

Adventures

INTO

Eternal Life

Changing Lives With The Unchanging Word

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International Bible School
Course by Roger E. Dickson
New Testament quotations from
International King James Version
Old Testament quotations from
New King James Version

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INTRODUCTION TO GREAT DISCOVERIES

Welcome to a study of **Great News!** This course is designed to take you on an exciting journey through God's historical plan to save those who will respond to His grace. The Bible was written to aid us in our personal discoveries of what God has promised us. It was written to help us discover the greatest news of all history, and thus receive the gift for which all of us seek, eternal life.

The Bible is an exciting book to study. It is exciting because it is God's word. And since it is God's word for us today, it is exciting to learn the mind of God and who He is. Therefore, we ask you to join with us in studying this wonderful book, the Bible. Your study of the Bible will change your life.

HOW TO STUDY THIS COURSE

You will enjoy studying this course because it takes you on an adventure through the Bible. There are six basic actions of study in this course that are used in order to help you better understand and learn the great news that is revealed in the Bible. These study actions are the following:

STUDIES

The text of this book is divided into blocks of study material that are called **Studies**. Each Study contains ideas that you must understand. Read through the Studies very carefully. They are building blocks that fit into a biblical theme concerning God's great news to save us for eternal dwelling. *(If you are using this course as a Bible study program for a Bible class, cover the thoughts of only one study for each Bible class. Use the added scriptures that are listed under **Scripture Reading** and **Scripture Research** for added references for your Bible class studies.)*

SELF TEST

Text questions are added at the end of each Study. Read and answer these questions. They will help you to review important points of each Study. The answers to the text questions are within the material of each Study that is reviewed. **After** you have completed the questions to a particular Study, you can check your answers with the correct answers in the back of the course on page 78. Keep in mind that you are not graded over your completion of these questions. They are a programmed system of self-study that will help you better comprehend the material of the Studies. Therefore, answer the questions first, and then check your answers. *(Do not return these questions or answers to your regional representative of the International Bible School. They are given only for your review of the material of each study.)*

SCRIPTURE READING

Every scripture that is listed under **Scripture Reading** should be read. If you have a Bible, be sure to study these scriptures. They will increase your knowledge of the subject that is discussed in the Study they follow. *(Keep in mind, however, that it is not necessary to have a Bible to complete this course. The Scripture Readings are added only to give you important Bible texts that are additional helps for your personal Bible studies.)*

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH

The **Scripture Research** is also given for added study. Various topics are listed and it is recommended that you read the scriptures that follow each topic. Reading the scriptures in your Bible will expand your knowledge of what the Bible has to say concerning the specific subject that is under discussion in the individual Studies. *(The topics that are listed are subjects that would be good for you to study when using this course in Bible studies in your home.)*

FINAL EXAM

There is a Final Exam that accompanies this textbook. Once you complete the Studies of each section as indicated on the Final Exam, **complete the Final Exam questions over that section**. You can then proceed to the Studies of the succeeding sections after you complete the exam questions of a particular section. **Once you have completed all the questions of the Final Exam, return only the Final Exam to your local representative for grading.**

TEXTUAL SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

There are also scriptures given in the text of the Studies. We recommend that you use your Bible and read each one of these passages. *(All the Bible book references of the scriptures in the text of this course are abbreviated. You can find the complete spelling of Bible books on the **Scripture Abbreviations** page at the end of this book on page 79.)*

We are excited about your interest in studying the Bible. As we seek to restore simple New Testament Christianity, it is important that all of us turn to the Bible for answers. We must unite upon its principles. We must let it be our only guide in religious matters. By allowing the Bible to be our only authority, we will have a better life in this present world and eternal life in the world to come. We will also be joined together as a unified army of God's people in order to combat social problems in society and the attack of non-Christian religions. By establishing a correct relationship with God and one another, we can be a shining light to others who are seeking help in a hopeless world.

THE PROBLEM WITH SIN

Section I

It is very important in this course to deal with the problem that affects all people. This is the problem of sin. All of us struggle in our relationships both with God and our fellow man. In our struggle to please God, we sin. Many do not know what the will of God is, and thus, sin without knowing that they sin. However, there are those who know His will but still sin. They sin either willingly, or ignorantly in their struggle to please God.

We also have struggles in our lives with other people. God has given directions for us to guide our behavior with others. However, we often ignore these directions, and thus, cause harm to others and embarrassment to ourselves. We sin. Life, therefore, is a struggle. This is why God gave us the Bible. He gave it to us to give hope to those who are struggling in life and realize that they need help.

Sin causes us to have a bad conscience or a feeling of guilt. In order to deal with this guilt, many religious people who do not know the Bible, have simply developed their own solutions to take care of their sin. As a result, there are many religions in the world today that have been developed by religious people in an effort to deal with the problem of sin. Unfortunately, God does not accept man's worship or religious inventions that are created by the imaginations of those who know little or nothing about the Bible.

God is our creator. The fact that He is means that He is the one who must tell us how to worship. We must allow Him to tell us how to have a relationship with Him and one another. This means that we must focus on God's law and our problem of sin against His law. When we do this, great things will happen in our lives.

CREATION AND LAW

Study 1

THINGS TO LEARN

1. There is a Supreme Being referred in the Bible as God. He has always established laws for men to obey for He is the creator of all things.
2. God's laws are always complete and authoritative. Authoritative means that they must be obeyed by man in order to please God.
3. God does not allow man to add to or subtract from His laws.
4. All people have sinned against God. It is our sin that separates us from God.
5. We cannot save ourselves by trying to keep God's law perfectly. No one can keep law perfectly.
6. We cannot receive forgiveness of our sins by doing good works.

The Bible does not seek to prove the existence of God. His existence is simply assumed and thus revealed in the Bible. However, as the revelation of God to man, the Bible was given to us by God in order to answer the most important questions we have in reference to our existence.



**From where did we come?
What are we to do in reference to God, our creator?
What will happen when we die and where will we go?**

Everyone has asked the above questions. In answer to the first question, the Bible simply states that the first two people on earth were created in the spiritual **image** of God (Gn 1:26,27). We are thus the product of the God who created all things.

Since we are God’s creation, we should be concerned about what the duty of man is in reference to our Creator. The Bible says, *“Fear God and keep His **commandments**, for this is the whole duty of man”* (Ec 12:13). This statement answers the second question. It is our duty as God’s created beings to obey our Creator. Those who love God will obey Him.

The Bible also answers the third question. Concerning our death, the Bible says, *“And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the **judgment**”* (Hb 9:27). For the Christian there is hope of **eternal life** beyond death (Jn 3:16). But for those who have not submitted to God, there is the destiny of eternal destruction (2 Th 1:7-9).

The Bible thus answers the most important questions that we can ask. We came from God. We must obey His laws. When we die, we will be held accountable in judgment for our obedience or disobedience of His laws (2 Co 5:10).

SELF TEST

1. ____ God created man after His ... (A) ... physical image, (B) ... spiritual image
2. ____ It is the duty of man to keep God’s ... (A) ... power, (B) ... commandments, (C) ... faith
3. ____ What happens when we die? (A) Termination, (B) Unconsciousness, (C) Judgment
4. ____ Christians have the hope of eternal ... (A) ... judgment, (B) ... life, (C) ... anxiety

YES - NO Since God created you, does this give Him the right to give you law and then demand your obedience?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gn 1,2; Ps 8; 19:1,2; Is 40; At 17:24-28

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **Obedience:** 1 Sm 15:22; At 5:29; Hb 11:8, **Judgment:** Mt 5:21; Jn 5:24-30; 12:31; Rm 14:10; 2 Co 5:10; 1 Pt 4:17, **Eternal life:** Jn 5:21,26; 8:12; Mt 25:46; Ti 1:2, **Eternal destruction:** 2 Th 1:7-9; Rv 20:11-15; 21:8

MAN HAS THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE

Study 2

God first created two people. They were Adam and Eve. He created Adam and Eve in His own image. All men

since Adam and Eve are also in the image of God. Being in the image of God at least means that **man is a spiritual**

being and has the **right to make choices**. We are beings that can make choices concerning our behavior.



Having the right to make choices means that **we must be held responsible for our choices**. In other words, we will be held accountable in final judgment for the choices we make on this earth. The Bible says, *“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad”* (2 Co 5:10).

In order that Adam and Eve, as well as we, could be in a situation or environment that would allow choices to be made, God created this present environment. This is a world that allows choices to be made. God also made natural laws in order to sustain order in this natural environment. This world, therefore, is the best of all possible environments for the dwelling of individuals who have freedom to make choices of either good or evil.

God gave **moral laws** to us in order to govern our activity or relationships with one another in an environ-

ment where choices must be made. One of these moral laws for Adam and Eve was that they not eat of one special tree in the Garden of Eden, **the tree of the knowledge of good and evil** (Gn 2:16,17). Contrary to God's laws, however, both Adam and Eve broke God's law and ate of the fruit of this tree (Gn 3:1-8). By eating of this tree they transgressed (sinned against) the law of God. As a result, sin entered into the world because they were the first people to sin. With their sin came also their separation from God, and thus, **spiritual death** (Rm 5:12). Adam personally suffered spiritual death because he personally sinned by eating of the forbidden fruit.

SELF TEST

1. ____ What does man have a right to do since he is created after the image of God? (A) Be as God, (B) Choose, (C) Do as he wishes
2. ____ Since man was created with the ability to make choices, what responsibility must he have in reference to his choices? (A) Be held responsible, (B) No responsibility, (C) Do what he pleases
3. ____ What did God give man in order to direct his behavior? (A) Natural laws, (B) The Holy Spirit, (C) Moral laws
4. ____ What entered into the world for the first time when Adam sinned? (A) Eternal life, (B) Spiritual death, (C) Ability to choose

YES - NO Since you are given the privilege to make choices concerning God's law, does this mean that you will be held accountable for your choices?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gn 2,3

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **Choose:** Dt 4:32; 30:19; Ja 24:15; Pv 1:29; Is 45:12; 1 Tm 2:13,14; At 2:40; 3:19; Hb 11:25; 2 Pt 3:9, **Law:** Ps 19:7-11; 119:77,97; 1 Tm 1:9; Js 1:25; 2:8, **Judgment:** Mt 25; Jn 5:22; 12:48; At 17:30,31; Rm 2:8,16; Hb 9:27; 10:27; 2 Pt 3:7, **Sin:** Rm 14:23; Js 4:17; 1 Jn 3:4



SIN AND SEPARATION FROM GOD

Study 3

Concerning the event when Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden tree in the Garden of Eden, the Bible states, "Therefore, as through one man sin entered the world and death through sin, and so death passed to all men because all have sinned" (Rm 5:12).



When Adam and Eve ate of the forbidden fruit, their sin caused spiritual **separation** between them and God. They thus personally suffered **spiritual death**, that is, they were spiritually dead because of their separation from God. All men since the days of Adam and Eve also suffer spiritual death, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Rm 3:23). Every person today is spiritually separated from God because of his own personal sin, not because of Adam's sin. Adam was personally responsible for the guilt of his own sin. We are also personally responsible for our own sin today.

Isaiah 59:2 states, "But your iniquities have separated you from your

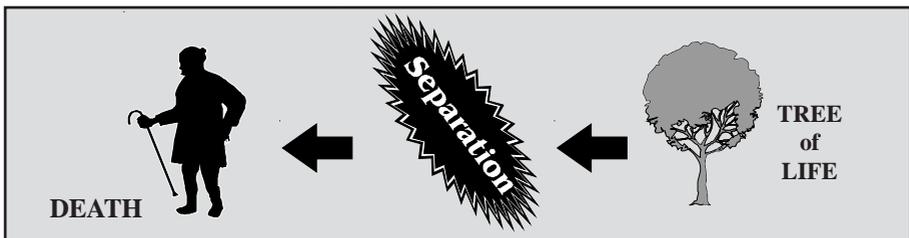


God; and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."

Not only did Adam spiritually die before God when he sinned, he was also driven from the Garden of Eden, "lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever" (Gn 3:22). Consequently, **physical death** entered into the world. The Bible says, "For since by man came [physical] death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all will be made alive" (1 Co 15:21,22).

When Adam was separated from the tree of life, all humanity was separated with him. Therefore, all men must physically die (Hb 9:27). We thus suffer the **consequences** of Adam's sin in reference to physical death because Adam caused all humanity to be separated from the tree of life.

Concerning our choices to sin, we are also like Adam. As Adam, all of us have made choices to sin against



God's law. All of us thus sin by transgressing the law of God (1 Jn 3:4). We sin by not doing that which we know is good (Js 4:17). Therefore, the Bible is correct by stating, "*There is none righteous, no, not one*" (Rm 3:10).

When we think about sin, therefore, we must think about separation. When one personally sins, he or she is spiritually separated from God. We thus suffer the **guilt** of our own sin.

We must think about separation even when discussing the subject of physical death. When Adam sinned, he was separated from the tree of life lest he eat of it and live forever (Gn 3:22-24). Because of this separation, it is now necessary that all of us physically die, for all humanity has been separated from the tree of life (Hb 9:27). We therefore suffer the **consequences** of Adam's sin in reference to physical death. This is what the Bible means when it says, "*... as in Adam all die ...*" (1 Co 15:22).



Though we sin against God, there is hope of reconciliation! Even when Adam and Eve sinned, God gave hope in order that all of us be restored to a correct relationship with God, for God knew that we would all sin as Adam. This hope for an eternal solution for sin was first given to Adam and Eve and

recorded in Genesis 3:15.

In this statement God promised a solution for sin. It is very important that you remember this particular prophecy. This is the Bible's first announcement of the **great news** that God had in His plan of redemption to save us from our sin. Even before the creation of the world God had a plan to redeem man from sin, for He knew that because of our weaknesses we would sin (Rv 13:8). Genesis 3:15 is a prophecy of God's intentions to set into action His plan of salvation. It is a prophecy of Jesus who would come and crush Satan's head by His death on the cross for the sins of man. Have you discovered this Jesus?

SELF TEST

1. ____ When we think of sin, what must we always think of in reference to our relationship with God? (A) Reconciliation, (B) Separation, (C) Union
2. ____ What did Adam suffer when he sinned against God? (A) Sickness, (B) Spiritual death, (C) Immediate death
3. ____ What did Adam have to suffer because he was separated from the tree of life? (A) Spiritual death, (B) Inability to choose, (C) Physical death
4. ____ What must we bear in relation to our personal sin against God? (A) Guilt, (B) Physical death, (C) Nothing
5. ____ Physical death is the ... (A) ... guilt of Adam's sin, (B) ... consequence of Adam's sin, (C) ... consequence of our own sin
6. ____ What would the Seed of woman do to the head of Satan? (A) Bless, (B) Bruise, (C) Empower

GENESIS 3:15: "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise His heel."

YES - NO Since there are consequences to your sin, can you be saved if you do not accept God's solution for those consequences?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gn 3:22-24; Rm 5:12-21; 1 Co 15:20-28

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Separation from God: Mt 7:21-23; Ep 2:1-3; 2 Th 1:7-9, **Physical death:** Ps 6:5; 13:3; 23:4; Jn 4:24; 8:51; 1 Co 15:54-56; Hb 2:14; Rv 2:10, **Spiritual death:** Rm 6; Ep 2:1, **Sin & separation:** Is 59:1,2; Ez 18:20; Mt 7:21-23

THE STATE OF MAN

Study 4

Honest people will agree with what the Bible says in Romans 3:23. *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* The problem with sin is that it brings spiritual death because sin separates us from God. *“For the wages of sin is **death**, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord”* (Rm 6:23). But why and how do men sin?

It is necessary that we have moral laws by which to live with one another. It is important to understand that we could not be left alone in a world of human relationships to develop our own moral laws. Throughout history people have tried to establish moral laws by which to direct society. But when we are left to ourselves to direct our own ways, social decay is usually the result. The Bible is right when it says, *“**It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps**”* (Jr 10:23).

When we try to make our own moral laws, we always end up making laws that please our own **worldly** desires. We often make moral laws that will allow us to do as we please. Therefore, if we were allowed to make our own moral laws, we would make laws that would eventually lead to social confusion and corruption. God knew that we would do this to ourselves. He thus

took the initiative to give us moral laws that would direct our paths.

But the problem with law is that we cannot keep it **perfectly**. For this reason, each one of us has sinned. Even if we try to do the best we can, we still break God's laws. And breaking God's laws is sin. Sin thus brings spiritual death because sin separates us from God (Is 59:1,2). When one is in a state of being separated from God because of sin against His laws, he cannot by any means or methods of himself be reconciled to God.

MAN'S DILEMMA

- **Inability to keep law perfectly so as to save oneself.**
- **Inability of good works to atone for sin.**

Here is our dilemma. First, **we cannot keep law perfectly so as to save ourselves, for everyone of us has sinned** (Rm 3:23). Even if our desire is to obey God in every way possible, we still sin. Therefore, because no one can keep God's law perfectly, the law condemns us to sin. We are thus driven to find something other than law in order to be reconciled to God.

Secondly, **we cannot do good works so as to make atonement for the sins we commit**. We cannot be saved by good works, **lest we boast**

one against another (Ep 2:9). God simply does not accept our good works as a sacrifice for sin. He cannot because there is no amount of goods works that we can do to earn eternal life in heaven. Therefore, we are in a condemned state in sin. In this state, we are unable to redeem ourselves from our sin against God. All of us stand condemned in the sight of God because of our sins. What shall we do?

SELF TEST

1. ____ The wages of sin is ... (A) ... life, (B) ... death, (C) ... hope
2. ____ It is not in man to direct his own ...

- (A) destiny, (B) faith, (C) steps
3. ____ When men make their own laws they often make them according to desires that are ... (A) ... God directed, (B) ... worldly, (C) ... of the Spirit
 4. ____ It is not possible for any man to keep the law of God ... (A) ... perfectly, (B) ... in any way, (C) ... in hope of eternal life
 5. ____ We cannot atone for our sins by doing good works, lest we ... (A) ... boast about our good works, (B) ... convince ourselves that we are right with God, (C) ... believe that sin is right

YES - NO Is it reasonable to believe that you can do as you please in life and yet expect to go to heaven?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ep 2:1-10; Rm 3
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: All sin: Gl 3:22; Rm 3:23; 11:32; 1 Jn 1:6-9, **Sin and death:** Is 59:1-3; Ez 18:4; 1 Jn 3:6, **Definition of sin:** Rm 14:23; Js 4:17; 1 Jn 3:4

THE BIBLE

Study 5

In order to find a solution for sin, we must turn to the instructions of the One against whom we sin. We thus turn to God who has revealed in the Bible the solution for our sin. We must strictly follow His instructions. We cannot invent our own religious system for forgiveness of sins. We must go only to the Bible which is God's direction to us on how to deal with our problem of sin.

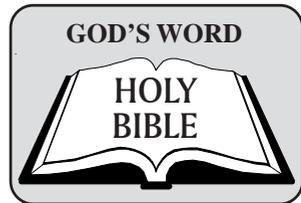
God says of the Bible, *"All Scripture is given by **inspiration** of God, and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work"* (2 Tm 3:16,17).

The word "inspiration" means "God-breathed." The Bible has thus been "breathed out" by God. **It is the**

revelation of God to us for our direction in life. It is the guiding measure by

which we must direct our lives in accordance with the will of God. Therefore, we should consider the word of God as David did in his life when he wrote, *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a **light** to my path"* (Ps 119:105). We should thus hunger and thirst after God's word (Mt 5:6). We must yearn for nourishment from the word of God (1 Pt 2:2).

God's word can change our lives because it is of God. *"For the word of God is living and **powerful**, and sharper than any two-edged sword,*



piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hb 4:12).

God expects us to obey His word. Obedience to God's word in our lives will result in great **spiritual growth** in our lives. The Bible says that we must “*grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ*” (2 Pt 3:18). Our only source for knowledge of Jesus, is the Bible. Therefore, Paul stated, “*I commend you to God and to the word of His grace that is able to **build** you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified*” (At 20:32). When we grow in knowledge of the Bible, we grow to know Jesus. This knowledge builds us up. This is what obedience to God's revealed word will do in your life. It will build you up. Here is what the apostle Paul says of the word of God in relation to your well-being:

For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe (1 Th 2:13).

The solution for sin is discovered in the Bible. The solution for a better life is discovered in the Bible. Your knowledge of what the Bible says, therefore, is necessary in order that you have life and that you have it more abundantly (Jn 10:10). The more we understand the word of God, the better our lives will be if we submit to what God has directed us to do. As a student of the Bible, it should be your goal to better your life by what you learn in the Bible.

SELF TEST

1. ____ What word means “God breathed”?
(A) Faith, (B) Love, (C) Inspiration
2. ____ What is the Bible unto our paths?
(A) Torch, (B) Light, (C) Inspiration
3. ____ What happens in our lives when we feast on the word of God? (A) Spiritual growth, (B) Nothing, (C) Unbelief
4. ____ The word of God is living and ... (A) ... faithful, (B) ... powerful, (C) ... written
5. ____ What does the word of God do in those who study and believe it? (A) Works, (B) Nothing, (C) Produces rejection

YES - NO Since God exists, is it not reasonable to believe that He would reveal His will to us and that we should obey His will?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ps 19:7-11; 119

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Revelation: Mt 11:25; 1 Co 2:6-13; Gl 1:11,12; Ep 3:3-5; 2 Tm 3:16,17; Hb 1:1,2; 2 Pt 1:20,21, **Work of God's word:** Ps 19:8; 73:24; 119:40,93,104,130; Jn 5:24; 8:51; 15:2; 17:17; 20:30,31; Rm 10:17; 15:4; 1 Co 10:11; 2 Tm 3:15; Js 1:21,25; 1 Pt 1:22,23

FINALITY OF GOD'S WORD

Study 6

When God gave the Old Testament law to the Jews, He warned them about adding to His law. He warned, “*You shall not **add** to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it,*

that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Dt 4:2). This was a stern warning and one that still applies today. God's final revelation to man was the

book of Revelation. With the last verses of instruction to man in this book, God warned men not to add to His word.

REVELATION 22:18,19

*For I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book, if anyone adds to these things, **God will add to him the plagues that are written in this book.** If anyone will take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, **God will take away his part out of the Book of Life, out of the holy city and the things that are written in this book.***

God could not have made His point more clear. **We must not add to His word religious laws that we invent for ourselves.** We must not add as requirements for our salvation the religious traditions of men. **Adding to God's law is saying that His laws are not sufficient.** It is saying that God needs help to determine what is best for man. But God says that His law is the "**perfect law of liberty**" (Jn 1:25).

It is perfect in order "*that the man of God may be complete, **thoroughly equipped for every good work***" (2 Tm 3:17). Since God's law is **perfect and complete**, then who are we to say that we need to add to it?

SELF TEST

1. ____ If God says His word is complete, then what must we assume? (A) It is sufficient, (B) It is incomplete, (C) We must add our rules
2. ____ What did God say He would add to those who would add religious laws to God's word? (A) Faith, (B) Plagues, (C) Torture
3. ____ In reference to the completeness of the law of liberty, what did God say His law was? (A) Incomplete, (B) Perfect, (C) Final
4. ____ In reference to our salvation and ministry, what is the word of God? (A) Sufficient, (B) Incomplete, (C) Partially applicable

YES - NO If you add religious laws to God's word, does this say that you feel that His law is not sufficient for your life?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gl 1:6-10

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Do not add to the word: Pv 30:6; 2 Jn 9-11, All-sufficient word: 2 Tm 3:15-17; 2 Pt 1:3, Word causes growth: At 20:32; 1 Th 2:13; 1 Pt 2:1,2; 2 Pt 3:18, Final revelation: Gl 1:6-9; 2 Tm 4:1-4; Jd 3

BINDING RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

Study 7

In our effort to find a solution for our problem of spiritual and physical death, many people have developed their own religious systems. But this is where many have deceived themselves. They think that because they are performing religious activities in their lives they are pleasing to God. Too often, however, these religiously sin-

cere people never stop to consider whether the religious work of their lives is pleasing to God. They think that simply because their religious practices bring them a good feeling and a clear conscience, such practices must be acceptable to God. **But the fact is that instead of finding a solution for sin, they actually sin by following after**

their own religious inventions that are often contrary to the will of God. They often create a religion after their own desires and not after the instructions of God's word. They thus sin in rebellion against God's word by following after their own religious traditions instead of looking to the Bible for direction from God.

God is serious about us doing what He has instructed us to do in His word. The Jews of Jesus' day did precisely what millions of people are doing today. They are behaving in their religion according to the religious traditions of their fathers instead of the word of God. Here is what Jesus said of this practice.

MARK 7:6-8

Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. In vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' For laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men

Jesus called their religious behavior after their religious traditions an act of hypocrisy. It was hypocrisy because they were practicing their own religious rules and rituals in order to make themselves acceptable to God. But Jesus called such **vain** worship. It was use-

less in an effort to please God. **It was useless religion because they were teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.**

Some religious traditions are not wrong, as long as they are recognized as tradition, and thus, **not binding on the consciences of men as necessary for salvation.** However, when we make traditions to be religious law, we do as Jesus said of the Jews. They were "**laying aside the commandment of God in order to hold to their traditions**" (Mk 7:8). This is the tragedy of the religious world today.

It seems that religious people throughout the world today are more interested in keeping their religious traditions than in keeping the word of God. Here is what Jesus continued to say to such people. "**All too well you reject the commandment of God so that you may keep your tradition**" (Mk 7:9). Is this your attitude toward the word of God? Are you willing to lay aside the word of God in order to keep your religious traditions? Are you rejecting the word of God in order to keep your religious traditions?

Let's be specific. This matter is so important that we must not miss the point of what Jesus is saying. Religious traditions originate from our religious history. It is not wrong to do things in a traditional manner. However, when the traditional manner of doing something becomes the only way it can be done,



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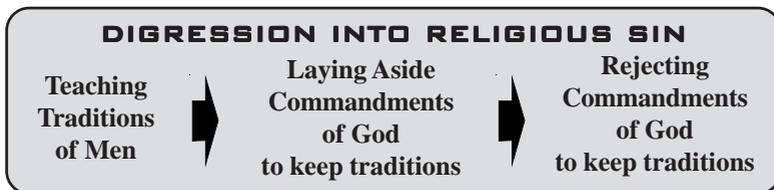
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**VAIN
WORSHIP**

then it becomes religious tradition that is bound on the consciences of men. If we cause division among believers because of our religious traditions, then such traditions have become binding law in our minds. In other words, if we think that the traditions should be kept in order to please God, then we are considering them to be law.

At this point in our apostasy from the word of God, the traditions start taking the place of the commandments of God. Jesus said in Mark 7 that we first

who did the same in His day. **They were hypocrites in their religious behavior because they rejected the commandment of God in order to keep their traditions.** Consider also what Jesus said to some Jews who believed on Him, but their belief was so weak it would not move them to leave their traditions in order to follow Him. *"Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, 'If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed..."*



start this process of apostasy from God by **"teaching as doctrines the commandments of men"** (Mk 7:7). We then continue our apostasy from God by **"laying aside the commandment of God"** in order to practice our traditions (Mk 7:8). And finally, we **"reject the commandment of God that we might keep our traditions"** (Mk 7:9).

Has this happened to you? If it has, it is the purpose of this course to call you to the word of God in order that you be able to divide between what is tradition and what is the actual word of God. You must make this decision. We plead with you to do this in your life **for it is a serious thing to add to the will of God so as to seek God's favor on your own religious terms.** The reason this is serious is that your religion may be in vain. It may be useless. Add to this what Jesus said of those Jews

(Jn 8:31). But they would not abide in His word as many today will not abide in His word. Therefore, to the same group of Jews Jesus said, *"You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do."* (Jn 8:44).

In conjunction with religious traditions, some have been led astray by their own emotions and feelings. They have subjected themselves to following emotional experiences in religion instead of the word of God. Some even claim that the Holy Spirit is leading and moving them to do things the Holy Spirit never said He would do in the first place.

The only way we can know what the Holy Spirit will do in our lives is to listen to what He said He would do in Bible which He inspired to be written.

Religions that focus on human emotions and feelings, while ignoring the Bible, **are religions that lead one into self-deception**. Remember, strong emotional conviction in religion is not a guarantee that one is of the truth, and thus, saved. Having a zeal for God without knowledge of God is a useless religious exercise in reference to our salvation (Rm 10:2; Gl 4:17,18). Cornelius was a devout man who did many good works (At 10:1,2). However, he had to hear and obey the gospel before he could be saved (At 11:1-14). Simon was such a strong religious leader in the city of Samaria that everyone in the city believed him (At 8:9-11). However, he also had to hear and obey the gospel in order to be saved (At 8:12,13). It is not good enough to be religiously committed, devoted or zealous toward God in order to be saved. **One must obey God's word!**

The only way you can know for sure if you are doing what God would have you do is to search the Scriptures. Be as the Bereans. Luke wrote of them, *"These were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the Scriptures daily to see whether those things were so"* (At 17:11).

We challenge you therefore to search the Scriptures in order to determine if your religious practices are based on the word of God or on the will of man. We want to challenge you with the following two questions. Your answers to these questions will determine whether or not you are willing to listen to God concerning His solution

for your salvation and how you will seek to please Him in this life.

YES NO If you discover in the Bible that you have been serving God according to human traditions and not according to the word of God, are you willing to change in order to do what the Bible instructs you to do in order to find a solution for sin?

YES NO If you discover something in the Bible that contradicts your present religious behavior, are you willing to correct such in order to do what the Bible says?

SELF TEST

1. ____ When we worship God according to our own traditions and not by the direction of His word, our worship is ... (A) ... pleasing to God, (B) ... in vain, (C) ... in agreement with God's word
2. ____ In order to keep their own religious traditions, what did the Jews do to the word of God? (A) Study, (B) Obey, (C) Reject
3. ____ What were the Jews keeping as religious practice that led them to reject the word of God? (A) Civil laws, (B) Roman laws, (C) Religious traditions
4. ____ If one falls away from the word of God, what is his last stage of religious behavior? (A) Acceptance of God's word, (B) Rejection of God's word, (C) Study of the Bible

YES - NO Since God has given His law to you, does this mean that you still have the right to develop your own system of salvation?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 15:1-9 (Is 29:13); Mk 7:1-9; Rm 1:21-32

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Traditions: Ep 5:6; Cl 2:8,20-23; 1 Tm 6:20. **Deception of traditional religions:** 2 Th 2:10-12; 1 Tm 4:1-5; 2 Tm 4:3-5; 2 Jn 9,10. **Seeking God:** Mt 7:7,8; 11:28,29; Rv 3:20

OUR DILEMMA WITH SIN

Study 8

Honest people know that they have a problem with sin. What many have done, however, is to seek out their own solutions to remedy their sin problem in order to have a good conscience toward God. In this effort to find solutions for sin and correct religious behavior, people have often forgotten two very important points. We cannot buy God's salvation, and thus we stand condemned because we all sin.

**WE CANNOT BUY
GOD'S SALVATION
WITH GOOD WORKS.**

Suppose you owed someone so much money that it would take you five hundred years of working every day in order to earn enough money to repay your debt. Could you possibly repay this debt? Certainly not! If you are physically strong, you would possibly live to be eighty or ninety years old. At the time of your death, however, you would still be in debt. Thus there is no possible way you could personally work the five hundred years in order to repay your debt.

Now suppose God would offer you a gift that was so great that there would be no possible way for you to pay what it cost. Upon accepting the gift according to God's conditions of acceptance, you would say, "What I now owe is greater than what I can repay." You are correct. You could not repay God the cost of the gift.

Remember the parable of the man who owed ten thousand talents to a king (Mt 18:23-35). There was no possible way he could repay his debt. When the man was brought to pay his account, he responded to the king by falling down on his knees. He begged for his deliverance. The king had mercy and subsequently forgave him his debt. This was grace given to one who could not repay.

So it is with our relationship with God. We cannot pay God for the forgiveness of our sins. **What we owe is more than what we can pay.** We are thus doomed. So how can we receive forgiveness? When we receive forgiveness, how can we repay God?

Some religious people believe they can pay God with their good works. In other words, they believe they can put God in debt to them by doing good works that will make God owe them their forgiveness. But the fact is, **one cannot live long enough in order to do enough good works to demand salvation from God. Neither can one so work as to pay God back for the salvation that He gives to those who walk by obedient faith.**



One is deceiving himself if he or she thinks one can buy salvation from God with good works. God says you cannot do enough good works to adequately pay for the salvation that He has to offer. If you could live a thousand lifetimes, you still could not pay the price of your salvation. If you are doing good works in order to buy your salvation, you have no chance of paying the bill.

The point is that we cannot put God in debt to give us eternal salvation. We cannot make God a **debtor**. Therefore, we will not be able to stand in final judgment and demand heaven from God because of our good works. The gift is too great to be earned by the efforts of any person. So how can one receive that for which he or she cannot do enough good works to earn? The answer is **God's grace**.

**ONE CANNOT EARN
GOD'S FAVOR
WITH PERFECT LIVING.**

The second principle that identifies some who are religiously misguided is the belief that one can so live according to God's law that he or she can demand salvation on the basis of obedience to law. Some may feel that they are good because of their obedience to law. However, one sin makes a **sinner**. James says, *"For whoever will keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he has become guilty of all"*

(Jas 2:10). If you think you are good according to law, but break one law, the law condemns you as a sinner. Therefore, *"man is not **justified** by the works of law but by the faith of Jesus Christ ... **for by the works of law no flesh will be justified**"* (Gal 2:16). The Bible also says, *"Therefore by the deeds of law no flesh will be justified in His sight ..."* (Rom 3:20).

The reason why one is not pronounced righteous before God by trying to keep law is the fact that all men break God's law (Rom 3:23). *"There is none righteous, no, not one"* (Rom 3:10). And the wages of sin is spiritual **death** (Rom 6:23). This is why no one can be justified before God by keeping His law perfectly.

We cannot earn our salvation by doing good works. We cannot keep God's law perfectly so as to have no sin. We are thus condemned by the law of God to be eternally separated from God because of our sin. We are condemned unless there is a solution for our problem of sin that is provided by God and not man. In recognition of our sinful state of condemnation, every one of us should be driven to say what Paul proclaimed, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?"* (Rom 7:24). The answer to this question is not in inventing our own religion or our

own methods to find forgiveness. **When dealing with sin against God the only solution is God's solution. The only source for discovering God's solution is the Bible.**



SELF TEST

1. ____ One cannot buy God's salvation with ... (A) ... faith, (B) ... hope, (C) ... good works
2. ____ If we seek to earn our salvation by good works, what do we make God to be? (A) Our debtor, (B) Our Father, (C) Our Savior
3. ____ One sin makes one a ... (A) ... believer, (B) ... sinner, (C) ... saint
4. ____ By works of law one is not ... (A) ... obedient, (B) ... justified, (C) ... praised
5. ____ The wages of sin is spiritual ... (A) ... life, (B) ... death, (C) ... regeneration

YES - NO Since you cannot keep God's law perfectly, nor do good works to atone for your sins, is it necessary, therefore, that you turn to God and His word in order to discover what you must do to be saved?

SCRIPTURE READING: Rm 3,4; Gl 2,3

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Sin and death: Is 59:1,2; Rm 5:8-21; 6:23. Sin and law: Ez 18:20; Rm 14:23; Js 4:17; 1 Jn 3:4. Good works: Rm 3:27,28; 4:1-5; 11:6; Ep 2:8-10

REVIEWING SECTION I**Studies 1-8**

You have so far studied that God created man with the ability and freedom to make choices. Adam and Eve were placed in an environment that allowed choices to be made. We are in the same environment today. Adam and Eve were **free-moral agents**, that is, they were created to be moral individuals with the freedom to choose concerning the behavior of their lives. So are we.

With freedom comes responsibility toward God and one's fellow man. And in order to control our behavior toward God and our relationship with one another, God gave law. Law is necessary for men to live together. But law requires that we are responsible. It de-

mands that we will be held accountable for breaking law.

With law came sin, for no one can keep law perfectly. When sin occurs, there is separation from God, and thus, spiritual death. If one continues in a state of spiritual death, he or she will be eternally destroyed from the presence of God.

People throughout history have realized that they were sinners, and thus, have constructed various religious practices in order to try to make themselves right in the sight of God. There are thus numerous religious people throughout the world who seek to please God after their own traditions. However, God does not accept our religious inventions that have been created after our desires to construct our own religions. Traditional religions mean nothing to God. They are only the invention of those who seek to be religious according to their own wishes.

Men have tried to invent their own religious works in order to have a good conscience toward God. But everyone knows that we sin. Everyone knows that we cannot do enough good works to gain assurance that we are saved. For this reason, honest and sincere worshipers of God seek after God. They seek God on His terms and according to His law. This is our challenge to you. We challenge you to continue in these studies until you discover the great grace of God that was revealed through Jesus Christ. It is this grace that will bring you peace of mind and joy in heart. We challenge you to continue in your studies in order to discover how God instructs us to worship

Him according to His will. The Holy Spirit has revealed the will of God concerning how God seeks to be wor-

shipped and served. Therefore, we must study the Spirit's instructions as revealed in the Bible.

Note: You must stop in your reading here and complete the final test questions over this first section of your studies. After you complete the appropriate questions, please continue your reading and study of the following material:

GOD'S SOLUTION FOR SIN

Section II

When Adam sinned in the Garden of Eden, he spiritually died, for his sin separated him from God (Rm 5:12). He was also separated from the tree of life, and thus, took all humanity with him from the tree of life. Subsequently, all of us must now suffer the consequences of his sin in that we all must physically die (1 Co 15:20-22). In the midst of this human tragedy, however, God made a promise that a solution for sin would come (Gn 3:15).

Throughout the Old Testament there are hundreds of prophecies that foretold of the coming Messiah who would make atonement for the sins of men, and thus, give all of us an opportunity to return to a loving relationship with our Creator. All these prophecies were of Jesus who would die on the cross in order to reconcile us to God. He also came to give us a way to conquer that which all of us fear, physical death (Hb 2:14).

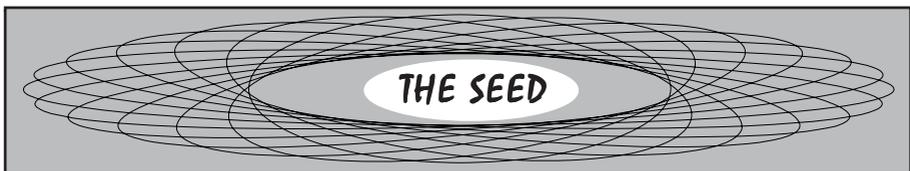
BLESSING OF THE SEED

Study 9

God chose a man by the name of Abraham through whose seed He would bring into the world the One who would be the Savior of the world. God promised Abraham, ***"And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed"*** (Gn 12:3). From the time this promise was made around 2000 B.C., God continually reminded His people

that there was a "blessing" coming who would bear the iniquities of the people (Is 53). The promise was not only to the descendants of Abraham, the Jews, but to **all families of the earth**. It was God's promise to all mankind.

So who was the blessing? Peter stated, *"You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant that God made with*



our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed **will all the families of the earth be blessed.**' For you first, God raised up His Servant **Jesus** and sent Him to bless you **by turning every one of you away from your iniquities**" (At 3:25,26). **The Seed of Abraham that would bless all mankind was JESUS!** The blessing was that Jesus would turn us away from our sins. Paul wrote, "Now to Abraham and

his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as to many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed, **who is Christ**'" (Gl 3:16). So the Seed was Jesus Christ. After Adam sinned, this was the Seed of woman that God promised would crush the head of Satan (Gn 3:15). He would crush Satan by offering Himself as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. This was the great news of the gospel.

THE SEED THAT WOULD CRUSH AND BLESS

SEED
would
CRUSH
(Gn 3:15)



SEED
would
BLESS
(Gn 12:3)



SEED
Crushed Satan
Blessed Man
(Gl 3:16)

Now what was the blessing of Abraham that would come from the Seed? The Bible answers, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would **justify the Gentiles by faith, preached beforehand the gospel to Abraham, saying, 'In you will all the nations be blessed'**" (Gl 3:8). The gospel in this promise refers to **good news!** It was the good news of the Seed who would take care of our sin problem in our relationship with God. The Seed would bring us to justification by faith (Rm 3:20; Gl 2:16). He would thus restore (reconcile) us to God by His blood (Rm 5:10,11). This is how God blesses all those who believe in Jesus and submit to obedience to the gospel. He is the Lamb of God who takes away all the sins of the obedient (Jn 1:29).

SELF TEST

1. ____ Who was the Seed of woman and descendant of Abraham who crushed Satan? (A) David, (B) John, (C) Jesus
2. ____ God promised Abraham that in him all families of the earth would be ... (A) ... blessed, (B) ... saved, (C) ... born
3. ____ What was preached to Abraham in the sense that God announced to him that One of his seed would be a blessing to man? (A) Faith, (B) Love, (C) The gospel
4. ____ By what would the Gentiles be justified? (A) Love, (B) Faith, (C) Hope

YES - NO Since God promised that all would be blessed through the promised Seed, is it necessary for you to go to the Seed in order to be blessed?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gn 12:1-3; 21:12; 22:18; Is 53; Gl 3

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Prophecy of cross: Is 53; Ps 22, **Prophecy of Jesus:** Ps 41:9; 22; Is 7:14; 9:6,7; 34:5,6; 42:1-4 Jr 31:15; Mc 5:2; Hs 11:1; Zc 13:7, **Reconciliation:** Rm 5:10,11; 2 Co 5:19,20; Ep 2:16; Cl 1:20

THE CRUSHING OF SATAN

Study 10

Exactly how did Jesus crush the head of Satan and at the same time become a spiritual blessing to all mankind? Answering this question explains the gospel. By answering this question, we will understand that we must respond to God's gift of grace.

THE BLESSING:
God's Solution To Our
Spiritual Death Problem!

Jesus came to take care of our sin problem. The Bible says, *"He who commits sin is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, so that He might destroy the works of the devil"* (1 Jn 3:8). Because we were spiritually dead in trespasses, Jesus came to die on the cross in order to bring us back to God (Cl 2:13-15). In doing this He destroyed the works of the devil.

THE BLESSING:
God's Solution To Our
Physical Death Problem!

Not only did Jesus take care of our spiritual death problem in reference to sin, He took care of our physical death problem. The Bible says, *"Therefore, since the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise partook of the same, so that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil,*

and deliver those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Hb 2:14,15).

Jesus died on the cross in order to take care of our spiritual death problem that results from our personal sin against God (Is 59:1,2). He died in order that people might be brought back to God. He was resurrected in order to give us hope that we too can be resurrected to life in the future. By His resurrection He took care of our physical death problem (1 Co 15:20-22).

A. Jesus came to earth from heaven.

Jesus, as the Son of God, was first in heaven, but He *"came down out of heaven"* (Jn 6:51,62). He lived and was tempted as every man (Hb 4:15). He was the Son of God who *"made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men ... humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross"* (Ph 2:7,8).



B. Jesus died for our sins.

Jesus, the Son of God, was crucified on the cross of Calvary for the sins of all people. He *"bore our sins in His own body on the tree, so that we, having died to sins, might live to righteousness – by whose stripes you were healed"* (1 Pt 2:24). Jesus died for all of us! Through His sacrificial death, all men who are obedient to His will can

have the forgiveness of their sins. **This is great news!**

Jesus crushed the power of Satan by dying on the cross so that people might have an escape from sin and spiritual separation from God.



However, in making such a sacrifice He bruised His heel (Gn 3:15) in the sense that He had to physically die on the cross in order to make an escape from sin possible for us.

Jesus had to shed His blood that we might be redeemed. Redeemed means that He **bought us and brought us back from Satan who had captivated us through our own sin**. There was remission of sins, therefore, only through the shedding of His blood. The Bible says that *“without shedding of **blood** there is no remission”* (Hb 9:22). Therefore, Peter reminds Christians *“that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver or gold from your vain behavior received by tradition from your fathers, **but with the precious blood of Christ ...**”* (1 Pt 1:18,19). Jesus took care of our spiritual death problem that was brought into our lives by our own sin (Rm 5:12).

C. Jesus was buried to be raised.

In order to overcome our problem of physical death, Jesus was buried in a tomb. However, on the third day after His burial He was raised on Sunday morning from the dead and came forth from the tomb (Mk 16:9). Jesus had the power and authority to lay down

His life. He had the power to raise Himself from the dead. He said, *“No one takes it [My life] from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have **power** to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received from My Father”* (Jn 10:18).

If we believe that Jesus was raised from the dead, then this belief becomes the foundation upon which our faith stands that we will be raised in the end (1 Th 4:14). In fact,



when Jesus comes again, *“all who are in **graves** will hear His voice and come forth ...”* (Jn 5:28,29).

However, only those who have believed on Jesus will be resurrected to life, for only “in Christ” is there hope of resurrection to an immortal state of being (1 Co 15:22). Jesus’ **resurrection, therefore, is God’s answer to the physical death problem of man**. This is good news!

D. Jesus ascended to heaven.

Jesus ascended to heaven after His resurrection. God manifested great power when He resurrected Jesus *“from the dead and set Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power and might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in that which is to come **He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church”*** (Ep 1:20-22).

Jesus is now in heaven at the right hand of the Father. He is functioning as our high priest. He is our high priest

“who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens” (Hb 8:1). Because Jesus is in heaven, Christians “have a Counselor with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous. And He Himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the whole world” (1 Jn 2:1,2). As our **Counselor**, Jesus is at the right hand of God making intercession for us (Rm 8:34; Hb 7:25). He is now King of kings and Lord of lords and has all authority over all things for our benefit (Mt 28:18; 1 Tm 6:15; Hb 1:3).



be the end of time. The Son will then submit all things to God. “And when all things are subjected to Him [Christ], then will the Son Himself also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, so that God may be all in all” (1 Co 15:28).

Jesus crushed Satan's work in every way. He came to earth to save sinners and to teach us a better way of life (Jn 1:29; 10:10). He died on the cross to deliver us from sin, thus saving us from spiritual death. He was resurrected from the dead so that we might have proof of being resurrected from physical death at His final coming. In this way He crushed Satan's power of physical death.

E. Jesus is coming again.

Jesus is coming a second time (Hb 9:28). He is coming to destroy **the last enemy which is physical death** (1 Co 15:26). He will destroy physical death forever by our resurrection from the dead (Jn 5:28,29).

Jesus is coming again to judge the world. It is through Jesus that the Father will **judge** all. “We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad” (2 Co 5:10). **The righteous will go into eternal heaven** (Mt 25:46; Rv 21:4). **The wicked will be cast into destruction** (2

Th 1:7-9). The earth and the elements of the world as we now know them will be destroyed (2 Pt 3:10,11). At that time there will

Jesus is coming again to finalize His victory over death by the resurrection of the righteous from the dead. This is great news for those who have given themselves to Jesus. It is bad news, however, for those who have not submitted themselves to Jesus. The disobedient will be raised for destruction when Jesus comes again. Are you looking for the final coming of Jesus? Because of their faith, Christians are “looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God” (2 Pt 3:12). Are you?



SELF TEST

1. ____ Jesus came that He might destroy what of the devil? (A) Life, (B) Works, (C) Destiny
2. ____ From what did Jesus release us by His resurrection from the dead? (A) The necessity of death, (B) The power of death, (C) The reality of death
3. ____ From where did Jesus come? (A) Paradise, (B) Heaven, (C) Hades
4. ____ There could be no remission of sins unless there was the shedding of what?

- (A) Blood, (B) Life, (C) Possessions
5. ____ What did Jesus have in order to lay down of His life and take it up again? (A) Faith, (B) Hope, (C) Power
 6. ____ When Jesus comes again, who will be resurrected? (A) Righteous, (B) Unrighteous, (C) All people
 7. ____ What did Jesus do in order to answer the physical death problem of man? (A) Taught the people, (B) Was resurrected, (C) Preached to the people
 8. ____ The cross was God's answer to what spiritual problem of man? (A) Spiritual death, (B) Physical death
 9. ____ What was put under Jesus' feet when He was seated at the right hand of God? (A) Satan, (B) The world, (C) All things
 10. ____ As what does Jesus function by pleading our case and making intercession for our sins? (A) Hope, (B) Counselor, (C) Lord
 11. ____ What will be the last enemy Jesus will destroy? (A) Physical death, (B) Satan, (C) Demons

12. ____ After final judgment, the righteous shall go away into ... (A) ... hades, (B) ... paradise, (C) ... heaven
13. ____ In the end, what will God do through Jesus in reference to the world? (A) Destroy, (B) Reconstruct, (C) Preserve
14. ____ After Jesus has accomplished His work, what will He do in reference to the Father? (A) Submit, (B) Remain head of all, (C) Be exalted above

YES - NO Since it was the work of Jesus to crush Satan, must you be of Jesus in order to have Satan crushed in your life?

SCRIPTURE READING: Satan overcome: Cl 2:13-22, Resurrection: 1 Co 15; 2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 4:12-18
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Authority of Jesus: Mt 28:18; Jn 12:31; 13:3; 16:11; 17:2; Ep 1:20-22; 1 Pt 3:21, 22, First coming: Jn 1:1-14; 8:58; 14:5,24; 20:28; Rm 9:5; 2 Pt 1:16; 1 Jn 5:20, Judgment: Jn 12:31; 2 Co 5:10; 2 Tm 4:1; Hb 9:27; 1 Pt 4:17; Jd 6, Atonement on cross: Jn 1:29; 1 Co 15:3; Gl 1:4; Hb 9:28, Resurrection: Jn 5:28,29; 11:24,25; 1 Co 15; 1 Th 4:13-18, Exaltation of Jesus: At 2:29-36; Ph 2:5-11; Hb 1:1-3, Priesthood of Jesus: Zc 6:12,13; Hb 2:17; 4:14; 5:6; 7:11-28; 9:11, Kingship of Jesus: Dn 2:44; 7:13,14; Zc 6:12,13; Rm 5:17; 1 Tm 1:17; 6:15; Rv 19:16

GOD'S GRACE & MAN'S TRADITIONS

Study 11

The gospel event that was explained in the previous study happened almost two thousand years ago. It was an event that manifested the grace of God to man. Jesus said, "For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (Jn 3:17). In this way, therefore, "the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Ti 2:11). Though mankind was dead in sin, God's grace was poured out through Jesus (Rm 5:8). Jesus brought a solution for our problem of sin.

God's story of grace is briefly explained in the Bible in Ephesians 2:1-

10. Verses 4-9 specifically explain the marvelous grace of God.

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved. And He raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you are saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not of works, lest anyone should boast.

This is great news! God knew that we could not save ourselves. He knew that we could not keep His law perfectly so as to justify ourselves by law-keeping. In our frustration to keep His law perfectly, He knew that we would invent for ourselves religious ceremonies of works in order to find forgiveness of sins by our own religious performances. But God also knew that we could never do enough good works to earn our salvation.

God knew our inabilities, our unrighteousness and our ungodliness. Nevertheless, because of His mercy He sent Jesus into the world. Listen to what the Bible says. *"For when we were still without strength, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. **But God manifests His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us**"* (Rm 5:6-8). **That's grace! And that's great news!**

God sent His Son to save us even though we did not deserve to be saved. God first extended His hand to take us out of our own religious confusion of traditional religions. He sent Jesus to the Jews who were lost in their religious traditions. He sends Jesus today to everyone who is lost in the confusion of traditional religions that are vain in the sight of God (Mk 7:6-9).

You may be "very religious" as those in the city of Athens in Greece. However, to such religious people Paul stated, *"And the times of this ignorance God has overlooked, **but now commands all men everywhere to repent***

..." (At 17:22,30). If you are satisfied in man-made traditional religion, here is what the Bible says concerning such if you now believe in Jesus.

Therefore, if you died with Christ from the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you submit yourselves to ordinances? "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle." All these concern things that perish with the using, after to the commandments and doctrines of men. These things have indeed a show of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and neglect of the body, but not in any value in restraining the indulgence of the flesh (Cl 2:20-23).

Now we challenge you. The Bible says, *"Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the **faith**"* (2 Co 13:5). You may think that you are living an acceptable life that is pleasing to God. However, can you prove your religious behavior to be that which is acceptable to God? Can you prove your beliefs by going to the Bible? In other words, are you trusting in religious traditions simply because they have always been practiced by your forefathers? If you are, then you must reconsider your religious traditions in relation to God's word.

Remember, the Jews to whom Jesus first preached were religious. They believed in God. However, they had established their own religious traditions. The Bible says that Jesus *"came to His own, and His own **did not receive Him**"* (Jn 1:11). The Jews did not receive Him because they had al-

ready rejected the will of God (Mk 7:9). Since they had already rejected the word of God, it was easy to reject Jesus.

Will you be one of those religious people today to whom Jesus comes, but because of your religious traditions you will reject Him? Keep in mind that God's grace is not only offered to those who do not know Jesus. It is also offered to those who have devised their own religions in order to save themselves. It is offered to those who have been trapped in the world of man-made religions. God calls us out of such vain religions in order to enjoy the freedom of His grace. He calls, **“Come out from among them and be separate,” says the Lord. ‘And do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you’** (2 Co 6:17).

Jesus calls us into freedom from the bondage of man-made religion (Gl 5:1). In Him we can be free from human organizations, ceremonial religion, binding traditions of men, and authoritarian religious institutions that seek to assume lordship over God's people. Jesus calls us into the freedom of God's grace in order that we become the bondservants of His will.

Those who accept God's grace on His conditions can have hope. Here's God's promise. **“But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name”** (Jn 1:12). If you accept Jesus through the conditions God prescribes in His word, you have the right to become a child of God. You have a right to come into a relationship with the Father, Son and

Holy Spirit by obedience to the gospel. In this relationship you will be headed for heaven and eternal glory in the presence of God. This is the gift that God wants all people in the world to have. You can have it through your obedience to the gospel. This is great news!

SELF TEST

1. ____ Jesus did not come to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be ... (A) ... judged, (B) ... saved, (C) ... rejected
2. ____ In what was God rich that moved Him to save us by His grace? (A) Power, (B) Joy, (C) Mercy
3. ____ In whom must we be in order to enjoy God's grace? (A) Christ, (B) The world, (C) In heaven
4. ____ What did God demonstrate toward us while we were still dead in sin? (A) Love, (B) Hope, (C) Faith
5. ____ What does God say those who are caught in traditional religion must do in order to accept Jesus? (A) Maintain their traditions, (B) Combine traditions with God's word, (C) Repent
6. ____ One must examine himself according to God's word in order to determine whether he is in what? (A) The faith, (B) His father's religion, (C) The commandments of men
7. ____ What did many religious Jews of Jesus' day **not** do in reference to Jesus? (A) Believe the Old Testament, (B) Obey God, (C) Receive Him
8. ____ What do those who receive Jesus have a right to become? (A) Judged, (B) Persecuted, (C) Children of God

YES - NO If you understand how far God has to come in order to bring you home with Him, and yet refuse His invitation, do you think you should be saved anyway?

SCRIPTURE READING: Jn 1:1-51; 3:1-21; Rm 5
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Salvation in Christ: Lk 19:10; Jn 1:29; At 4:12; Rm 5:8,9; Hb 9:28; 1 Pt 2:24; **God's love:** Jn 3:16; Rm 5:8; 1 Jn 3:1; 4:9-11, **Child of God:** Rm 8:16; Gl 3:7; 4:5; Ph 2:15; Hb 2:10; 12:5; 1 Jn 3:2

ESTABLISHING A RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

Study 12

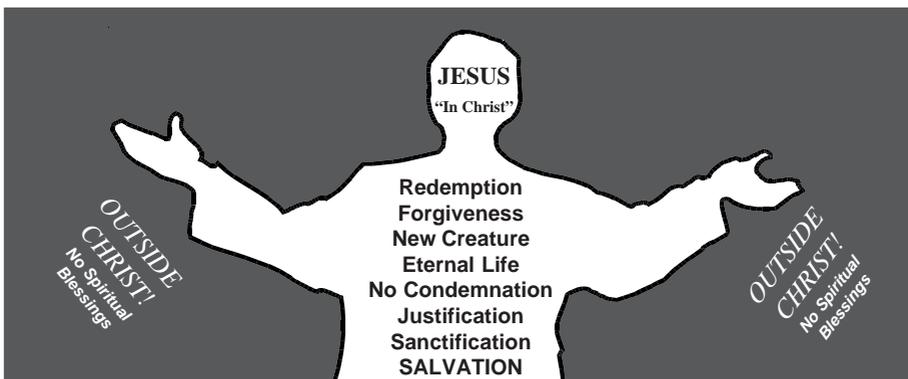
In order to be saved one must have a covenant relationship with Christ who saves. In the New Testament, the phrase “in Christ” is used to explain this relationship. When one is “in Christ,” he or she has a **spiritual covenant relationship** with God. This is the same as being in the body, the church, for the church is the body of Christ (Cl 1:18).

Jesus is the **head** of the body (Ep 5:23). The word “head” is used figuratively to mean “control” and “center of reference.” As our physical head controls our entire body and is the center of reference to our function as a body, so Jesus desires to control our lives and be the center of reference for all our behavior. In this way He will bring an abundant life to us because He will always lead us in the right direction (Jn 10:10). When one is in the body of Christ, therefore, he has established a submissive relationship with Jesus, the head. When we submit to the head of the body, the head gives spiritual bless-

ings that bring salvation.

When we are in an “in Christ” relationship with God, we have all **spiritual blessings** that come with a covenant with God. The Bible says, “*Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ*” (Ep 1:3). In order to have all these spiritual blessings we must be in submission to Jesus as our head. We cannot be outside Christ and expect to receive those blessings that are only in Christ. Illustrated in the chart below are those blessings that we have when we are in an “in Christ” relationship with Jesus.

There are no spiritual blessings **outside** Christ. If one is to have **redemption** and **forgiveness** of sins (Ep 1:7), he or she must be in Christ. Outside Christ there is no redemption or forgiveness of sins. If one is to be a **new creature**, he or she must be in Christ (2 Co 5:17). There are only old creatures outside Christ. If one desires



to **live forever**, he or she must be in Christ (1 Jn 5:11). There is only eternal death outside Christ. Outside Christ all are under condemnation. However, if one comes into Christ, he or she is **not in a state of condemnation** (Rm 8:1). If one desires to be **sanctified** of all sin, then he or she must come into Christ (1 Co 1:2). All these spiritual blessings add up to **salvation** (2 Tm 2:10). This salvation is only in Christ. Since all spiritual blessings are in Christ, there is only one question that must be asked and answered.

HOW CAN ONE RECEIVE ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS THAT ARE ONLY IN CHRIST?

You must answer this question. The answer is in the Bible. You must also make another decision. When the Bible answers this question, will you be willing to accept the answer and apply such to your life? If you are convinced that the Bible answer is clear and necessary for your salvation, will you obey the instructions of the Bible? It does no good for one's salvation to know what to do to be saved, and yet do nothing. Therefore, only a positive response to what the Bible teaches will benefit our eternal destiny. This is your opportunity to respond to God's will.

SELF TEST

1. ____ What kind of relationship does one have with God when he is "in Christ"? (A) Physical, (B) Unconditional, (C) Spiritual
2. ____ In Christ are all spiritual ... (A) ... thoughts, (B) ... blessings, (C) ... encounters
3. ____ If one is outside Christ, what spiri-

- tual blessings does he have? (A) Forgiveness of sins, (B) Eternal life, (C) None
4. ____ All spiritual blessings result in our ... (A) ... faith, (B) ... redemption, (C) ... salvation

YES - NO Since all spiritual blessings in reference to your salvation are in Christ, do you think you should be saved if you fail to do what God says you must do in order to come into Christ?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ep 1:3-14

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Redemption: Rm 3:24; 8:23; 1 Co 1:30; Gl 3:13; 4:5; Ti 2:14; Hb 9:12; 1 Pt 1:18, **Forgiveness:** Mt 6:12-14; 18:21-35; At 13:38; 26:18; 1 Jn 1:9; 2:12, **Condemnation:** Mt 23:14,33; Mk 3:29; Jn 3:19; 5:29; Rm 3:8, **Eternal life:** Jn 5:24-26,39; 8:12; 10:28; 11:25; 17:2,3; Rm 2:7; 1 Tm 6:12; Ti 1:2; 1 Jn 5:11-13, **Sanctification:** 1 Co 1:30; 6:11; 7:14; 1 Th 4:3; 1 Tm 4:5; Hb 2:11; 10:10; Jd 1, **Salvation:** At 4:12; Rm 1:16; 2 Co 6:2; Ph 2:12,13; Ti 2:11; Hb 2:3; 1 Pt 1:10-12

REVIEWING SECTION II

Studies 9-12

When Adam sinned, God set in action His plan to reconcile all men to Himself. Abraham was chosen as the one through whom God would build a nation from which the promised Seed of salvation would be born. When the time came for all prophecies to be fulfilled concerning God's plan of salvation, God sent forth Jesus into the world (Gl 4:4). As the Son of God, Jesus came to be the sacrificial offering for our sins. After accomplishing His work on the cross, all people were and are invited to come into a saving relationship with Him in His body, the church. His invitation still stands today.

In order to come under the controlling direction of Jesus who promises us an abundant life in this time and eternal life to come, one must submit to Jesus as his head. Submission means there are conditions for being in Christ.

We cannot choose our own conditions by which to come into a covenant relationship with God. Man-made conditions and rules lead one away from God and accuse Jesus of not providing all that is necessary for our salvation. Neither can we depend on our own feelings and emotions. Hu-

man feelings and emotions lead one away from God by concentrating on one's self (Jr 10:23). For this reason, all must submit to God's directions as to how we must accept His grace. We must submit to His will in order to come into a saving relationship with Him in Christ.

Note: You must stop in your reading here and complete the final test questions over this second section of your studies. After you complete the appropriate questions, please continue your reading and studies. Remember to do this after each section of studies throughout the remainder of this course.

TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GOD'S GRACE

Section III

You have learned that the gospel is the historical event of the death of Jesus on the cross for our sins. You have also learned that He was buried in a tomb, but raised Sunday morning on the third day in order to give us hope that all those who are in Christ will also be raised to eternal life when He comes again. This is the good news event that manifested the grace of God (Ti 2:11). In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 the Bible teaches that when Jesus comes again, those who have not obeyed the gospel *"will be punished with everlasting destruction away from the presence of the Lord and away from the glory of His power."* It is for this reason that every person must discover the gospel and obey it in order to escape the coming destruction. So one must ask, How does one obey the gospel of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus

in order to escape the coming destruction?

In order to have all spiritual blessings that are necessary for salvation you must be in a covenant relationship with Christ. The Bible promises that in Christ you are redeemed from sin by Jesus' blood. It is in Christ that there is salvation (2 Tm 2:10). But how does one come into Christ?

In this section of your studies you will learn how to obey the gospel in order to come into Christ. You will learn how to respond to the grace of God by obedience to the gospel.

In order to understand what God wants you to do to be saved, there are important points that you must understand. These points are often misunderstood by religious people in their efforts to do what they believe God wants them do in order to please Him.

THINGS TO LEARN

1. God has established a new covenant with His people, which covenant has a new law, the law of liberty.
2. One cannot save himself from sin, and thus, we must depend on the grace of God by being obedient to God's conditions for accepting His grace.
3. Recognition of God's grace must move us to respond to His conditions for accepting His grace.
4. God's grace gives us freedom from the binding religious traditions that men force on the consciences of sincere people.

**GOD'S PROMISES
OF A NEW COVENANT AND LAW**

Study 13

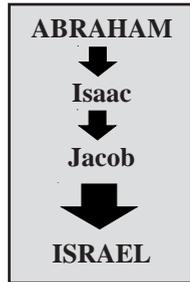
Before God gave any written law to man on earth, He spoke directly to the **fathers of tribal families**. He gave His spoken laws to these fathers in order that His will be taught to the entire extended family (Hb 1:1). One of these extended family fathers was Abraham. Of all the fathers of faith in the world at the time, Abraham was God's choice through whom He would bring into the world the Seed, which promise was first made to Adam and Eve (Gn 3:15). The fulfillment of this promise would result in the spiritual blessing of all humanity.

God chose Abraham in order to prepare the way for the Seed who would come into the world through him and the nation of Israel. God promised Abraham, *"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed"* (Gn 12:3).

God thus established a personal covenant with Abraham concerning the

promise that He would fulfill in Abraham's descendants. The fulfillment of the promise would come almost 2,000 years after the promise was made. In order to preserve a part of humanity through whom the Seed of blessing would come, God chose the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob to build a nation, the nation of Israel (Gn 12:1-3; 15:5).

Many years after Abraham died, and after God brought the children of Israel out of Egyptian captivity, He established a covenant with Israel as a nation. The law of this covenant was given as a condition for keeping the covenant. Therefore, **the Old Testament law was given specifically to the nation of Israel** to be their condition for keeping the covenant (Ex 24:1-4). Moses said to Israel, ***"The Lord***

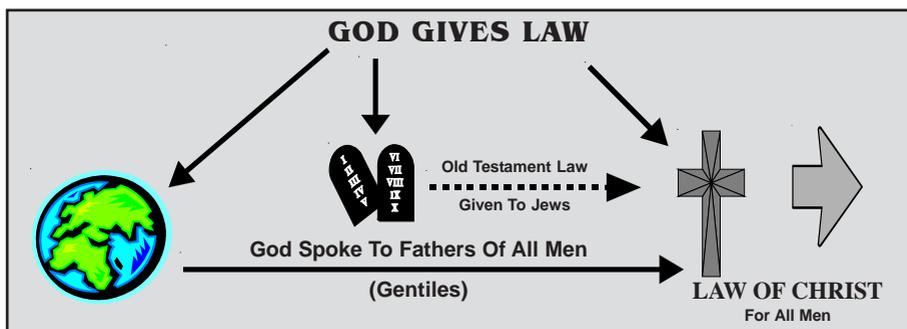


did not make this covenant with your fathers, but with us [Israel], those who are here today, all of us who are alive” (Dt 5:3).

Concerning the law of the covenant, God said to Israel, *“Now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the judgments which I teach you to observe, that you may live, and go in and possess the land which the Lord God of Your fathers is giving you. **You shall not add to the word which I command you, nor take anything from it, that you may keep the command-***

ments of the Lord your God which I command you” (Dt 4:1,2).

Until God gave a written law on Mt. Sinai to Israel through Moses, all men were under the moral laws of God that He gave through the fathers of the tribal families. After Mt. Sinai, the nation of Israel came under a different law, which law was the condition for their keeping of God’s covenant that He established specifically with them (Dt 5:1-5). The Gentiles, however, remained under the system of spoken law that had existed from creation (Rm 2:14,15).



LOOKING FOR A NEW COVENANT AND LAW

In **Jeremiah 31** God promised that a new covenant would come. *“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when **I will make a new covenant** with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah” (Jr 31:31).* This promise of a new covenant that was made through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled centuries later in Christ, through whom God established a new covenant with all people who would submit to His will.

Jeremiah 31 is quoted in the New Testament in **Hebrews 8**. It is in the context of Hebrews 8 that the Hebrew writer affirmed that Christians are now under a new covenant, for the old one was taken away. The Bible says, *“But now He [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a **better covenant**, which was established on better promises” (Hb 8:6).*

The first covenant and law was only for Israel. However, Israelites could not keep the conditions of this covenant perfectly because of man's common problem. **All men sin and fall short of the glory of God** (Rm 3:23). Therefore, the Bible says, *"For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. **Because finding fault with them, He says: 'Behold, the days are coming ... when I will make a new covenant'**"* (Hb 8:7,8).

We are now in the days of the new covenant relationship with God. The old covenant and law that was exclusively made with and for Israel has passed away (Hb 8:13). Under the new covenant are new conditions. There is a new law. It is of this new law that the Bible states, *"But he who looks into **the perfect law of liberty** and continues to abide in it, not being a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man will be blessed in his deed"* (Js 1:25).

SELF TEST

1. ____ To whom in the history of the world did God first give His laws? (A) Priests, (B) Fathers of families, (C) Servants
2. ____ What would the families of all the world receive as a result of the promise that was made to Abraham? (A) Blessing, (B) Prosperity, (C) Faith
3. ____ To whom was the Old Testament law given? (A) All men, (B) The Gentiles, (C) Israel alone
4. ____ With whom did God make a covenant in Deuteronomy 5? (A) Gentiles, (B) Abraham, (C) Israel
5. ____ Why could Israel not keep the old covenant? (A) Because all men sin, (B) The covenant was imperfect, (C) The law of the covenant was imperfect
6. ____ Christians are now under the perfect law of ... (A) ... faith, (B) ... hope, (C) ... liberty

YES - NO In order for you to be saved, must you do those things God has commanded in order to come into a covenant relationship with Christ?

SCRIPTURE READING: Gn 12:1-3; 18:17-19; 22:15-18; Gl 3:15-18

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Covenant & law: *With Abraham* - Gn 15:18; *With Israel* - Ex 19:4-6; 24:8; 31:16; Dt 4:13; 5:1-5; Ne 8:1; Mt 4:4; Rm 3:1,2, *With all God's children* - Jr 31:31-34; Hb 8:1-13; 10:11-25; 12:24; 13:20, **References to the law:** Ne 8:1,18; 9:13,14; Lk 2:22-24; Jn 1:17; 7:19; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25; Rm 3:9-19; 7:1-7

ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW LAW

Study 14

With the passing of the Old Testament covenant between God and Israel came the passing of the Old Testament law. The Old Testament law and covenant passed away when Jesus died on the cross in order to bring into force His new covenant and law (Hb 9:16,17).

Jesus did not come to destroy the purpose for which the Old Testament law was given. He said, *"Do*

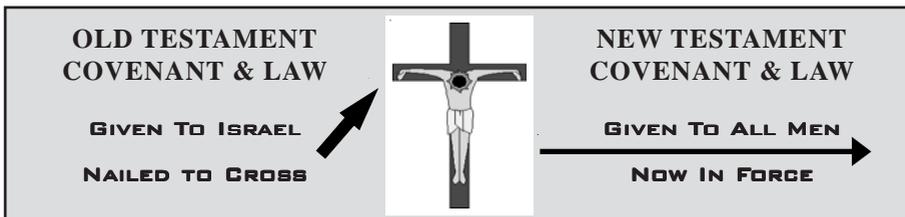
*not think that I came to **destroy** the Law or the Prophets"* (Mt 5:17). The purpose of the law was to bring the people of God to Christ (Gl 3:24,25). It was a shadow of good things to come (Hb 10:1). What Jesus did do was fulfill the law. He stated, *"I did not come to **destroy** but to **fulfill**"* (Mt 5:17). This is the key to understanding the purpose of the Old Testament law (Gl 4:4,5).

Jesus was the fulfillment of the law

in the sense that the law was given to bring Israel to Christ. When the law fulfilled its purpose, therefore, what happened to the law was what the Bible says in Hebrews 10:9. *“He [Jesus] said, ‘Behold, I have come to do Your will, O God.’ He takes away the first [covenant and law] in order to establish the second [covenant and law].”* Christians today are not subject to the Old Testament law. The Bible plainly states the following:

Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another, even to Him [Jesus] who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God (Rm 7:4).

If anyone would try to go back under the Old Testament law or any religious law in order to be justified before God by the merit of law-keeping, the Bible warns, *“You have become estranged from Christ, you who attempt to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace”* (Gl 5:4). This is actually good news because when one is under law to save himself, and thus, without the grace of God, there is no forgiveness of sins (Hb 10:1-4). But under Christ there is grace. The Bible says that *“the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (Jn 1:17). *“Therefore the law was our headmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor”* (Gl 3:24,25). Christians today are under the grace and truth of Christ.



PURPOSE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT LAW

- Why did God give the Old Testament law?**
1. The law was given as a headmaster (schoolmaster or tutor) in order to bring God’s people to Christ (Gl 3:24,25).
 2. The law was given in order to morally and socially direct and preserve the nation of Israel until the Seed came (Ex 20:1-17).
 3. The law was given in order to manifest sin (Rm 3:20; 7:7).

4. The law was given in order that Christians have an inspired source of learning and edification under the new law of Christ (Rm 15:4; 1 Co 10:11).

Jesus redeemed us from having to be justified by law. Under the Old Testament law it was impossible **“that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins”** (Hb 10:4). But under the New Testament law we are under a covenant relationship with God who says, *“Their sins and iniquities I will remember no more”* (Hb 10:17). God said this because of the sacrificial blood of Jesus for all men. The Bible says that *“we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all”* (Hb 10:10). **This is great news!** Christians, therefore, are sanctified by the sacrifice of Jesus. They do not have to seek justification by the keeping of Old Testament laws as animal sacrifices.

SELF TEST

1. ____ In reference to the Old Testament law, Jesus said that He did not come to destroy but to ... (A) ... fulfill, (B) ... terminate, (C) ... re-establish

2. ____ Jesus said, “Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the ... (A) ... Prophets, (B) ... Psalms, (C) ... covenants
3. ____ By what are Christians made dead to the law? (A) Hope, (B) The body of Christ, (C) The works of law
4. ____ From what is one fallen if he seeks to be justified by perfect law-keeping? (A) Faith, (B) Hope, (C) Grace
5. ____ Now that Christ has come, what has happened to the Old Testament law? (A) It was taken away, (B) It was added to law of Christ, (C) It was re-established
6. ____ What part did the Old Testament law play in bringing Israel to Christ? (A) Headmaster, (B) Brought salvation to Israel, (C) Proof of God's existence
7. ____ What could the sacrifices of the Old Testament law not do? (A) Bring hope, (B) Take away sins, (C) Produce obedience

YES - NO If the Old Testament law was still in force today, would you have to offer animal sacrifices according to God's law?

SCRIPTURE READING: Rm 7:1-6; Gl 4:21 - 5:2; Hb 10:1-18

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Abolishment of law: Gl 4:4,5; Ep 2:14-16; Cl 2:14; Hb 9:11-25; 10:9,10, **Sacrifice:** Hb 10:4; 9:15, **Better things:** Hb 7:19,22; 8:6; 9:23; 10:34; 11:35; 12:24

RESPONDING TO GRACE

Study 15

Of Jesus the Bible says, *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”* (Jn 1:17). *“For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live sensibly, righteously, and godly in the present age”* (Ti 2:11,12).

These statements of the Bible talk about grace, God's loving initiative to deliver us from our predicament of sin and spiritual death.

Grace is an action on the part of a giver who gives us something that we do not deserve nor can we earn. This is what we call **“unmerited favor.”** Unmerited favor means favor or accep-

tance that is not earned. God's grace toward us means that He acted so as to give us something that we did not earn, nor did we deserve.

Here's the point. We were lost without hope of living forever. When friends physically died, all of us stood around their graves, sadly feeling that this was the end of our loved ones. To many, life was terminated at a gravesite where there was no hope. But God did not create us for such a devastating end. In order that we have hope, God acted on our behalf. His actions have given us the opportunity to have hope for eternal dwelling in a heavenly environment. In order for us to have such a hope, there had to be sacrifice; there had to be an initiative on God's part that would change the graveyard scene. God's actions that we have hope were actions of grace.

Keep in mind that God is the one who had to take the first step. As men, we could do nothing to change our fate of termination at the time of death. Eternal dwelling is God's realm of existence. And in order that we partake of this existence, it was necessary that God reach down and take us into this realm of dwelling. How and what God did to accomplish this was an action of grace on His part, for we who are limited to this physical world could do nothing to escape the confines of this world. Our limitation to the world confined us to live after our human inability to keep law perfectly, and thus, we lived in sin.

God did not have to take the initiative to bring us into His presence by offering a sacrifice for the sin that separates us from Him. God did not have

to take on the form of man in order to die and be raised again that we also be raised to eternal life in the end. But the fact is, He did. And this is grace.

The Bible says, "*But God manifests His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us*" (Rm 5:8). What a beautiful thought and action on the part of God. His grace toward us moved Him into action to bring us into His realm of dwelling. In this sense, therefore, grace is a free gift. We did not deserve or earn it.

The Bible says, "*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast*" (Ep 2:8,9). If God had sent Jesus into the world because we had worked so as to earn such a sacrifice, then the sacrifice of Jesus would not be a free gift of God. It would have been payment to us for our goodness. But the Bible says, "*And if by grace, then it is no longer by works; otherwise grace is no more grace*" (Rm 11:6). The fact is that God gave the gift regardless of our sinfulness. He loved us before we loved Him (1 Jn 4:19). The Bible says, "*In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins*" (1 Jn 4:10).

Our recognition of God's action of grace should move us to respond to His grace. When our faith obediently responds to God's grace, grace reigns "*through righteous-*



ness to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rm 5:21). **When we see the grace of God on the cross where Jesus died for our sins, faith in God's action should motivate us to obediently respond.** When our faith responds according to how God says we should respond, then we are brought back into a relationship with God that eventually ends in eternal dwelling with Him. This is the thought behind what the Bible says in Romans 5:1,2. *“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.”*

God has extended through Jesus Christ the opportunity for you to dwell in His presence in eternity. This was an action on the part of God that you did not deserve. You did not earn it. It

was thus an action of grace. How will you respond to such an action of love on the part of God?

SELF TEST

1. ____ The law came through Moses but grace and truth came through ... (A) ... work, (B) ... Jesus, (C) ... the Holy Spirit
2. ____ Grace means unmerited ... (A) ... faith, (B) ... hope, (C) ... favor
3. ____ The grace of God came while we were still ... (A) ... believers, (B) ... obedient, (C) ... sinners
4. ____ Because grace was not earned by men, what is it from God? (A) A payment, (B) A gift, (C) A reward
5. ____ By what do we have access into the grace of God? (A) By works, (B) By faith, (C) By the Holy Spirit

YES - NO Since God lovingly extended grace to you in order that you be saved and live forever, do you think you should be saved if you do not obediently respond to His grace?

SCRIPTURE READING: Rm 3,4,5; Gl 3,4; Ep 2

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **God's love:** Rm 5:8; 1 Jn 4:10,19; Ti 2:11,14; **Grace:** 2 Co 8:9; 12:9; 13:14; Ep 1:7; 2:9; 4:7; Js 4:6

GRACE MOVES FAITH INTO ACTION

Study 16

God's action of grace should move our faith into action. Dead faith never profits anything in reference to our salvation, for even the demons believe and tremble (Js 2:19). Though their belief moved them to tremble, it was still lacking, for it did not move them to obedience. And remember, ***“faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead”*** (Js 2:17). Therefore, when one recognizes the precious grace of God that was manifested through the sacrifice of Jesus, **sincere people respond by obedience.**

Our faith must respond in our belief that God gave Jesus to be our Savior. Salvation by grace through faith means that God, because of His love for us, gave His Son Jesus to save us (Jn 3:16). But we must accept this free gift through **obedient faith.** God offers the free gift, but we must accept it by our obedience to His will. Our obedience, therefore, **is a response to His great love for first giving the gift.** In other words, we love because He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19). And because of our love for Him, we want to thank Him

by being obedient to His will. Jesus said, "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**" (Jn 14:15). We are thus the friends of Jesus if we do what He says (Jn 15:14). This is exactly what Paul meant when he stated the following concerning his obedient response to God's grace to save him:

1 Corinthians 15:10

But by the grace of God I am what I am. And His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me.

The point here is clear. One is not saved by grace if he refuses to submit to the will of God. He is not saved if he refuses to respond to God's love. There is a condition attached to our salvation by grace. The condition is our response to God's love and grace. Jesus puts us to the test by saying, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word" (Jn 14:23). **You must prove your love of Jesus by keeping His word.** True love of God and Jesus obeys. "**This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments**" (1 Jn 5:3). "This is

love, that we walk according to His commandments" (2 Jn 6).

What profits in our relationship with God, therefore, is **faith working through love** (Gl 5:6). We can thus know those who are God's people because of their loving response to His grace. The Bible says, "But whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. **By this we know that we are in Him**" (1 Jn 2:5).

SELF TEST

1. ____ If faith does not have works, it is ... (A) ... alive, (B) ... accepted by God, (C) ... dead
2. ____ Jesus said that if we love Him, we will keep His ... (A) ... hope, (B) ... faith, (C) ... commandments
3. ____ What profits in Christ is a faith that works through ... (A) ... hope, (B) ... endurance, (C) ... love
4. ____ God's grace toward Paul was not in ... (A) ... hope, (B) ... vain, (C) ... expectation

YES - NO If your faith does not move you to obey God, do you think that you should be saved anyway?

SCRIPTURE READING: Jn 14; Rm 5:1-11; Js 2:14-26
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Obedient faith: Rm 1:5; 6:17; 16:26; 1 Th 1:3; 2 Th 1:11, Love and commandments: Mt 22:37-40

GOD'S INVITATION TO FREEDOM

Study 17

Most religious people have burdened themselves with countless religious traditions. They are as Jesus said to the Jewish religious leaders, "**For you load men with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers**" (Lk 11:46). The Jewish reli-

gious leaders bound on the consciences of men numerous religious laws and traditions that God had never bound (Mk 7:1-9). The people could not bear the burden of these laws, for no one could keep all of them. The people thus felt continually guilty because they could not practice all the re-

ligious laws of the Jews. So it is today.

The religious world binds on the consciences of men hundreds of laws and traditions that God never intended to bind as law. When one comes to Jesus, however, **he is set free from the burden of religious tradition.** He is free in the sense that he knows that religious traditions **will not be the standard by which he will be judged.** The only standard by which one will be judged is the word of Christ (Jn 12:48). Jesus, therefore, makes the following invitation to all who have been burdened with religious traditions:

Come to Me all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Mt 11:28-30).

As a Christian it feels great to be free from the burden of man-made religions. Paul wrote, **“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage”** (Gl 5:1). Coming into Christ will give you freedom. You will be set free from having to keep religious traditions in order to feel pleasing to God. As free men in Christ, we must not go back to

religion that is based on the traditions of men and not the word of God. The apostle Peter warned concerning some who sought to return to such religious traditions, *“Now therefore, why do you test God by putting a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?”* (At 15:10). Once in Christ, no one can place a yoke of bondage on the neck of those who have been set free from the burden of human religious traditions. Therefore, *“beware lest anyone take you captive through philosophy and vain deceit according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, and not according to Christ”* (Cl 2:8).

SELF TEST

1. ____ Once free, Christians should not be entangled in a yoke of ... (A) ... freedom, (B) ... bondage, (C) ... obedience
2. ____ The Jewish religious leaders ladened the people with ... (A) ... wisdom, (B) ... righteousness, (C) ... religious burdens hard to bear
3. ____ Christians must beware lest they be cheated by the ... (A) ... laziness of life, (B) ... zeal for work, (C) ... tradition of men

YES - NO Are you willing to give up any religious tradition that would hinder you from obeying the will of God?

SCRIPTURE READING: Cl 2:11-23; Gl 4:21-31
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Freedom in Christ: 1 Co 7:21,22; Rm 8:1,2; Gl 4:26,31; 1 Pt 2:16

REVIEWING PART III

Studies 13-17

The greatest promise that God made to mankind that sparked hopes in the hearts of those who were sons of Abraham by faith was the promise

that in Abraham He would bless every family of the world. In order to preserve a portion of humanity for the fulfillment of this promise, God chose Abraham,

through whom the nation of Israel came into being. God subsequently established a covenant with Israel. He also gave conditions, or laws, for keeping this covenant.

When the promise was fulfilled, Jesus established a new covenant. He is now our High Priest, functioning as our counselor before the Father. His coming was the fulfillment of God's promise. He was the manifestation of God's grace to all men. God worked through Jesus to reconcile all men to

Himself. By faith we must therefore respond to the grace that was revealed on the cross. We must respond by learning and obeying the conditions that God has established as to how we must come into a covenant relationship with Him today. When we respond to God's grace, we are set free in Christ. We are free from the burdens of religious traditions that bring our consciences into bondage. We are free to respond to God's grace according to His will and not the will of man.

Note: Complete the final test questions over Section III.

OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL

Section IV

You have now come to the central message of your study and the most important thing that you must do in order to take advantage of God's grace. It is very important that you thoroughly understand God's conditions for your

response to His grace. Your understanding of His conditions will determine whether you will spend eternity with Him in heaven to come. Therefore, please prayerfully study through the material of this section.

OBEY THE GOSPEL

Study 18

... rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.

The preceding statement of **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9** is one of the most challenging passages in the New Testament. It is a prophecy of the future and a statement of truth for the present.

If you are a Bible believer, this

scripture teaches some encouraging things. **Jesus is coming again** (Jn 14:1-3)! He is coming with His angels. If you are not a Christian, then this Bible teaching will be disturbing. It is disturbing because Jesus is coming to take vengeance on those who have not

“obeyed the gospel.”

One thing is clear from the above scripture. **One must obey the gospel in order to escape the coming judgment of Jesus.** This biblical teaching is declared in a similar manner in 1 Peter 4:17. *“For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God. And if it first begins with us, **what will be the end of those who do not obey the gospel of God?**”* Peter is here asking us a very direct question. He expects us to give the correct answer. And the correct answer is that those who do not obey the gospel have no chance for eternal life because they have not responded to God’s grace that is manifested through the gospel.

This certainly brings us to a challenging quest. We must ask and answer two questions that arise from reading 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Our answer to these questions will

determine our salvation. Here are the two questions:

**WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?
HOW CAN ONE
OBEY THE GOSPEL?**

SELF TEST:

1. ____ With whom will Jesus come? (A) Demons, (B) Angels, (C) Unrighteous
2. ____ What will Jesus do when He comes? (A) Take vengeance, (B) Bring all to repentance, (C) Bless the world
3. ____ What will happen to those who do not obey the gospel? (A) Will repent, (B) Will be restored, (C) Will suffer destruction

YES - NO If you do not obey the gospel, will you suffer the destruction of hell?

SCRIPTURE READING: 2 Pt 3; Jd 14-16

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **Heaven:** Rm 8:18,23; 1 Co 15:50; 2 Co 4:17; 5:1-10; Hb 11:10,16; 13:14; Js 1:12; Rv 14:13; 21:4; 22:5. **Hell:** Mt 7:13,14,21-23; 13:41,42; 18:8; 23:33; 25:41-46; Hb 6:2; 10:29; Rv 19:20; 20:10,14,15; 21:8

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

Study 19

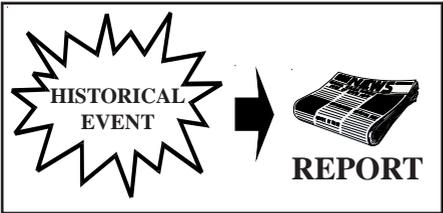
Suppose we asked you the question, “What is the gospel?” What would be your answer? The most common answer is, “It is good news.” This is partially right but partially wrong. “Good news” is the meaning of the New Testament Greek word that we translate with the English word “gospel.” The gospel is good news. But it would be better to ask, **“What is the good news?”** This question will often bring mixed responses.

To the preceding question some reply, “The gospel is the teaching of Jesus.” But this is not the correct

answer. Some also respond by saying, “The Bible is the good news.” Again, this would not be a correct answer. Others might answer, “Jesus is the gospel.” This would be a correct answer if we understand that Jesus was more than a man, more than a good teacher. But how is Jesus good news in our relationship with God, with life, and with the judgment to come? Knowing the answer to these thoughts will bring the abundant life about which Jesus spoke in John 10:10, *“I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.”*

THE GOSPEL EVENT

The gospel is actually an **event**, an event that happened in history. In a newspaper many events are reported. Each particular event occurred before the newspaper was written and printed. A reporter either personally experienced a particular event, or interviewed witnesses who had personally experienced the event. From the testimony of witnesses or personal experience, a reporter wrote a report about each event that is reported in the newspaper.

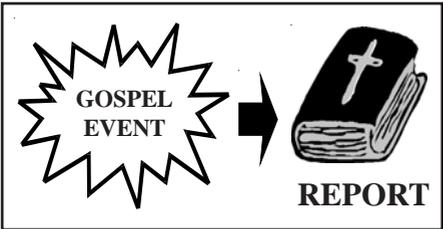


The report is not the event.

When we read the newspaper, we believe the reported events because we trust the reliability of the reporter. Remember, the event was something that occurred in history, but the report was written **after** the event took place.

The gospel is an event.

The New Testament is the inspired **report** of this event. Let's see if this is true.



1 Corinthians 15:1-4 is one of several passages that explains what we are saying. The Holy Spirit inspired Paul to report in verse 1, ***“Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand.”*** Now these words were written by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. However, they are not the gospel. In other words, **Paul is using inspired words to talk about the gospel.** He says that the gospel can be **declared**, that is, one can stand up and declare it to all men. The gospel can be **preached**. Words are used to preach and declare the gospel. The “words” are the **medium** through which the gospel is communicated. The words are not the gospel. The gospel can also be **received**, that is, it can be accepted as true. Paul also states that we **“stand in”** the gospel, that is, the Christian’s entire emotional and spiritual being rests upon the foundation of its truth.

In verse 2 Paul continues, ***“... by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.”*** Now herein is something very interesting. One is saved by the gospel. But notice here that the Holy Spirit places a subjunctive “if” in relation to salvation by the gospel. The “if” emphasizes a **condition**. The condition is that one must continue to believe the word of communication concerning the gospel. The Corinthians had not seen or experienced the gospel event. They had only heard of it from Paul. Therefore, they had to continue to

believe what Paul had reported about it. Today, we must believe the report of God's word. It is the only source through which we can gain knowledge of the gospel event that took place about two thousand years ago.

In these first two verses of 1 Corinthians 15, Paul did not explain the gospel. He only talked about the gospel. However, in verses 3 and 4 he reports the gospel event.

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.

This is the gospel event! Jesus actually died on a cross! He was actually raised from the dead! **This is the good news!**

THE GOSPEL

The good news (the gospel) is the event of the death of Jesus for our sins.

The good news is Jesus' burial.

The good news is Jesus' resurrection to give us hope of eternal life.

1 Corinthians 15:20 explains the resurrection. *"But now Christ has been raised from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who are asleep."*

Jesus was not the first one to be

raised from the dead. Jesus previously raised Lazarus. However, Jesus' resurrection was different from

Lazarus' resurrection in two ways. First, Lazarus had to die again. Secondly, he was raised with the same body that had to experience again the same sufferings of life and death. His moral body had not put on immortality; his perishable body had not yet become imperishable (1 Co 15:50-55).

On the other hand, **Jesus was raised never to die again. Jesus was raised with the same body.** However, it was a **changed** body. The apostle John experienced Jesus' resurrected body but did not fully understand it, for he later wrote, *"Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we will be. But we know that when He [Jesus] appears, we will be like Him, for we will see Him as He is"* (1 Jn 3:2).

Jesus is the **firstfruits** of all those who die in Christ. His resurrection to never physically die again is the guarantee to believers that they will also experience such a resurrection if they obey the gospel. **The Christian will be raised with a changed body as Jesus.** He will be raised never to die again. This is the glorious hope of the Christian. This is a glorious hope of those who seek eternal existence. **This is good news!** It is great news about conquering physical death in order to live forever. This is the dream of every person.



SELF TEST

1. ____ The Greek word that is translated gospel means what? (A) Faith, (B) Good news, (C) Declare
2. ____ Historically speaking, what is the gospel? (A) The Bible, (B) An event, (C) The teachings of Jesus
3. ____ What is the good news in reference to our sins? (A) Jesus died for our sins, (B) Jesus will judge us, (C) We are made to sin no more
4. ____ What is the good news in reference to physical death? (A) We now have hope of eternal life, (B) We have forgiveness, (C) There is no hell

YES - NO Since the gospel is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, must you obey this historical event in order to be saved?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 27,28; Mk 15,16; Lk 23,24; Jn 19,20

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: The gospel preached: At 2:29-38, **Hear the gospel:** Mk 1:14,15; 16:16; Mt 13:9-23; Jn 3:16; 5:24,25; 6:45; 8:24; 20:30,31; At 10:43; 13:38,39; 15:7; Hb 11:6; Rv 3:20, **Believe the gospel:** Mt 7:21; Lk 6:46; Jn 6:29; 8:24; 12:42,43; 20:30,31; At 13:38,39; Rm 10:16,17; Hb 11:6,

Respond to the gospel with repentance: Mk 1:14,15; 6:12; Lk 13:3; At 2:38,46,47; 3:19; 17:30; 26:20; 2 Pt 3:9, **Respond to the gospel with confession:** Mt 10:32,33; Lk 12:8; Jn 9:22; 12:42; At 19:17,18; Rm 10:9,10; 1 Tm 6:12; 1 Jn 2:23; 4:2,3,15, **Cases of response to the gospel:** At 2:31-47; 8:5-13, 26-39; 9:10-19; 10:24-48; 16:13-15, 25-34; 18:8; 19:1-5

GOOD NEWS FOR OUR PROBLEMS

Study 20

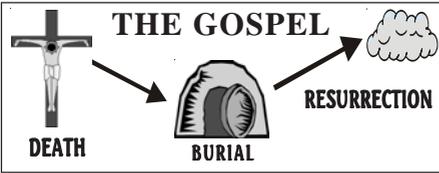
Remember that the gospel is good news. It is God's good news to all people concerning our basic problems we have with God and eternity. But how is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus good news for us today? The answer is simple. Remember, "**... all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God**" (Rm 3:23). Also remember that the result of sin is separation from God. The Bible says, "**But your iniquities have separated you from your God**" (Is 59:2). Therefore, when you think about sin, **you must think about separation from God**. And what must one think about when he is separated from God? The Bible says, "**For the wages of sin is death**" (Rm 6:23). When we think about separation from God we must think about death and eternal destruction.

When we think about death, we must recognize our two greatest

problems. Both involve death. The following are two problems for which every man needs good news:

SPIRITUAL DEATH is the result of being separated from God because of our personal sins against God. This is what the Bible means in Romans 5:12, "**... death spread to all men because all sinned ...**" God says that every man has sinned. Without the gospel one is "**dead in trespasses and sins**" (Ep 2:1). Remember that this is man's first and greatest problem! We must be **reconciled** (brought back) to God. The gospel event, therefore, answers this problem, **for Jesus died for our sins on the cross** (1 Co 15:3). He died in order to bring us back to God. **This is good news!**

PHYSICAL DEATH also resulted from sin, the sin of Adam. Remember



that we must suffer the **consequences** of Adam’s sin. As a result of his sin, he was **separated from the tree of life** (Gn 3:22-24). All humanity was thus taken from the tree of life. Therefore, it is appointed unto all of us that we must physically die (Hb 9:27). The Bible says, “*For as in Adam all die ...*” (1 Co 15:22).

But again, the gospel is good news concerning our second greatest problem, the problem of physical death. The Bible says, “*... even so in Christ all will be made alive*” (1 Co 15:22). Therefore, **in Christ** Christians will be made alive. They will live forever. **This is good news!**

Remember that our first great problem is our **spiritual separation from God** which has resulted from our **personal sins** against God. **The gospel is good news because Jesus came to die for our personal sins against God** (1 Co 15:3).

Our second greatest problem is that **each one of us will eventually physically die**. We thus need good news. Jesus was raised to never die again. He was raised with an eternal, imperishable body. **Those who have obeyed the gospel and are in Christ will also be raised when He comes again. They will be raised to go home with the Lord to an eternal dwelling** (2 Co 5:1-8; 1 Th 4:13-18). **This is good news!**

SELF TEST

1. ____ What is the result of sin in reference to one’s relationship with God? (A) Reconciliation, (B) Separation, (C) Union
2. ____ What is the result of separation from God? (A) Salvation, (B) Regeneration, (C) Spiritual death
3. ____ What is the result of separation from the tree of life? (A) Spiritual death, (B) Physical death, (C) Eternal life

YES - NO Is the good news, the gospel, the fact that Jesus died on the cross for your sins, was buried, and rose from the dead in order to give you hope of eternal life?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ep 2:1-10; Cl 3:1-11
RESEARCH SCRIPTURES: **Gospel:** Mk 1:14,15; 8:35; 10:29; 16:15,16; At 15:7,16,19; 20:24; Rm 1:16; 10:15,16; 1 Co 4:15; 9:12,19; Gl 1:6-9; 2 Th 2:14, **Hope:** Ps 78:7; 119:42-81; At 26:6,7; Rm 8:22-25; Ti 1:2; Hb 6:18,19; 7:19

OBEDIENCE TO THE GOSPEL

Study 21

The gospel event (the death, burial and resurrection) is good news about our spiritual death problem. **Jesus died for our sins**. The gospel event is good news about our physical death problem. **In Christ we will be raised from the dead**. But how does one connect with the gospel? How can one

connect with the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus that occurred about two thousand years ago? **How can one obey an event in history?**

Keep in mind also that we must come into Christ where there are all spiritual blessings (See Study 12). How then must one come into Christ where

there is continual cleansing of sins, and thus, eternal life (1 Jn 1:7; 5:11)? In other words, **how must one obey the gospel event of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus in order to come into Christ?**

The good news of Jesus was God's part in our salvation to bring us into the grace of God. What must every person now do in response to God's grace? Obviously, we must first **believe** the gospel. Jesus came preaching, "The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. **Repent and believe the gospel**" (Mk 1:15). One must believe the gospel before he will respond to the gospel.

We assume that you believe. Now how can you be **reconciled to God by the cross of Jesus**? How can you and others have hope of eternal life by the resurrection of Jesus? **Romans 6:3-6** is a clear and simple answer.

ROMANS 6:3-6

In the letter to the Romans, Paul was writing to Christians in Rome, and thus, reviewed their past obedience to the gospel. **Verse 3** is a question, "Or do you not know that as many of us as

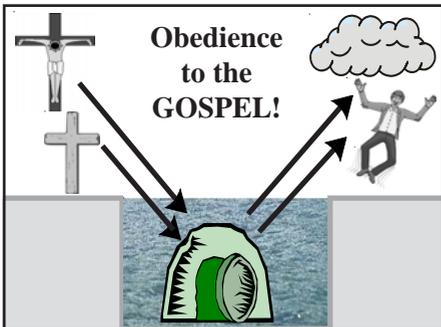
were **immersed [baptized] into Christ Jesus were immersed [baptized] into His death**?" But Jesus died in Jerusalem. He died almost two thousand years ago. Nevertheless, how can you today be "immersed into His death"? Again, the answer is simple and given in **verse 4**.

Therefore, we were buried with Him through immersion into death, that just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, even so we also might walk in newness of life.

It would be hard to miss Paul's explanation of how to be baptized into the death of Jesus in obedience to the gospel. Notice the preposition "with." By immersion in water (baptism) **one goes to the grave with Jesus**. Something great, something spiritual thus happens in baptism. Jesus was buried. In obedience to the gospel event, **we are also buried with Him**. In immersion we are coming into a spiritual union with Jesus. A covenant is being established. A personal relationship with God is beginning. Because of the seriousness of this teaching, Paul repeats the answer to the question of verse 3 again in **verse 5**.

For if we have been united together in the likeness of His death, we will also be in the likeness of His resurrection.

By immersion into Jesus one is united together in the likeness of Jesus' death. As Jesus went to the tomb almost two thousand years ago,



so we can also go to a tomb of water together with Him today. Subsequently, we are raised with Him in order to walk in newness of life. **This is great news!** In immersion, therefore, you are buried with Jesus. You are also raised with Jesus. In immersion one obeys the gospel, which is the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It's that simple. However, before one goes to the grave with Jesus, he or she must also go to the cross with Jesus. Paul explains this in **verse 6**.

... knowing this, that our old man was crucified with Him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, that we should no longer be bondservants of sin.

Here again is the preposition "with." Jesus was crucified. You must also be crucified with Him. The old man of sin must die. Your old man of greed, selfishness, drunkenness, cheating, lying, etc. must die on a cross of self denial with Jesus. Paul wrote concerning his personal crucifixion, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me ..."* (Gl 2:20). You also must be crucified with Jesus before you can be buried with Him in the waters of baptism. The Bible says, *"Repent, and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"* (At 2:38).

How can one obey the gospel?

Now we have answered the second question that 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9

raises. How can one obey the gospel in order to escape the coming destruction? The answer is simple. **By crucifying the old man and being immersed into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, one comes into a saved relationship with Christ.** The gospel *"is the power of God to salvation for every one who believes ..."* (Rm 1:16). Do you believe in Jesus? Do you believe the gospel event? Have you responded to the gospel by immersion into Jesus' death, burial and resurrection?

Remember, Romans 6:3 stated that we are **"immersed into Christ."** In 1 Corinthians 15:22 Paul stated that "in Christ" all will be raised. The conclusion is obvious. **In order to have the hope of being resurrected to eternal life when Jesus comes again, one must be in Christ.** The Bible says, *"And this is the testimony, that God has given to us eternal life and this life is in His Son"* (1 Jn 5:11).

Have you obeyed the gospel by immersion in water for forgiveness of sins? Do you desire an "in Christ" relationship with the Son of God? Do you want to live forever with Jesus? If so, then your response to the grace of God must begin by your obedience to the gospel by immersion (baptism) into Christ (Gl 3:26,27).

Always remember that what God wants us to believe and do in order to be saved is the first thing Satan will attack in order to keep us out of heaven. Since we must believe the gospel and obey it in order to be saved, then we must assume that

Satan will lead people to deny the gospel event. He will lead people to deny the fact that one must obey the gospel through immersion for remission of sins. For this reason, don't let anyone tell you that the gospel, and obedience to it, is not essential for establishing a covenant relationship with God in Christ.

SELF TEST

1. **T or F** If one does not obey the gospel, he will suffer the vengeance of Jesus when He comes again.
2. **T or F** If one must obey the gospel in order to be saved from the coming judgment of condemnation, then one must know the gospel.
3. **T or F** The central facts of the gospel event are the death of Jesus for our sins, His burial, and resurrection to give us hope of eternal life.
4. **T or F** Jesus was the first to be raised from the dead never to die again in order to give Christians hope that they will be raised to eternal life.
5. **T or F** When one thinks about sin, he or she must also think about being

- separated from God because of sin.
6. **T or F** One must believe in the actual happening of the gospel event before he or she can correctly respond to it.
 7. **T or F** One obeys the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus by immersion in water for the remission of sins.
 8. **T or F** When one has been immersed and raised into a spiritual relationship with Christ, he or she walks in the newness of the abundant life.
 9. **T or F** Before one is immersed into Christ, he or she must crucify the old lifestyle of sinful living.
 10. **T or F** All those who are in Christ have eternal life which will be fully possessed when Jesus comes again.

YES - NO If you do not obey the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, can you expect to be saved when Jesus comes from heaven with His mighty angels?

SCRIPTURE READING: Rm 6:1-7; 1 Co 15:1-4
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **Baptism:** Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; Jn 3:3-5; At 2:38; Gl 3:26,27; 1 Pt 3:21. **Baptism in water:** Mt 3:11; Jn 3:23; At 8:36; 10:47. **Baptism is a burial in water:** Rm 6:3,4; Cl 2:12 (The Greek word that is translated baptize, is *baptizo*. The word means "to dip, plunge, or immerse.")

THE COMMUNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Section V

When you are immersed in water in obedience to the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, God adds you to the family of God, the church. About three thousand people were first immersed in Acts 2 in A.D. 30, thus establishing the church for the first time in history (At 2:41). Every member of the church then was *"praising God and having favor will all the people. And*

the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved" (At 2:47).

Wherever in the world one obeys the gospel for the correct reasons, God adds that person to the church. **It is for this reason that wherever there is a baptized believer, the church exists.** When one does what God says he or she must do in order to be saved,

God is the one who adds that person to the church. It is not our option to join a church of our choice. It is only our choice to obey what God has said to do in order that He add us to His people.

The word "church" comes from the Greek word *ekklesia*. The word means a "called out assembly." The church (assembly) of God's people has been called out of the world by our obedience to the gospel through which God calls people today out of sin. God "*calls you into His own kingdom and glory*" (1 Th 2:12). However, He calls through the appeal of the **gospel** "*for the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ*" (2 Th 2:14).

When we accept the call of God through the gospel, we are added to the family of God, the church. As obedient believers we are God's priests (2 Pt 2:5,9) and have thus given our lives in total sacrifice to Jesus (Rm 12:1,2). Therefore, when the word "church" is used in the New Testament in reference to God's work among people, **you must think about people**. The church is not a building. It is the community of God's people.

If you have obeyed the gospel according to the will of God as set forth in the preceding studies, then you need to seek out God's people in your community. In this section of your studies there are some things for which to look when searching for God's people, the church of Christ. If you cannot find the church of Christ in your area which worships and serves God according to simple New Testament Christianity, then you need to begin

worshiping and serving God according to His directions in the New Testament. Because you obeyed the gospel, you are a part of the church. Therefore, start an assembly of Bible students with others who have obeyed the gospel in your house. This is important lest you create a religion after your own desires or the misguided desires of others. Remember, God does not accept the vain worship of those who have constructed their own churches after the traditions of the fathers or the emotions of misguided people (Mk 7:1-9). He seeks for true worshipers.

As an obedient believer who has been baptized for remission of sins, you must heed the Bible's exhortation of Colossians 2:20-23 in reference to man-made churches. In this context God says to you, "*Therefore, if you died with Christ from the elementary principles of the world, why, as if you were living in the world, do you subject yourselves to ordinances. Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle.*" (Cl 2:20,21). Remember that man-made religions "*have indeed a show of wisdom in self-made religion, false-abasement and neglect of the body, but not of any value in restraining the indulgence of the flesh*" (Cl 2:23).

Because of the vast number of man-made religions in the world, the following studies are set forth for you in order to help you to discover the true church of Christ. These are important points that will help you either to discover the church of Christ in your community or to start an assembly of God's people in your own home.

THINGS TO LEARN

1. The head of the church is the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. The origin of the church was in the 1st century in Jerusalem.
3. The relational function of the church is centered around Jesus as head.
4. References to the church emphasize the glory of Jesus Christ.
5. The worship and service of the church focuses on God.
6. We must come out of man-made religions in order to find Jesus Christ.

THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH**Study 22**

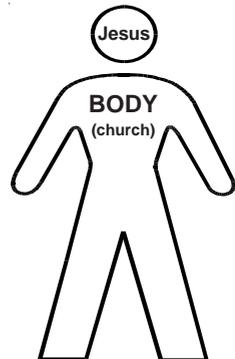
Head has reference to **control** and **center of reference**. As our physical head is the **center of reference** to our body from which all parts of our body are controlled, so Jesus wants to spiritually control our lives which we have brought into sin either through following after the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, or the pride of life (1 Jn 2:15,16). The Bible says that Christ **“is the head of the church. And He is the Savior of the body”** (Ep 5:23). **“He is the head of the body, the church ...”** (Cl 1:18). As the only head of the church, Jesus demands absolute control over those who submit to His will. He can have no competition in the area of headship. For this reason no other person should religiously control your life on earth other than Jesus.

Jesus exercises His control of the church by our voluntary submission to His word. We submit because we have accepted Him as the only way for our salvation (Jn 14:6; At 4:12). Submitted believers realize that they must face final judgment (accountability) for their behavior on earth (Hb 9:27). They realize that Jesus will be the judge (At 17:30,31). And they realize that the word of Jesus, not the traditions of men,

will be the rule by which they will be judged (Jn 12:48). Therefore, one need not be fearful of those who would seek to bind on us the religious traditions of men. Jesus’ control of our lives means **freedom from the doctrines and commandments of those who would intimidate or cause fear in our hearts that we follow them**. The Bible says the following to those who have been baptized.

Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage (Gl 5:1).

Since Jesus is the only head of the church, there can be no other head that would distract from His absolute leadership of the church. God, the Father, has **“put all things under His [Jesus’] feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church”** (Ep



1:22). Jesus has all authority and there can be no other authority that would compete with Him in our lives (Mt 28:18). He is Lord of lords and King of kings (1 Tm 6:15). His authority extends even beyond that which is of this world. The Bible says, *“For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that He might be Lord both of the dead and of the living”* (Rm 14:9). Jesus *“has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, angels and authorities and powers having been made subject to Him”* (1 Pt 3:22).

How much more authority and power can one have than all authority and power? Any church that would establish another head of the church other than Jesus is actually distracting from the headship of Jesus over all things. It is important to believe, therefore, that when we come to Jesus in order that our lives be corrected, we must submit to His control. He, not any man, must have our total commitment.

SELF TEST

1. ____ When we obey the gospel, God

- adds us to ... (A) ... a denomination, (B) ... a sect, (C) ... the church
2. ____ By what does God call people out of the world? (A) Faith, (B) The gospel, (C) The Holy Spirit
 3. ____ When the word “church” is used in the Bible, we must think about ... (A) ... people, (B) ... heaven, (C) ... faith
 4. ____ In Colossians 2:20 the Bible exhorts Christians not to submit themselves to what in reference to religion? (A) Man-made religious regulations, (B) Belief in God, (C) Bible study
 5. ____ When the word “head” is used in reference to Christ, about what must one think? (A) Faith, (B) Love, (C) Control
 6. ____ In reference to the religious traditions of men, what does submission to Jesus’ headship mean? (A) Bondage, (B) Freedom, (C) Apostasy
 7. ____ Over what is Jesus now head? (A) Angels, (B) Kings, (C) All things

YES - NO Since submission to Jesus as your head means that you must not submit to the religious commandments of men, are you willing to leave the traditional religions of men in order to submit to Jesus?

SCRIPTURE READING: Ep 1:20-23; Ph 2:5-11; Cl 1:9-18
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Jesus’ authority: Mt 7:29; Mk 1:22-27; Lk 5:24; 20:2-8; Jn 5:22,27; 13:3; 17:2, Jesus will judge: Mt 16:27; 25:32-46; Jn 5:22; At 10:42; 17:30,31, Jesus is King: Is 9:6,7; Jn 18:36,37; 1 Co 15:20-28; Rv 3:21, Jesus is priest: Hb 4:14-16; 7:25,26; 8:1,6; 9:24

THE ORIGIN OF THE CHURCH

Study 23

The establishment, or origin of the church of God is based on the establishment of the kingdom reign of Jesus. When people in the first century first responded to the kingdom reign of Jesus in heaven, the church was established on earth. Therefore, when we determine when the reign of Jesus was established and officially announced, we will discover when the

church was established, for it was established when people first responded to the kingdom reign of Jesus.

In this study are key Old Testament prophecies that point to the establishment of the kingdom of Jesus which began over 1,900 years ago. According to our calendar today, the announcement of this kingdom reign was made in the city of Jerusalem on the

day of Pentecost in A.D. 30. Thus, the church was established on this day in A.D. 30 when men and women first re-

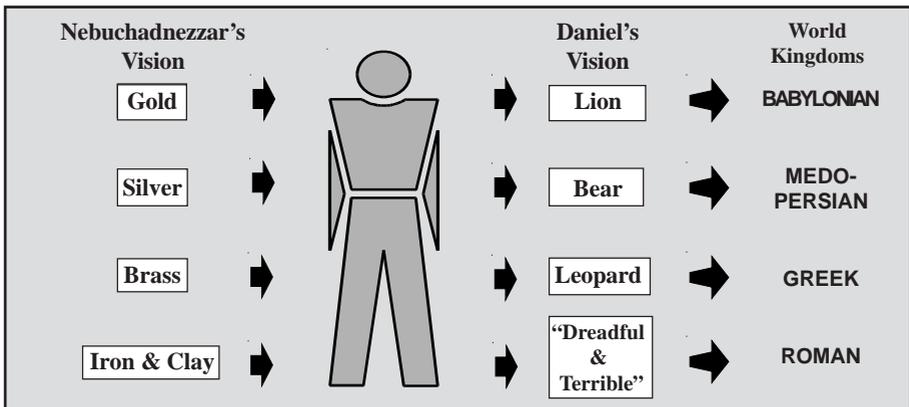
sponded to the first official announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus in heaven by obedience to the gospel.

PROPHECIES OF DANIEL

Daniel 2 is a record of a vision of King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon that happened in the sixth century before Christ. In the vision, the king saw a great image. The image was a portrayal of **four world kingdoms** (See Dn 2:36-45). The image had a head of gold. This head represented the **Babylonian Kingdom**. Its breast and arms were of silver which represented the **Medo-Persian Kingdom**. It also had a belly of brass that represented the **Greek Kingdom**. The last kingdom was represented by feet and legs of part iron and clay. This was a representation of the **Roman Kingdom**. In verse 44 Daniel interpreted, *“And in the days of **these kings** [the Roman kings] the God of heaven **will set up a kingdom** which shall never be destroyed; and the kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and*

***it shall stand forever.**”* The kingdom reign about which Daniel prophesied would be established in the days of the Roman kings.

Daniel 7 is a record of Daniel’s vision that is a parallel vision to Nebuchadnezzar’s vision of Daniel 2. The same four kingdoms are represented, but with different figures. Babylon was the lion; Medo-Persia was the bear; Greece was the leopard; Rome was the beast that was “dreadful and terrible.” Daniel again prophesied that in the days of the Roman Kingdom God would set up a kingdom. In the days of the fulfillment of this vision, Daniel spoke of the ascension of the “Son of Man” to the Ancient of Days (God). After this ascension, there was given to the Son of Man *“**dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve Him**”* (Dn 7:13,14).



Prophecy of Isaiah 2:1-5:

In this prophecy Isaiah spoke of the house of God being established. He spoke of the word of God going from Jerusalem. He prophesied that all nations would flow unto the house of God (See also Mc 4:1-3).

Prophecy of Joel 2:28-32:

Joel prophesied of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the last days. God would no longer pour out the Holy Spirit on the prophets alone. He would pour out His Spirit on "all flesh" (At 2:16-21).

Prophecy of Jeremiah 31:31-34:

God promised that He would establish a new covenant with the house of Israel and Judah. This covenant would bring all the obedient of all nations into a covenant relationship with God (Hb 8:6-18; 10:15-18).

These and many other prophecies concerning Jesus have all been fulfilled. When John the Baptist came in the first century, he preached, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is **at hand**"

(Mt 3:1,2). When Jesus came, He also preached, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel**" (Mk 1:14,15). "At hand" means near or soon. In other words, the kingdom about which both John and Jesus spoke was soon to be established in reference to their earthly ministries.

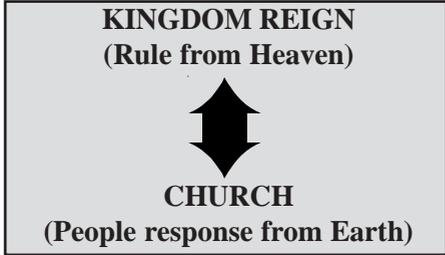
Neither the kingdom reign of Jesus nor the church were established in the days of John the Baptist or Jesus. During their ministries, both spoke of the church as something that would come in the future. **Concerning the kingdom**, Jesus said, "*Truly I say to you, there are some of those who are standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God come with power*" (Mk 9:1). **Concerning the church**, He said, "*And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it*" (Mt 16:18). Both the kingdom reign of Jesus and the church, therefore, were yet in the future in reference to Jesus' earthly ministry.



The words “kingdom” and “church” refer to two different things in reference to God’s rule and people. “Kingdom” refers to **God’s reign and rule from heaven**, whereas, “church” refers to **our response to kingdom reign**.

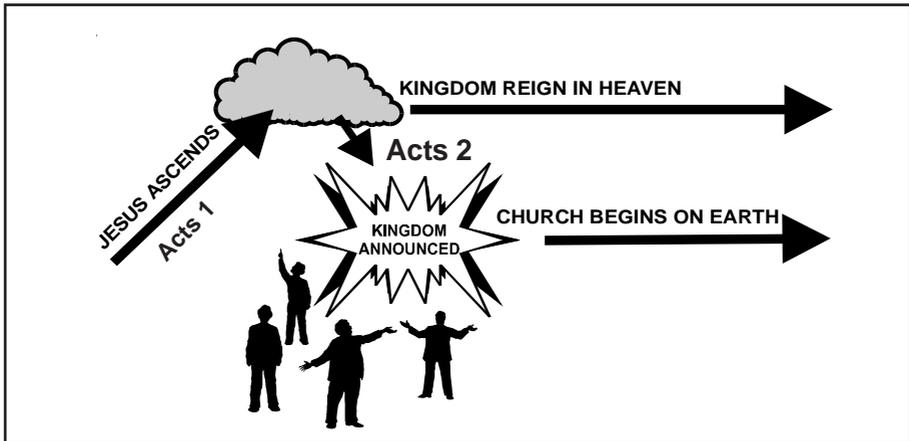
The kingdom is within the one who submits to the kingdom reign of Jesus from heaven. It is as simple as that.

Now when were the kingdom prophecies of the Old Testament fulfilled? The answer is simple. They were fulfilled when Jesus ascended to the Father to receive glory, dominion and kingdom reign. This happened in the first century and was recorded in Acts 1. Jesus ascended to the right hand of God (At 2:29-35). A few days later on the Sunday morning of the Jewish **Pentecost of A.D. 30**, Peter proclaimed the message of the gospel, the death of Jesus for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection for our hope (At 2:29-33). Peter then proclaimed, *“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this same Jesus whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ”* (At 2:36).



Jesus said, **“The kingdom of God is within you”**(Lk 17:20,21). *“My kingdom is not of this world”* (Jn 18:36). Therefore, the kingdom of Jesus is not physical as the Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Greek and Roman kingdoms. It is spiritual. Here’s how. Jesus asked the disciples to pray, *“Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven”* (Mt 6:9,10). **When the will of the Father is done on earth in the hearts of men as it is done in heaven, then kingdom reign comes.**

When men and women heard of the kingdom reign of Jesus, **they responded with submission**. Listen to what happen after Peter’s first historical announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus. *“Now when they heard this,*



they were cut to the heart. And they said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (At 2:37). Herein were people who responded to the kingdom reign of Jesus. In order to answer their response, Peter instructed them, "**Repent, and be immersed every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit**" (At 2:38).

Now here is the point. Jesus ascended to the right hand of the Father in order to reign as King (Ep 1:20-23). The first official announcement of this kingdom reign took place on the day of Pentecost in Jerusalem. About 3,000 people first responded to this official announcement by allowing the will of God to be done on earth in their hearts as it is done in heaven (At 2:41). Therefore, the church began in Acts 2 with these first responses to the gospel. **The church began when men and women first responded to the first announcement of the kingdom reign of Jesus.** This happened on the day of Pentecost in A.D. 30 in the city of Jerusalem.

SELF TEST

1. ____ The image that Nebuchadnezzar saw portrayed four world ... (A) ... wars, (B) ... kingdoms, (C) ... laws
2. ____ Daniel 2:44 is a prophecy that God would establish what? (A) Earthly government, (B) Kingdom reign, (C) The nation of Israel
3. ____ In the days of what kings did God say He would establish a kingdom? (A) Babylonian, (B) Greek, (C) Roman
4. ____ Isaiah prophesied that the word of God would go from what city? (A) Rome, (B) Babylon, (C) Jerusalem
5. ____ "At hand" means ... (A) ... distant, (B) ... soon, (C) ... already
6. ____ Kingdom refers to God's reign from ... (A) ... earth, (B) ... the councils of men, (C) ... heaven
7. ____ In A.D. 30 the church was established on what day? (A) Pentecost, (B) Saturday, (C) Monday
8. ____ About how many people were baptized to be saved, and thus, begin the existence of the church in Acts 2? (A) 3,000, (B) 2,000, (C) 4,000

YES - NO If your church was not established in Jerusalem in A.D. 30 on the day of Pentecost, would you be willing to become a member of one that was?

SCRIPTURE READING: Dn 2:14-45; 7:9-28; At 1,2
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Kingdom prophecies: 2 Sm 7:12,13,16; Is 9:6; 22:20-25; Ps 45:6,7; 110:1; Zc 6:12,13; Jr 23:5,6

THE RELATIONAL FUNCTION OF GOD'S PEOPLE

Study 24

The Lord Jesus Christ is the universal head of His body, the church (Cl 1:18). He rules through the authority of His written **word** (Jn 12:48). His control and direction for His body, therefore, is accomplished through those who have submitted to His kingship over all things.

The direction of the body of Christ,

the church, is thus from heaven. God never intended to set up on earth a ruling power that would either take the place of or challenge the lordship of Jesus from heaven over all things. Any religious body that would set aside the authority of Jesus by establishing their own religious laws is acting in rebellion against the kingdom reign of Jesus.

Jesus warned, "He who rejects Me and does not receive My words, has one who judges him. **The word that I have spoken, the same will judge him in the last day**" (Jn 12:48).

On earth God has set forth leadership work in the church to be accomplished through the lives of designated men. These devoted workers in the church do not have the authority to establish laws that would be bound on the consciences of men. Their designation is for the purpose of nurturing by teaching, life examples, and ministering as servants to the needs of those who have voluntarily submitted themselves to the direction of Jesus (Hb 13:17).

All leadership of the church must be based on the leadership principles that Jesus set forth in His instructions to the disciples. Jesus gave His fundamental principle of leadership in Mark 10:42-45.

You know that those who are recognized as rulers over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them. And their great ones exercise authority over them. But it will not be so among you. But whoever desires to be great among you, will be your servant. And whoever of you desires to be first will be bondservant of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Whenever we discuss the subject of leadership in the church, therefore, we are discussing those who have dedicated themselves to be bondservants to the needs of those who have submitted to Jesus (See 1 Co 16:15,16).

EVANGELISTS

Evangelists, or preachers, function in two special works. Their primary function is **to proclaim the good news of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection to the lost**. Secondly, they work **to edify the church**. The Bible exhorts evangelists, "*Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching*" (2 Tm 4:2). The Bible says to evangelists to "*be watchful in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry*" (2 Tm 4:5).

It is not the work of the evangelist to rule over the church. Evangelists are to serve the word of God to the church both in teaching and by the example of their lives. The apostle Paul wrote to the young evangelist Timothy, "*Let no one despise your youth. But you be an **example** to the believers in word, in behavior, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, give heed to reading, to exhortation, to teaching*" (1 Tm 4:12,13).

SHEPHERDS

Jesus has given leadership work in the church to a designated group of men who are commonly referred to as **elders** or **shepherds**. Depending on your translation of the Bible, throughout the New Testament these men are also referred to as **bishops, overseers, pastors** or **presbyters**. These are all the same designated group of leaders. **Different words are used to describe them simply to identify the nature of service they do for the flock of God.**

Shepherds do not have the authority to make religious laws for the church, for God has delivered to the church all religious instruction through the revealed word of God (2 Tm 3:16,17; 1 Pt 1:3; Jd 3).



When elders were designated in the first century church, there was a **plurality** of elders designated for the church in any one area (At 14:23). There was never the situation where one elder functioned with one church.

Before shepherds were designated, they had to have certain physical qualifications and spiritual qualities. These qualifications and qualities are set forth in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:7-9. These qualifications and qualities were set forth in order to guide the church in designating those men who were spiritually qualified to function in the work of a shepherd.

Shepherds have the responsibility of caring for the flock that can personally know them (1 Pt 5:2). They are to offer their spiritual presence, teaching and example to those with whom they normally associate.

The work of elders is shown in the following New Testament instructions: *“Shepherd the flock of God that is among you, **serving as overseers** ... being **examples** to the flock”* (1 Pet 5:2,3). *“Therefore, take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you **overseers, to shepherd the church of***

God ...” (At 20:28). It is the work of shepherds to function in counseling and caring for the church. They look out over the flock of God in order to make sure that spiritual and physical needs are cared for among God’s people (Hb 13:17). It is their responsibility to teach the flock.

Christians in a particular region may not have a plurality of qualified men to function as a designated group to shepherd the flock of God. However, this does not mean that they are without the benefit of godly counseling and spiritual direction that is offered through godly men. There are always godly members who can give spiritual counseling and direction to the members. However, if such members do not have the physical qualifications as listed by the New Testament, they cannot be publicly designated as elders of the church. Nevertheless, they can fulfill their Christian responsibility of helping others through times of trial, as well as, minister in the work of teaching the word of God to the church (1 Co 16:15,16; Gl 6:1,2).

SPECIAL MENSERVANTS

Special male servants, or deacons, are designated for the purpose of **serving special needs of the people** (Ph 1:1). As the elders, they also are to fulfill specific physical qualifications and spiritual qualities before they are designated to special works. These qualifications and qualities are stated in 1 Timothy 3:8-12. Through their special ministries, they function to mature and edify the church in the area of special needs.

SELF TEST

1. ____ Jesus rules and guides the body through ... (A) ... the Holy Spirit, (B) ... His written word, (C) ... our feelings
2. ____ Elders are also referred to as ... (A) ... evangelists, (B) ... pastors, (C) ... prophets
3. ____ How many elders are to be designed for the church in any particular church? (A) Two, (B) One, (C) Plurality
4. ____ In reference to their work with the flock of God, what are elders to do? (A) Shepherd, (B) Make religious laws, (C) Rule with their opinions
5. ____ In reference to their spiritual direction of the church, what are elders to do? (A) Be examples, (B) Rule by their opinions, (C) Make religious laws
6. ____ What is the purpose of the work of special male servants? (A) Rule, (B) Serve special needs of the church, (C) Preach
7. ____ What is the primary work of evangelists? (A) Preach to the lost, (B) Preach

for a church, (C) Serve special needs of the church

8. ____ The Bible exhorts evangelists to do the work of an ... (A) ... elder, (B) ... evangelist, (C) ... educator
9. ____ In reference to the behavior of their lives, what are evangelists to be to the members of the church? (A) An example, (B) A shepherd, (C) A deacon

YES - NO Those who are functioning as leaders in the church are to function as slaves to the needs of the members.

SCRIPTURE READING: Servant leadership: Mk 10:35-45; Jn 13:1-17; 1 Co 16:15,16, **Elders:** At 20:28-32; 1 Tm 3:1-7; Ti 1:7-9; 1 Pt 5:1-3, **Evangelists:** 1 & 2 Timothy; Titus (These three New Testament books were written specifically to the evangelists Timothy and Titus.)

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Principle of servanthood: Mt 20:20-28; Mk 9:33-37; 10:35-45; Lk 22:24-30; Jn 13:1-17, **Work of servanthood leaders:** 1 Co 16:15,16; Hb 13:17, **Elders:** At 15:4,5,23; 20:17,28; Ep 4:11; Ph 1:1; 1 Th 5:12,13; 1 Tm 3:1-7; 5:1,17-19; Ti 1:7-9; Js 5:14,15, **Evangelist's life:** At 20:22-24; 21:8; Rm 1:15; 1 Co 9:25-27; 2 Co 4:1,2; 10:12-16; 1 Th 3:2; 1 Pt 4:11 (See 1,2 Tm; Ti), **Evangelist's work:** Rm 10:14,15 (See 1,2 Tm; Ti).

FINDING GOD'S PEOPLE

Study 25

The people of God (the church) in the New Testament are referred to with words and phrases that describe **ownership** and **character**. These words and phrases either identify the owner to whom members of the church have given allegiance or explain the nature of the body of Christ. Such words and phrases were never meant to be proper names for the church so as to divide members one from another. They were used by the Holy Spirit to identify the people of God in their relationship to God. The following phrases are commonly used in the New Testament to refer to Christians as a group of those whom God has called out of the world through their voluntary obedience.

- **The church of God** (1 Co 1:2)
- **The body of Christ** (Ep 1:22,23)
- **The church of Christ** (Rm 16:16)
- **The house of God** (1 Tm 3:15)
- **The flock of God** (1 Pt 5:2,3)
- **The bride of Christ** (Rm 7:4; Rv 21:9)
- **The church of the Lord (God)** (At 20:28)
- **The household of God** (Ep 2:19)
- **The temple of God** (1 Co 3:16)

As with phrases that define the nature of the global church, individual members are referred to in the New Testament with terms that describe the nature or ownership of the saints. The following is a brief list of descriptive terms that are used in the New Testament to describe members of the body.

- **Disciples** (At 11:26)
- **Christians** (At 11:26; 1 Pt 4:16)
- **Saints** (Rm 1:7; Ep 1:1; Ph 1:1)
- **Children of God** (Rm 8:16; Ep 5:8)
- **Sons of God** (Gl 3:26; 1 Jn 3:1,2)
- **Brethren** (Ph 4:21; 1 Pt 2:17)
- **Servants** (Rm 16:1,2)
- **Priests** (1 Pt 2:5,9; Rv 1:6)

It is always a good principle to use Bible references to describe those teachings and actions that are described in the Bible. Those names that are used in the religious world that divide brethren should be discarded. Those who seek to establish unity among brethren will always give up traditional names in order to base unity among Christians on the principles of the Bible.

We must always keep in mind that God did not intend to give a specific name to the church. There is no unique name used in the New Testament to either identify the church or her mem-

bers. God knew that names would denominate believers from one another, and thus He sought to maintain the unity of the body by using terms and phrases that refer only to the nature or work of the church. For this reason it would be wrong to use a particular reference to the church in a manner that would denominate Christians from one another.

SELF TEST

1. ____ Words and phrases are used in the New Testament to refer to what in reference to God's people? (A) Ownership, (B) Origin, (C) Establishment
2. ____ The reference "church of Christ" means that the church belongs to whom? (A) The Holy Spirit, (B) Christ, (C) Christians

YES - NO If the name of the church to which you belong is not found in the Bible, would you be willing to give it up in order to have unity with other believers?

SCRIPTURE READING: Cl 1:9-18
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Ownership of the church: At 20:28; 1 Co 6:20; Ti 2:14, **Glorify God, not man:** Jn 12:28; 16:14; 17:5; Rm 1:21; Gl 6:13,14; Cl 3:17; 1 Pt 4:16; Rv 4:11

WORSHIP & SERVICE OF THE CHURCH

Study 26

Jesus made a very important statement in John 4:23. *"But the hour is coming and now is, when **the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him.**"* It is very important how we worship God. **God is our creator and it is He who gives directions as to how He wants to be worshiped.** Therefore, it is not our choice as to how God should be worshiped. The choice is His for He is our creator.

Many religious people today are worshipping God according to their own inventions. But if we worship God after the doctrines and commandments of men, we worship God in **vain**. Jesus said, *"**And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**"* (Mk 7:7). If we worship God in **ignorance** of Him and His will, we also worship Him in vain. The apostle Paul addressed such worshippers in Acts 17. He said to them, *"The One whom you worship **without know-***

ing, Him I declare to you" (At 17:23). In order that these to whom Paul wrote should worship God in truth, he preached to them the truth of God (At 17:23-31).

There are also those who worship God according to their own religious ceremonies and creeds. About such the Bible says, *"These things have indeed a show of wisdom in self-made religion and self-abasement and neglect of the body, but not in any value in restraining the indulgence of the flesh"* (Cl 2:23). Yes, it is important to worship God according to what He desires, **not according to what we individually desire.**

Unfortunately, when it comes to worship and service of God, many are as those about whom Paul wrote whose worship and service was rejected by God. *"For I testify of them that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves to the righteousness of God"* (Rm 10:2,3). We must seek the righteousness of God according to a knowledge of His word. Those who are ignorant of the Bible seek to worship God according to their own rules and regulations. They thus worship God in vain.

Worship should never be an effort to entertain ourselves. Worship is the outpouring of a heart that recognizes the awesome nature of God. How can we think about entertaining ourselves when contemplating the awesome greatness of God?

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

It is great news that Christians today do not have to worship God in ignorance or after the ordinances of the Old Testament. Animal sacrifices are no longer necessary in worship to God. Christians today have been freed from the necessity of offering the blood of bulls and goats that could not take away sins (Hb 10:1-4). They have been freed from having to ignorantly worship God according to their own desires and the traditions of men. Christians today have the advantage of God's direction in worship through His inspired word.

The Christian's worship and service to God today is on a daily basis and according to the directions of His will, the Bible. Worship of God is not confined to buildings or particular locations, for God *"does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands as though He needed anything ..."* (At 17:24,25).



Worship and service of God is not confined to a particular time or day. The Bible says, *"I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service"* (Rm 12:1). The Christian has presented his entire life as a "living sacrifice" to God. Paul wrote of himself, *"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the*

life that I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me" (Gl 2:20). The total life of the Christian is given in service to God. Therefore, he worships God daily. Wherever a Christian may be at any time he has the privilege of worshipping God.

All Christians are priests of God. Christians "are being built up a spiritual house, a **holy priesthood**, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ" (1 Pt 2:5). They are a "chosen generation, a **royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a special people" to God (1 Pt 2:9). As priests, Christians are on duty at all times. Their whole life is given in service to God. The following are some of the important things Christians do in their daily worship and service of God.

Christians Daily Study And Proclaim God's Word

The early Christians determined to preach God's word on a daily basis. "And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (At 5:42). They "went everywhere preaching the word" (At 8:4). Because Christians have been saved by the grace of God, they have great news for all the world. It is their work, therefore, to preach the gospel to every person in the world (Mk 16:15).

SELF TEST
 1. ____ Those who worship God according to their own doctrines actually worship

- God in ... (A) ... truth, (B) ... vain, (C) ... peace
- ____ Those who do not know the word of God will worship God in ... (A) ... ignorance, (B) ... truth, (C) ... wisdom
 - ____ What must Christians first present as a living sacrifice to God? (A) Possessions, (B) Abilities, (C) Bodies
 - ____ In reference to their holy service and worship, what are Christians? (A) Priests, (B) Preachers, (C) Prophets
 - ____ When is the time of the Christian's worship? (A) Saturday, (B) Sunday, (C) Daily

YES - NO If you discovered in the Bible that you were worshipping God in error, would you change your worship?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 15:1-9; At 17:16-30; 2 Tm 4:1-3
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Worship: Gn 22:5; Ps 45:11; 95:6; Mt 2:2; At 24:14; Rv 4:10; 14:7; 19:4; Hb 10:24,25,
Preach: Mt 28:19,20; Mk 16:15,16; Rm 10:8-15; Ep 3:10,11; 4:11,12; 1 Tm 4:13, 2 Tm 2:15

Christians Daily Sing Praise To God And Admonish One Another

As the community of God, the Bible exhorts Christians to be "speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord" (Ep



5:19). *“Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord”* (Cl 3:16). Christians should be known for their daily teaching of one another with their voices in song. They should use the medium of songs to voice their praises to God.

SELF TEST

6. ____ Christians must sing with their voices while making melody in their ... (A) ... minds, (B) ... thoughts, (C) ... hearts
7. ____ In reference to one another, what must Christians do in their singing? (A) Teach, (B) Pray, (C) Meditate

YES - NO Is it God’s desire to hear the music of vocal singing that comes from the melody of one’s heart?

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: At 16:25; Rm 15:9; 1 Co 14:15; Hb 2:12; Js 5:13

Christians Give Themselves To Prayer And Fasting

The Bible says to *“pray without ceasing”* (1 Th 5:17). Christians should not be *“anxious for anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving”* let their requests be made known to God (Ph 4:6). Christians direct their prayers **to the Father**, for it is He who answers our prayers (Jn 14:13).

During His earthly ministry, Jesus said, *“But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days”* (Mk 2:20). Jesus was speaking of Himself going away to reign in heaven. He has since gone away, and

thus, **His disciples now fast**. The disciples now fast often during their intense prayers to call on God to work in their lives (At 13:1-3). They give themselves to fasting (1 Co 7:5).

SELF TEST

8. ____ To whom should Christians make their request? (A) Jesus, (B) Holy Spirit, (C) The Father
9. ____ In conjunction with their prayers, Christians give themselves to ... (A) ... the world, (B) ... one another, (C) ... fasting

YES - NO Have you been offering prayers to God with fasting?

SCRIPTURE READING: At 4:23-31; Mk 2:18-20
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Prayer: At 2:42; 12:5,12; 1 Co 14:14-17; Cl 3:17; 4:12; 1 Tm 2:8, **Fasting:** Mt 17:21; Lk 2:37; At 13:1-3; 14:23

Christians Daily Give And Do Good In Praise Of God

In worship and reverential submission to God, the Christian is not his own. He has been bought with a price. That price was the offering of the Son of God on the cross for our sins. Therefore, the Bible says, *“For you have been bought with a price. Therefore, glorify God in your body”* (1 Co 6:20). Since the Christian is not his own person, he realizes that what he has is from God. Therefore, the Christian uses his possessions (money or material things) in a sacrificial manner to provide for himself and his family, and to do the work of God for others. The Christian gives as a natural expression of loving God and one another. Christians should daily



GIVING

give in a sacrificial manner to any spontaneous need that may arise. **God is a giver, and those who would claim to be godly, must also be givers.** The Bible says, *“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith”* (Gl 6:10).

the following concerning what Jesus wants us to remember in the Lord’s Supper,

And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed it and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, “Take, eat; this is My body.” Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.”

SELF TEST

10. ____ To whom does the body and spirit of the Christian belong? (A) Himself, (B) His brother, (C) God

11. ____ To whom must Christians especially do good? (A) Unbelievers, (B) Christians, (C) Unfaithful Christians

YES - NO If you become a Christian, are you willing to care for the physical needs of others?

SCRIPTURE READING: At 2:44,45; 4:34-37; Ph 4:10-20
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Giving: 1 Co 16:1-3; 2 Co 8:1-4; 9; Gl 2:10, **Doing good:** Lk 10:30-37; Js 1:27; 4:17; 1 Jn 3:13-18

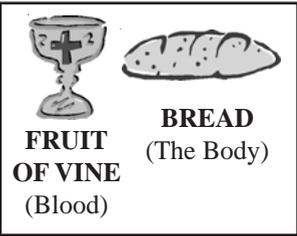
Christians Commune With Jesus And One Another

Though worship of God is individual, on the first day of the week, Sunday, Christians seek to bring their worshipful spirits together in order to praise God with others. They come together to remember Jesus and the grace of God that was poured out for them when Jesus died on the cross (Ti 2:11). An important part of this Sunday assembly is the communion of Christians with one another and Jesus around the Lord’s Supper. The early Christians came together on Sunday in order to celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus (At 20:7). Christians partake of the Lord’s Supper which was instituted by Jesus. Matthew 26:26-28 reveals

Concerning the **bread** of the Supper, Jesus revealed that Christians must remember Him when they eat of the bread. *“This is My body which is for you. **This do in remembrance of Me**”* (1 Co 11:24). Concerning the **fruit of the vine**, Jesus said that it represented the blood of the new covenant that Christians have with Jesus. He said, *“This cup is the new covenant in My blood. **This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me**”* (1 Co 11:25).

The **bread** of the Supper represents the **body of Jesus**. The **fruit of the vine** represents the **blood of the new covenant** which God has made with Christians.

The **bread** that Jesus used when the Supper was instituted was unleavened, that is, without yeast. It was unleavened because Jesus and His dis-



ciples were at the time eating the unleavened bread of the Passover Feast of the Jews (Ex 34:25; Lv 7:17). The **fruit of the vine** was juice from grape vines (Mk 14:24,25). The New Testament does not say that either the bread or fruit of the vine turn into the literal body and blood of Jesus. Neither does it say that Jesus' body and blood are present in the elements. The bread and fruit of the vine simply **represent** Jesus' body and blood.

Jesus used these two physical things – bread and fruit of the vine – to represent two spiritual truths of Christianity. These truths are that He sacrificially gave His fleshly body and poured out His blood for our salvation (Ep 1:7; 1 Pt 1:21-25). When we partake of the Supper, therefore, we remember Jesus. We proclaim that He died for us. In doing such we examine ourselves. The Bible says, *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, **you proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes**”* (1 Co 11:26). Christians must search their hearts at the time they eat and drink of the Supper. *“But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup”* (1 Co 11:28).

UNITY OF THE CHURCH

Another important remembrance of the Supper is to consider the oneness of the body of Christ. The Bible says, *“The cup of blessing that we bless, is it not the fellowship of the blood of Christ? The bread that we break, is it not the fellowship of the body of Christ? For though we are many, **we are one bread***

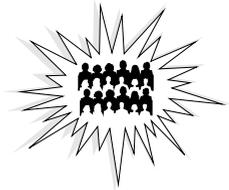
and one body, for we are all partakers of that one bread” (1 Co 10:16,17).

When we partake of the bread, therefore, we must remember the unity of the universal church. We are one church because we have obeyed the one gospel by immersion into the body of Christ. God has added us to the one universal church (At 2:47). The Bible says, *“For as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of that one body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all immersed into one body ...”* (1 Co 12:12,13).

DYNAMIC LIVING

Christians present their entire lives in reverential worship and service to God (Rm 12:1,2). Their worshipful attitudes are expressed in daily proclamation of God’s word, the singing of spiritual songs, praying, doing good to others, and giving to others to the glory of God. These living responses to the grace of God manifest our ap-

preciation to God for saving us from our sins (1 Co 15:10). The submissive nature of the Christian’s life is worship to God. The Bible says, *“Therefore, whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God”* (1 Co 10:31). *“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”* (Cl 3:17). **Therefore, when worshipful Christians**



assemble on Sunday to partake of the Lord's Supper, a dynamic spiritual fellowship of praise to God happens that is a great encouragement to all the those who participate in the assembly.

SELF TEST

- 12. ____ What does the bread represent?
(A) The blood of Jesus, (B) The body of Jesus, (C) The covenant
- 13. ____ What does the fruit of the vine represent? (A) The blood of Jesus, (B) The body of Jesus, (C) The church
- 14. ____ In reference to their hearts, what

- must one do when partaking of the Supper? (A) Pray, (B) Examine, (C) Repent
- 15. ____ In reference to the Lord's death, what do Christians do when partaking of the Supper? (A) Study, (B) Preach, (C) Proclaim
- 16. ____ When Christians eat of the one bread, they must remember the one ... (A) ... body, (B) ... faith, (C) ... hope

YES - NO Have you been partaking of the Lord's Supper every first day of the week?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 26:26-29; Mk 14:22-25; Lk 22:14-20; 1 Co 11:23-29
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: At 2:42; 20:7, **One body:** 1 Co 12:12-31; Ep 4:4-6; Cl 1:16-18

SEARCHING FOR GOD'S PEOPLE

Study 27

So how can you find Christians in your community? You can by simply knowing the identifying characteristics of God's community that are recorded in the New Testament. Since the church exists wherever there is one who has obeyed the gospel, then the church of believers is identified by those who have been obedient to the common faith that has been delivered to us by God (Jd 3).

You must realize that a religious group may partially teach and practice some of the identifying characteristics of the New Testament church. However, a church may not be the true church if people have either added to the word of God or subtracted from its teachings. Obeying only part of what God requires of us is not acceptable to God. A New Testament church is the true church when the members believe and obey the will of God as revealed in the New Testament.

You must be careful, therefore, for

men have added false teachings to their religious practices in order to worship God after human doctrines and religious traditions. They have also subtracted from God's plan. False teachings are being taught throughout the world. Therefore, one must beware of false teachings. All teachings must be tested by the word of God (See 1 Jn 4:1; Rv 2:2). The Bible says, "**Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test your own selves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you – unless indeed you are disqualified?**" (2 Co 13:5). Remember the following warnings of 1 Timothy 4:1-4:

Now the Spirit clearly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceitful spirits and doctrines of demons, speaking lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron.

For the time will come when they will not endure sound teaching. But to suit their itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires. And they will turn their ears from the truth and will be turned to fables.

Be careful! Be not deceived!

One would be foolish to believe that every church that claims Christ as the Son of God or claims to be following the Bible is actually practicing what the Bible says one must do to be saved. Identify true believers in your community. Identify the true church by what it practices and teaches. What is practiced and taught must be according to the New Testament.

It is important that we do not add to God's word (2 Jn 9). It is important that we do not teach or believe a different gospel (Gl 1:6-9). It is our plea to

you, therefore, that you search the Scriptures in order to discover the true church of God in your community. The only way you can do this is through prayer and consulting the word of God.

SELF TEST

1. ____ What must each believer do in reference to his or her own beliefs? (A) Examine, (B) Be satisfied with, (C) Assume to be correct
2. ____ From what did the Spirit say some would fall away in the latter times? (A) Religious behavior, (B) The faith, (C) Preaching
3. ____ Some turn away from the truth and turn unto ... (A) ... politics, (B) ... Holy Spirit, (C) ... fables

YES - NO If you cannot find a true church of Christ in your community, would you be willing to start one in your home?

SCRIPTURE READING: At 20:28-30; 2 Pt 2:20-22
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: **Apostasy:** Gl 3:1-5; 1 Tm 4:1-3; 2 Tm 2:18; 4:4,10; Hb 6:4-6; 10:26-31; Rv 2:4, **Deception:** Ps 43:1; 55:23; Mt 24:11,24; 1 Co 3:18; 2 Co 4:2; 11:13; Ep 4:14; 5:6; Cl 2:8; 2 Tm 3:13

REMEMBER!

There is **one head** of the universal church who is **Jesus Christ**.

There is **one universal church** which is the body of Christ.

There is **one origin** of the church which was in Jerusalem.

There is a **plurality of elders** for believers in every city.

Christians must daily worship God in **spirit and truth**.

Christians must **sing** to God from their hearts.

Christians must **give** out of the cheerfulness of their hearts.

Christians must regularly partake of the **Lord's Supper**.

Christians must regularly allow God to speak to them through **Bible study**.

Christians must regularly **assemble** together for mutual exhortation.

Christians must regularly **pray**.

The mission of Christians is to **preach the gospel** to the world.

LIVING AS A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Section VI

You have now come to a very important part of your study of this course. You must now make some important decisions. You must first make a decision to obey the gospel. You must then make a decision to share with others what you have learned in this course. This is one of the most challenging parts of your life as a Christian. It is challenging because every baptized disciple must begin sharing the gospel with others, as well as seeking to assemble Christians together in order to stir up love and good works (Hb 10:24,25). Doing this means that you must take a stand for what the Bible teaches concerning the gospel and the church of God's people.

In reference to Christians being connected with that which is false, the Bible says such things as, *"And what union has the temple of God with idols? **Come out from among them and be separate ...**"* (2 Co 6:16,17). *"If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not receive him into your house and do not give him greeting. For he who gives him greeting participates in his evil deeds"* (2 Jn 10,11). These are direct statements from the Holy Spirit that emphasize the seriousness of what we must do as Christians in order to maintain purity of belief and behavior as sons of God.

When one obeys the gospel and is added to the church by God, he or she is added to the church of God, not to a denominational religion that has been created after the traditions of men (At

2:47). God does not add us to false religious groups. He does not want you to continue to worship in error with a false religious group. He does not add you to something that is contrary to His revealed word. Therefore, you are obligated to worship and serve God according to what He teaches you through His word.

You are also obligated to teach others what you have learned in the Bible. In other words, you cannot obey God's plan of obedience to the gospel in order to be saved and then continue to worship and serve God according to the traditions of men (Mk 7:1-9). You must act now, both in your own response to God's word, and your teaching the Bible to others.

You must worship God with His people in spirit and truth (Jn 4:24). If there is a church of Christ in your community, **then you must worship and serve God with this church of fellow Christians.** You must come out from among false religions and be separated from false teachings in order to serve God in truth.

If you are the only member of the church in your community, then it is time for you to act. **It is time to start a meeting of Bible students in your own house.** This is what God would expect. This is what thousands of New Testa-



ment Christians did in the first century and this is what thousands are doing today throughout the world in order to restore New Testament Christianity.

HOME WORSHIP GROUPS

If there are no other Christians in your immediate area, you must start a worship group in your house. Here are some things to do in order to get started.

- Set aside a specific time during the week for the meeting.
- Invite your close friends to come to your home. Tell them you have learned some exciting things in the Bible and that you would like to share it with them.
- Use the material of this course to

direct your studies with the group through the Bible.

- Focus on what the Bible says. Read key Bible passages. The Bible is not difficult to understand.
- Conduct your Bible/worship group for an hour or two every week.
- Encourage those who come to invite their friends.
- Remember that God is with you.

You will be surprised how many people want to study the Bible. They are usually waiting for someone to guide them. You can be that person. Your Bible study and worship group will be the beginning of the church in your community. Therefore, begin as soon as possible.

STARTING A CHURCH IN YOUR HOUSE

Study 28

For assemblies, the early Christians met in their houses. In fact, they met in their homes until the first part of the fourth century. The first church buildings were not constructed until Constantine, Emperor of Rome, built the first building for a church in A.D. 323. But in the first century, Christians met in homes when they went throughout the world. Listen to these historical statements of the New Testament:

- *And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ (At 5:42).*
- *I kept back nothing that was profit-*

able, and teaching you publicly and from house to house (At 20:20).

- *Greet the church that meets in their [Priscilla and Aquila's] house (Rm 16:5).*
- *Aquila and Priscilla greet you heartily in the Lord, with the church that is in their house (1 Co 16:19).*
- *Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nympha and the church that is in her house (Cl 4:15).*
- *To our sister Apphia, Archippus our fellowsoldier, and to the church in your house (Pl 2).*

The church in the first century met in the houses of the members!

One of the first things to learn about the fellowship of the church is that it does not make any difference where you assemble for mutual edification. God is not concerned about places of meeting. In fact, Jesus taught against establishing an “official” place of worship when He made the following statement to a woman from Samaria who questioned Him about locations of worship:



Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem worship the Father.... But the hour is coming and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeks such to worship Him (John 4:21-23).

Christians do not have official places of worship. Since worship is focused on God by individuals, one can worship wherever he is. Since God is everywhere, Christians can bring their worshipful spirits together anywhere it is convenient.

After your obedience to the gospel by immersion into the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, you may be the only New Testament Christian in your community. Therefore, you need to take a lead in beginning an assembly to worship God in your home or other appropriate meeting place. Remember, it is your responsibility to serve God in truth. It may be that your house is the best place to meet in your commu-

nity. Here are some suggestions to begin an assembly of disciples in your house.

LEADERSHIP & DECISIONS

When beginning an assembly of disciples in your area, decisions must be made. Many decisions will rest on your shoulders as the one who is initiating the establishment of the church in your community. However, as soon as possible bring all the Christians together in order to make decisions as a group. It is unwise for churches to be run by the decisions of only one person. In the New Testament, the entire church was involved in making decisions that affected the entire church (At 15:22).

In the beginning of the church in your community, you will have to take a lead. In 1 Corinthians 16:15,16, Stephanas and his household took the lead in establishing the church in Corinth. However, **they took the lead by devoting themselves to serve other people.** Leadership, therefore, is service to others, not simply the process of making decisions. People will follow those who lovingly humble themselves to serve the needs of others (Mk 10:43,44). This is how a church is established. When faithful men and women set themselves to serve the needs of the community, first by preaching the gospel, and then by servicing the physical needs of people, others will follow. Therefore, as a leader, **“do good to all men, especially to those who are of the household of the faith”** (Gl 6:10).

So get started! Take the lead to decide. Decide that you will lead in your community by making your house a place of Bible study and worship for the community.

SELF TEST

1. ____ The early Christians taught daily in every ... (A) ... school, (B) ... library, (C) ... house.
2. ____ Who met in the house of Apphia? (A) City council, (B) The church, (C) Soldiers
3. ____ With his household, who devoted himself to serve the church in Corinth? (A) Paul, (B) Timothy, (C) Stephanas

YES - NO Are you actively teaching others those things you have learned in the Bible?

SCRIPTURE READING: Mt 20:20-28; Lk 22:24-30

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Leaders love the church: Mt 20:28; Jn 10:11; 13:34,35; 15:13, Leaders give examples: 1 Co 11:1; Ph 4:9; 1 Tm 4:12; 1Pt 5:2,3, Leaders give service: Mk 10:45; 1 Co 16:15,16; Gl 6:1,2; Hb 13:17, Leaders give vision: Mk 16:15; At 20:24; Ph 3:14; Jg 5:2

MULTIPLE ASSEMBLIES

The New Testament does not teach that a church is established because all the members in a particular location are able to meet together at the same place on Sunday. The word "church" refers to people. The church is the community of God's people. Therefore, **wherever God's people are, the church exists**, regardless of how people assemble. A church is not defined by the ability of all the members to meet together at the same place.

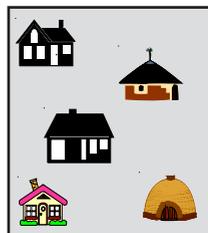
When you establish a meeting of the members in your house, the church will grow and become too large to meet in your house alone. When this happens, start meeting in two or more houses of the members. In many places there are no public buildings to

rent. Therefore, you will have to continue to divide the assemblies of the church when the assemblies become too large for each house. How-

ever, **keep in mind that regardless of how many assemblies you have because of space and distance from one another, you are still one church. People are the church, not the assembly of the people.**

The church of the New Testament is always universal. In reference to city churches, the church (was referred to as the church in Corinth (1 Co 1:2), the church of Ephesus (Rv 2:1), or the church of Smyrna (Rv 2:8). Though the church in cities met in many different houses throughout the city, God still considered the church of a particular city to be one church. Regardless of how many houses in which you must meet when you grow as a church, you are still part of the one universal church.

There may be the opportunity to meet in a public facility as a school or rented building. If this is the case, then all the Christians can join together to pay the rent for such a building. Some groups have even built their own buildings. A very practical place of meeting is a government school building. Keep in mind that it is not important where you meet. What is important is assembling the members of the church together in small or large groups for mutual edification and encouragement. But keep in mind that all the members in one area do not have to meet to-



gether at the same place and time on Sunday. This may not be practical because there is no building that will house all the members or it may be too far to walk for some members to come together into one place. What is important is that members meet with as many members as possible for mutual edification.

CONDUCTING ASSEMBLIES

A primary purpose for the assembly of Christians is explained in Hebrews 10:24,25.

And let us consider one another to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the habit of some, but exhorting one another

The assembly of Christians must be an occasion when each member can **stir up love** in the hearts of other members. In order to accomplish this, relationships must be built between members. Love grows when members begin to know one another in a personal manner. Your assemblies, therefore, must be conducted in a manner that will allow everyone to get to know one another.

During your assembly, the members must be **stirred up to do good works**. In order to do this, works must be identified. Each member must claim a work to be accomplished. And, each member must be accountable for accomplishing that work.

There will always be those who do not want to do any work (See Js 2:14-

26). These will forsake an assembly that requires members to claim good works that must be done. Regardless of how you conduct your assemblies, keep in mind that the directive of Hebrews 10:24,25 must be accomplished. Love must be generated and works must be identified and accomplished.

We worship God both in our hearts and in the behavior of our lives (Rm 12:1). Since God is the one we worship, we must worship Him according to His directions. There are few instructions in the New Testament concerning how the actual assembly of the church should be conducted. A general principle for conducting an assembly that is directed specifically for the worship of all members is stated in 1 Corinthians 14:40. *“Let all things be done decently and in order.”* This certainly means that the members do not come together for public entertainment to please their own desires. Neither does it allow members to emotionally lose control of themselves in the assembly.

When Christians come together to worship, they do not come together to please themselves or to carry on with their own inventions of worship. We must remember that worship is directed to God and it is He who instructs, *“The true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him”* (Jn 4:23). The religious world is filled with those who seek to worship according to their own desires. However, the Father is seeking those who will worship Him according to His instructions in His word.

Keep in mind that the Sunday assembly is for Christians. It is a time of celebration, a time to remember the Lord's death for our sins and resurrection for our hope. It is thus a time to take the opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper (At 20:7). It is an opportunity to speak to one another in songs (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). It is an opportunity for discussing the word of God (At 20:7). It is a time for contributions for special needs that the church has decided to accomplish as a group (1 Co 16:1,2). It is also a time when Christians can join together in group prayer (At 4:23-31). The Sunday assembly, therefore, should be a time of great fellowship and encouragement to all the members.

An important principle to remember concerning the assembly of Christians to worship God is that **the public assembly is an opportunity to praise God as a group**. One should not use the occasion to show pride or call attention to oneself. One should not use the occasion to exalt himself or herself before others. One should not worship according to his own likes or dislikes. Worship must be according to the will of the One who is worshiped. Worship of the church must be directed toward God and according to His desires, not the desires of any one member.

There are no directions in the New Testament concerning how an assembly of disciples is to be conducted. Since there are no specific directions, God expects us to use our imagination in order to determine what to do. We are thus free to make decisions concerning what we want to do

when we assemble. The following are some fundamental principles that will help you decide what to do in conducting an assembly of disciples:

A. Beginning the assembly:

One of the men of the group could begin the meeting with a series of songs. This will help the group to begin thinking about God and His love. It will also help focus the minds of all members on God and His work. Some churches begin their assemblies with a song or reading from the Bible. You can decide what to do for the group in your assembly. What is important is to call people's attention to praising God and edifying one another.

B. Continuing the assembly:

During the assembly, sing several songs that are directed toward the praise of God. Remember also that we are to speak to and teach one another in song (Ep 5:19; Cl 3:16). Sing songs that encourage one another to work for Jesus. If you do not have any written songs or songbooks, then write your own. You can use Bible scriptures and teachings to develop the lyrics for your songs. The Psalms of the Old Testament were originally written as songs of worship. The important thing to remember is that your songs must express scriptural truths.

C. Prayer in the assembly:

Pray at different times throughout the assembly. Different brothers should be allowed to pray. During prayer, the entire congregation can either sit, stand or bow to their knees in silence as they

are led by one person who leads the prayer. There is no Bible direction concerning the position we should maintain during prayer. You are free to determine what you want to do.

Prayer is directed to God, the Father. A good prayer would begin with a praise of God. Also, thank God in prayer for the things you have. Ask for the forgiveness of sins. Pray for His care and guidance of the church in evangelizing your community. Close the prayer in the name of Jesus, for it is because of Jesus' authority and work as our mediator that we have the privilege of approaching the Father through prayer (Jn 14:13; 1 Tm 2:5).

D. The celebration feast and Lord's Supper in the assembly:

The early Christians had a celebration meal during many of their assemblies. This was commonly referred to as the "love feast" (2 Pt 2:13; Jd 12). As in the establishment of the Lord's Supper by Jesus, during the feast they partook of the Lord's Supper (See 1 Co 11:23-25). Feasting together promotes love and fellowship among Christians. It is a good practice, therefore, to have as many fellowship love feasts as possible with Christians. Sunday is only one occasion when such feasts can occur.

When serving the Lord's Supper, serve to every Christian who is present. You can place the bread that you have prepared in a tray or dish and have someone distribute it to each member in order that he or she may take a small portion for eating. After you have distributed and eaten the bread, you

should then distribute the fruit of the vine in a cup or cups in order that all might drink a small portion.

MAKING THE BREAD

One can easily make the unleavened bread for the Lord's Supper. Simply use some flour and mix with a little oil. Add a little water and mix together. Bake in a pan or oven for about fifteen minutes. Bake enough for a sizeable portion for each member who partakes of the bread.

PREPARING THE CUP

Grape juice can be used for the fruit of the vine. Some churches boil raisins in order to extract the juice. When wine is available, churches usually mix it with water in order to be able to distribute it to serve more people. It is often mixed at a ratio of one cup of wine to four cups of water.

E. Teaching and reading in the assembly:

When Christians have assembled together, it is an opportunity for letting God speak to them through His word. Therefore, it is good to read the Bible to the assembly (1 Tm 4:13). The opportunity of the assembly is a time for teaching everyone who is present. It is a time to focus on God by allowing Him to speak to us through the reading of His word.

The order by which you conduct your assembly is not as important as your attitude during the assembly, especially during the time when you are partaking of the Lord's Supper. The Bible says, "*Whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an un-*

worthy manner, will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. **But let each man examine himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks not discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment to himself**" (1 Co 11:27-29).

F. Identify and encourage good works.

Hebrews 10:24,25 identifies two specific things that we must do during our assemblies with one another. We must encourage (1) love of one another and (2) we must encourage good works to be done. Christians must not forsake assembling for this purpose.

While you are together as the body, take time to talk with one another. Take time to inform one another about what has happened in the lives of each member. Identify needs that must be fulfilled and make a plan to accomplish those needs. Christianity is relationships and the assembly of Christians together builds those relationships.

SELF TEST

4. ____ When Christians meet together, what should be accomplished? (A) Edification to love and do good, (B) Worship, (C) Both A & B
5. ____ What is a general principle for the conduct of those who assemble? (A) All dress the same, (B) The assembly be conducted in a decent and orderly manner, (C) Both A & B
6. ____ What is the central purpose of the assembled church for worship? (A) Praise God, (B) Worship after our own desires, (C) Show ourselves before the church
7. ____ How can Christians instruct one another in the assembly? (A) Through singing, (B) Through teaching, (C) Both A & B
8. ____ What was the meeting of Christians

- for a common meal? (A) Love feast, (B) Lord's Supper, (C) Community breakfast
9. ____ What is the central purpose of the Sunday assembly? (A) To meet fellow Christians, (B) Teaching the word, (C) Partaking of the Lord's Supper
 10. ____ Christians are to meet specifically for stirring up love and good ... (A) ... thoughts, (B) ... singing, (C) ... works

YES - NO If there is no church of Christ in your area, are you willing to start a church in your house?

SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Prayer: Mt 6:5-15; Mk 11:24; Lk11:1-4; Jn 14:13; At 4:23-30; Ep 6:18; Ph 4:6; 1 Tm 2:8; Js 5:16, **Assemble to encourage:** At 11:22-24; 14:21,22; 15:3,41; 18:23; Rm 14:19; 15:2; 1 Co 14:3-26; Hb 3:13; 10:24,25

SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Contributing money or things to help others and to help evangelists preach the gospel to the lost is a Christian privilege. It is a way one can express his or her love of God and others. We must take every opportunity to do good (Gl 6:10). Therefore, as givers we must be ready at all times to give when occasions arise for which sacrificial giving must come from us. There are many examples of Christians giving to special needs in the New Testament.

- **1 Corinthians 16:1-4** is an example of Christians giving money to fulfill a special need. The Corinthians were helping poor Christians who were suffering from famine in the area of Judea.
- **2 Corinthians 8:1-4** is an example of churches working together in fellowship with one another in order to

give to others.

- **Philippians 4:10-18** is an example of Christians giving for the purpose of evangelism.
- **Acts 4:32-37** is an example of Christians giving to help those in the area of the local region of members.
- **Acts 6:1-7** is an example of Christians distributing what was given to help the widows of the church.

There are many things for which Christians can join together in order to accomplish. Christians can join together in order to support evangelists to go to unevangelized areas. They must take care of orphans and widows (Js 1:27). Christians can also join together as members to buy Bibles, pay the rent for a meeting hall or make payments for a church building. The important thing to remember is that **Christians must make sacrificial contributions, and they must make such contributions cheerfully** (2 Co 9:6,7). From the very beginning of the church that meets in your house, therefore, begin contributions that can be used to preach the gospel to the lost.

EVANGELISM

As a Christian you should desire that others join you in your freedom in Christ. You should thus teach what you know to others. However, when you teach and preach the word of God, Satan will fight against you. There will always be those who will persecute you. They will persecute you in order that you be discouraged about preaching the gospel to the lost. Regardless of

persecution, you must let others know about the great news that you have discovered.

Matthew 5:10-12

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you for My sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven, for in the same manner they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Regardless of persecution and mocking, you must evangelize your community. Jesus commanded that we preach the gospel to everyone (Mk 16:15). He taught that we go to all nations (Mt 28:19,20). This is exactly what the early Christians did. *“And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ”* (At 5:42). This is exactly what you must do. The early Christians went everywhere preaching the word of God (At 8:4). You must do the same.

An example of evangelistic outreach was the work of both the Philippian and Thessalonian churches. The Philippian church was only a few weeks old when it started sending support once and again to evangelists who preached in other areas (Ph 4:15-17). From the very beginning of their Christian life, the Thessalonian church likewise sent forth the word of God, not only in their region, but also in every

place (1 Th 1:5-10). The only qualification for preaching the gospel is knowing the gospel. Since you now know it, your knowledge makes you responsible to preach it to others. For this reason, **“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and teaching”** (2 Tm 4:2).

SELF TEST

- 11. ____ 1 Corinthians 16:1-4 is an example of churches giving to ... (A) ... a special need, (B) ... rent payments, (C) ... evangelists
- 12. ____ With what attitude must Christians contribute? (A) Grudgingly, (B) With reser-

- ations, (C) Cheerfully
- 13. ____ What must Christians do when they are persecuted? (A) Complain, (B) Argue, (C) Rejoice
- 14. ____ What church supported evangelists from its very beginning? (A) Corinth, (B) Rome, (C) Philippi
- 15. ____ What church is said to have evangelized their own region? (A) Laodicea, (B) Perga, (C) Thessalonica

YES - NO Are you actively giving to others in order to help?

SCRIPTURE READING: Lk 10:25-37; At 4:32-37; 6:1-7; Ph 4:10-18; 1 Th 1:2-10; 1 Jn 3:16-23
SCRIPTURE RESEARCH: Giving: Mt 19:21; At 20:32-35; Gl 2:10; 6:10; Ep 4:28; 2 Co 9

MAKING AN ETERNAL COMMITMENT TO GOD

Study 29

The word “commitment” frightens many people because they know that God expects of them more than they are giving. But commitment to God should not frighten you. It will not if you love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength (Mk 12:30). If you do love God, you must be committed to move into action for Jesus. When you realize what God has done for us through His grace, we should do as Paul. **“His grace toward me was not in vain, but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me”** (1 Co 15:10).

Remember the words of Jesus. **“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven”** (Mt 7:21). If you love Jesus you will take up your cross and follow Him (Lk 9:23).

God demands obedience. Jesus

became the author of eternal salvation **only for those who obey Him** (Hb 5:8,9). If we love Him, **we will keep His commandments** (Jn 14:15; 1 Jn 5:3). Heaven, therefore, is prepared for those who love God so much that they are moved into action to keep the commandments of Jesus.

You must surrender your life to Jesus. You must commit yourself to a total trust in God. God loves you and is not willing that you should perish (2 Pt 3:9). However, He is a just God. In other words, He will not bless those who curse Him by rebellious living. Jesus said, **“Whoever will confess Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever will deny Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven”** (Mt 10:32,33). Jesus is not the author of eternal salvation to those who deny Him by un-

godly living. He will give eternal rest only to those who work for Him.

If you have not obeyed the gospel, **find someone immediately to immerse you into Christ in order that you come into contact with the blood of Jesus.** After this, go out and tell others what you have done. Speak to them of the grace of God that was revealed on the cross and has given you freedom in Christ (Gl 5:1; Ti 2:11). Tell them how you responded to the grace of God by obedience to the gospel in baptism (1 Co 15:10). Encourage others to join with you in this new freedom in Christ. When you obey the gospel, you can tell others what Paul told us about his life. *“I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who*

live, but Christ lives in me ...” (Gl 2:20).

You must not allow opposition to stop you. Remember what Paul said to Timothy, **“Yes, and all who desire to live godly in Christ Jesus will suffer persecution”** (2 Tm 3:12). You will suffer persecution. However, be as the apostles when they were persecuted. Rejoice that you are *“counted worthy to suffer shame for His [Jesus] name”* (At 5:41). The Bible encourages, *“Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in this matter”* (1 Pt 4:16). Fight the good fight of the faith (1 Tm 6:12). You will be headed for eternal life in heaven. God is working for you in all things in order to bring about that which is good (Read Rm 8:31-39).

GOD’S LAST CALL

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light (Mt 11:28-30).

Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me. (Rv 3:20).

TEXT QUESTION ANSWERS

DIRECTIONS: After you complete a block of questions in the text, check the answers you gave with the correct answers below. After you check your answers to a block of questions, continue reading. **Complete the answers to each block of questions before proceeding.**

STUDY 1: 1. B, 2. B, 3. C, 4. B

STUDY 2: 1. B, 2. A, 3. C, 4. B

STUDY 3: 1. B, 2. B, 3. C, 4. A, 5. B, 6. B

STUDY 4: 1. B, 2. C, 3. B, 4. A, 5. A

STUDY 5: 1. C, 2. B, 3. A, 4. B, 5. A

STUDY 6: 1. A, 2. B, 3. B, 4. A

STUDY 7: 1. B, 2. C, 3. C, 4. B

STUDY 8: 1. C, 2. A, 3. B, 4. B, 5. B

STUDY 9: 1. C, 2. A, 3. C, 4. B

STUDY 10: 1. B, 2. B, 3. B, 4. A, 5. C, 6. C, 7. B, 8. A, 9. C,

10. B, 11. A, 12. C, 13. A, 14. A

STUDY 11: 1. B, 2. C, 3. A, 4. A, 5. C, 6. A, 7. C, 8. C

STUDY 12: 1. C, 2. B, 3. C, 4. C

STUDY 13: 1. B, 2. A, 3. C, 4. C, 5. A, 6. C

STUDY 14: 1. A, 2. A, 3. B, 4. C, 5. A, 6. A, 7. B

STUDY 15: 1. B, 2. C, 3. C, 4. B, 5. B

STUDY 16: 1. C, 2. C, 3. C, 4. B

STUDY 17: 1. B, 2. C, 3. C

STUDY 18: 1. B, 2. A, 3. C

STUDY 19: 1. B, 2. B, 3. A, 4. A

STUDY 20: 1. B, 2. C, 3. B

STUDY 21: 1. T, 2. T, 3. T, 4. T, 5. T, 6. T, 7. T, 8. T, 9. T, 10. T

STUDY 22: 1. C, 2. B, 3. A, 4. A, 5. C, 6. B, 7. C

STUDY 23: 1. B, 2. B, 3. C, 4. C, 5. B, 6. C, 7. A, 8. A

STUDY 24: 1. B, 2. B, 3. C, 4. A, 5. A, 6. B, 7. A, 8. B, 9. A

STUDY 25: 1. A, 2. B

STUDY 26: 1. B, 2. A, 3. C, 4. A, 5. C, 6. C, 7. A, 8. C, 9. C,

10. C, 11. B, 12. B, 13. A, 14. B, 15. C, 16. A

STUDY 27: 1. A, 2. B, 3. C

STUDY 28: 1. C, 2. B, 3. C, 4. C, 5. B, 6. A, 7. C, 8. A, 9. C,

10. C, 11. A, 12. C, 13. C, 14. C, 15. C

**A Message From The International Director
Of The
International Bible School**

Dear Fellow Student of the Bible,

You have completed an exciting study of the word of God. In speaking for all our teachers who are working with the world-wide outreach of the International Bible School, I want to personally thank you for your dedicated commitment to the study of the Bible. It is my prayer that this course has aided you in your quest to know the will of God. More importantly, I pray that this course has helped you to learn what is necessary in order to have eternal life with God.

We will probably never see one another in this life. However, if this course has made it possible for you to be with all of us in heaven, then all the efforts that the International Bible School family of fellow workers have made to bring it to you will be well worth their efforts. As you respond to what has been revealed in this course, please keep in mind that we seek to be with you for eternity in the presence of God.

Now that you have discovered the greatest news there is in this world, I want to encourage you to share it with others. If you join with us by being clothed with Jesus by immersion for remission of sins, you too will have a message of hope. Now that you have been found by Jesus, you have a mission. That mission is to find others for Jesus.

*Your fellow worker in Christ,
Roger E. Dickson
Cape Town, South Africa*

SCRIPTURE ABBREVIATIONS***OLD TESTAMENT***

Gn - Genesis
Ex - Exodus
Lv - Leviticus
Nm - Numbers
Dt - Deuteronomy
Ja - Joshua
Jg - Judges
Rt - Ruth
1 Sm - 1 Samuel
2 Sm - 2 Samuel
1 Kg - 1 Kings
2 Kg - 2 Kings
1 Ch - 1 Chronicles
2 Ch - 2 Chronicles
Er - Ezra
Ne - Nehemiah
Et - Esther
Jb - Job
Ps - Psalms
Pv - Proverbs
Ec - Ecclesiastes
Ss - Song of Solomon
Is - Isaiah
Jr - Jeremiah
Lm - Lamentations
Ez - Ezekiel
Dn - Daniel
Hs - Hosea
Jl - Joel
Am - Amos
Ob - Obadiah
Jh - Jonah
Mc - Micah
Nh - Nahum
Hk - Habakkuk
Zp - Zephaniah
Hg - Haggai
Zc - Zechariah
Ml - Malachi

NEW TESTAMENT

Mt - Matthew
Mk - Mark
Lk - Luke
Jn - John
At - Acts
Rm - Romans
1 Co - 1 Corinthians
2 Co - 2 Corinthians
Gl - Galatians
Ep - Ephesians
Ph - Philippians
Cl - Colossians
1 Th - 1 Thessalonians
2 Th - 2 Thessalonians
1 Tm - 1 Timothy
2 Tm - 2 Timothy
Ti - Titus
Pl - Philemon
Hb - Hebrews
Js - James
1 Pt - 1 Peter
2 Pt - 2 Peter
1 Jn - 1 John
2 Jn - 2 John
3 Jn - 3 John
Jd - Jude
Rv - Revelation