion:

- A. Jude 3 is the battle cry of the church, the Christian’s call to arms. - cf. Leonidas, Battle of Thermopylae, “They shall not pass.”
- B. Will you not join the ranks of volunteers? - “Soldiers of Christ Arise”



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