

SEEKERS

Bible Study Course

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Introduction

If you want to know what the Bible teaches, there is no substitute for personal Bible Study. First, read your Bible. Second, choose a Bible course that can help you to learn what it teaches in a systematic way. Even then, be sure that the lessons you study are based solely on the teaching of the Bible, that they are clear and understandable.

A few years ago while visiting in the Philippines I came across a Bible Course that had been taken from the Internet. The brethren there were using the course, and on going through the lessons I found them to be scriptural and easy to read. The course covered the essential things that one would need to know to become a Christian, a member of the Lord's church. It was brief — not stretched out over dozens of lessons. I therefore decided that we should add it to the other Bible courses we make available for use throughout the world.

Rather than to print it in separate sheets, we have put the 8-lesson course together and printed it in book form. The two pages of test questions for each of the lessons have been arranged so that you can study the lessons, answer the questions, and then tear out the test pages and send them for grading. This will leave the book itself intact for further study.

It is suggested that you study two lessons, answer the questions covering those 2 lessons, and send them for grading. After those pages have been returned to you, proceed with another two lessons, and continue until the entire course has been completed. Following this procedure, surely you will be greatly benefited by the study.

If you have questions or would like to take another course, please let us know. May God bless you as you proceed with your study and, at the same time, we would encourage you to invite your friends to take this course as well.

J. C. Choate
Church of Christ
New Delhi, India
June 20, 2005

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Bible Study Course

Lesson One

THE BIBLE

What is this book called the **Bible**? It is a collection of books written by 40 different men over a period of 1600 years (from about 1500 B.C. to 100 A.D.). These men did not write down their own wisdom or knowledge for others to learn. They were inspired by God to write the words they wrote.

"For prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:21).

Another verse tells us that:

"All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man

of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Timothy 3:16,17).

Although these words were written down by men, the author of the message is God. The Bible reveals the truths that mankind needs to know. Because of the importance of the Bible's contents, God gave us warnings to make sure that we do not change the meaning of His revelation to suit ourselves. Part of God's law which Moses delivered to Israel stated:

"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" (Deuteronomy 4:2).

It is important to know exactly what the Bible teaches; otherwise, we will not be able to know the will of God or be able to please Him. God will reward only those who have loved Him and done His will.

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord', shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21).

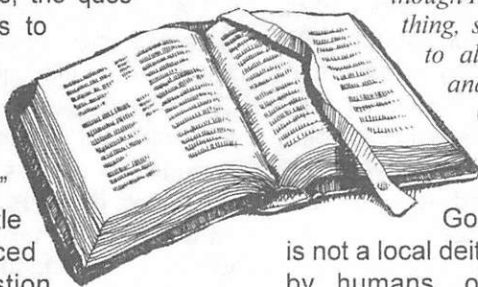
Which God?

In today's world there are many gods; the question comes to

mind, "Which god are you talking about?"

The apostle Paul faced this question

2000 years ago when he came to the city of Athens. The city was *"given over to idols"* (Acts 17:16). Paul was preaching about Jesus (who is the subject of lesson two in this series). But since this teaching was strange to their ears, the people asked Paul to explain further.



*"Men of Athens, I perceive that in all things you are very religious; for as I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD.** Therefore, the One who you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you; God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things"* (Acts 17:22-25).

The God of the Bible is not a local deity dreamed up by humans, or one "god" among many; He is *the* God of the universe, the One who made all that you see on the earth and in the heavens. In fact, the very first verse of the very first book of the Bible — Genesis — declares this truth.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

That same first chapter of Genesis reveals to us that God is plural. Not only do we read about the Spirit of God (Genesis 1:2), but we also read, "*Let us make man in Our image*" (Genesis 1:26). In fact, there are three who share the essence of Deity; **the Father, the Word** (Jesus in the New Testament), and **the Holy Spirit**. These three are one. "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is One!*" (Deuteronomy 6:4).

The Bible also tells us that God is not like man. We are flesh and blood outwardly (our spirit residing within), but "*God is Spirit*" (John 4:24).

Since we, **the creation**, are on a different level from God, **our Creator**, we may never fully understand His nature while we live in these physical bodies, but we can know His character and His will — because these things He has revealed to us in the Bible.

What is the Bible?

The Bible is divided into parts. The **OLD TESTAMENT** and the **NEW TESTAMENT**

are the two main divisions. There are **39** Old Testament books and **27** New Testament books, making a total of **66** in all.

The **Old Testament** books were written from about 1500 B.C. to 400 B.C. and are further divided into four main groups. The first group consists of **five books** written by Moses, called *the Law*. **Genesis**, the first of these, describes the creation of this world and provides a summary of important events during the first 2000 years of man's existence, including a world-wide flood, which destroyed all but eight people.

After the flood, man again rebelled against God; so He chose one man, **Abraham**, for a special purpose. His descendants (who came to be known as the nation of Israel) became God's special people. God gave His holy law to them through Moses, and they had the privilege of being the nation through whom Jesus would be born into this world.

Jesus is the One who came to pay the price for our

sins, so that we might have the opportunity to be forgiven of them.

As the book of Genesis closes, God's people are living in the land of Egypt. In **Exodus** we find that the Israelites have been made slaves; God sends Moses to free them. He then gives them His law and the way He wants them to worship (**Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy**).

The following **twelve** Old Testament books (**Joshua through Esther**) record the *history of the nation of Israel* during the next one thousand years. **Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Song of Solomon** are described as "wisdom" literature. They are poetic in nature, consisting of songs, drama, and proverbs. The final **seventeen** books are written by the prophets who lived and taught during that thousand-year period of history.

The **New Testament** focuses our attention on **Jesus**, who came to redeem us from our sins. His earthly life is the subject of the books, **Mat-**

thew, Mark, Luke, and John. These books contain the account of His virgin birth, His teachings, His death on the cross for our sins, His burial in a tomb, and His resurrection from the dead.

The book of **Acts** begins with the good news being preached to mankind — that Jesus has saved us from our sins. *Forgiveness is available!* Furthermore, God puts all of those who are saved into **the church**, a body of believers, over which **Jesus is the Head.**

Romans through Jude explain *the Christian system*, including how we are to *worship and serve God* until the Second Coming of Christ, when this world ends and all are judged according to their works.

The book of **Revelation** is prophetic; it assures us all that God cares for and rewards His faithful children, despite the trials that we face in this life.

All New Testament books were written between A.D. 40 and A.D. 100.

Lesson 1 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answers.

1. The Bible is a collection of _____ books written down by about _____ men from _____ B.C. to _____ A.D.
2. Holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the _____.
3. All Scripture is given by _____ of God.
4. Only by knowing what the Bible teaches can we _____ God.
5. There is only one God who made the _____ and every thing in it.
6. In the beginning God created the _____ and the _____.
7. The three who share the essence of Deity are the _____, _____ and the _____.
8. The Old Testament contains _____ books, the New Testament has _____.
9. The first five books are called the _____, and they were written by _____.
10. God chose a man named _____ for a special purpose. His descendants would be called the nation of _____. Through that nation _____ would be born into the world.
11. The twelve Old Testament books (Joshua through Esther) record the history of the nation of _____ for one thousand years.
12. The New Testament focuses our attention on _____, who came to _____ us from our _____.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ The writers of the Bible wrote down their own ideas rather than God's.
2. ____ God does not care if man changes His word to suit himself.
3. ____ Only the one who does the will of the Father pleases Him.
4. ____ It does not matter which god we worship or serve.
5. ____ The God of the universe does not need anything.
6. ____ God is Spirit, not flesh and blood.
7. ____ The Old Testament contains sections of history, poetry, and prophecy.
8. ____ The New Testament is about Jesus; all books were written between A.D. 40 and 100.
9. ____ Romans through Jude explain the Christian system.
10. ____ The New Testament book of history is called Revelation.
11. ____ God will reward only those who have loved Him and have done His will.
12. ____ It is important to know exactly what the Bible teaches to be able to serve God acceptably and please Him.

THE BIBLE

The **Bible** contains the mind of God, the state of man, the way of salvation, the doom of sinners, and the happiness of believers.

✿ Its doctrine is holy, its precepts are binding, its histories are true, and its decisions are immutable.

✿ Read it to be wise, believe it to be safe, and practice it to be holy.

✿ It contains light to direct you, food to support you, and comfort to cheer you.

✿ It is the traveler's map, the pilgrim's staff, the pilot's compass, the soldier's sword, and the Christian's charter.

✿ Here heaven is opened, and the gates of Hell disclosed. Christ Jesus is its grand subject, our good its design, and the glory of God its end.

✿ It should fill the memory, rule the heart, and guide the feet.

✿ Read it slowly, frequently, and prayerfully.

✿ It is a mine of wealth, health to the soul, and a river of pleasure.

✿ It is given to you here in this life, will be opened at the judgment, and is established forever.

✿ It involves the highest responsibility, promises reward for faithful labor, and condemns all who trifle with its sacred contents.

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Lesson Two

JESUS — THE DIVINE SON OF GOD

“And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name” (John 20:30,31).

In Genesis, the very first book of the Bible, we are told that God created the first man (Adam) and the first woman (Eve) in His own image and put them into a perfect world, the garden of Eden. God gave them a commandment to keep, but they broke it. Breaking God's law is called sin. We are like Adam and Eve in that we also have sinned. *“The wages*

of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). This death is not just the physical death we die (the separation of the spirit from the body); this death involves **eternal separation from God.** In 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 we learn that the Lord Jesus shall be:

“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.”

To avoid eternal punishment we must come to **know God** and learn **how to obey**

the gospel. The Bible reveals God to us and tells us how to be saved. God's plan for redeeming man from his sins is seen first in the garden of Eden. At the very moment God was pronouncing the penalty for man's sin, He also promised to redeem him (Genesis 3:15).

Later, when God chose Abraham and his descendants for His own special people, He promised *"in your seed shall all the nations of the world be blessed"* (Genesis 26:4 and 28:14). This seed who would bless all nations is Jesus (Galatians 3:16). Jesus is the one who (according to the Old Testament) would come into the world through the descendants of Abraham (the nation of Israel); Jesus is also the subject of the New Testament.

Jesus is Unique

Jesus was born about 2000 years ago. He is the only person who ever lived who was

both thoroughly human and divine at the same time. This may seem hard to understand, but the Scriptures explain it.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Physically, Jesus was descended from Abraham. But He is also part of the Godhead. God (the Word) became a human being, one of us.

"For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Colossians 2:9).

Jesus had one human and one divine parent. An angel spoke to the young woman who would become His mother, and said:

"And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall



call His name Jesus" (Luke 1:31).

"Then Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I do not know a man? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you, therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:34, 35).

Jesus, however, was not half human and half divine. Sometimes He called Himself *"the Son of Man"*, referring to His humanity, and sometimes He called Himself *"the Son of God"*, referring to His Deity. The phrase "son of" in the Bible means to fully possess the characteristics of one's parent. Thus, He was at one and the same time fully human and fully divine. What humility He showed to live on earth as a human being!

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a servant, and

coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross" (Philippians 2:5-8).

Jesus is Eternal

On one occasion Jesus told the Jews, *"Before Abraham was, I AM"* (John 8:58). Although Abraham had lived on earth 2000 years before Jesus' birth as a human, Jesus' actual existence went far beyond that. His choice of the words, *"I AM"*, shows that He is eternal. Jesus was sent to earth by the Father (John 5:23). He came from heaven (John 6:38), and He returned there (John 13:3). Jesus made it clear that He was equal with God (John 5:17, 18); therefore, the Jews desired to kill Him.

Jesus the Savior

The name Jesus means "Savior". His mother Mary was instructed to give Him the name "Jesus" (Luke 1:31). Why? According to Matthew 1:21:

“for He shall save His people from their sins.”

For this one purpose He left heaven and came to earth. But since He appeared to be, visually, just like any other man, Jesus had to demonstrate that He was the Son of God who could save people from their sins. He proved His identity by the miracles, signs, and wonders that He did (reread the passage at the beginning of this lesson).

Jesus healed a man who had been **unable to walk** for 38 years (John 5:5-9). He **fed** 5,000 people with five barley loaves and two small fish (John 6:9-14). He was able to **cause a man to see** who had been born blind (John 9:1-7). He **raised** Lazarus from the dead (John 11:38-44)! And these are just a few miracles that He worked. The results of these wonders are recorded in several passages of Scripture.

“Many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did (John 2:23).

“Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed

on those who were diseased” (John 6:2).

“Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him” (John 3:2).

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, many of the Jews believed in Him, but the chief priests were jealous and determined to put Jesus to death (John 12:9-11), which they eventually did. From the beginning of the world it was God's plan to allow Jesus to die on a cross as *the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world*. He was qualified to take our place because He was **sinless**. But God raised Him from the dead. These facts were preached in the first gospel sermon which the apostle Peter proclaimed on the day of Pentecost.

“Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know — Him, being delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God,

you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death" (Acts 2:22,23).

"This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses" (Acts 2:32).

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you have crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

Jesus allowed sinful human beings to crucify Him, for through this means His innocent blood was shed for our sins. How we may have forgiveness of our sins will be the subject of the next two lessons.

Lesson 2 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answers.

1. The first man was _____, the first woman was _____. God placed them in the garden of _____.
2. Breaking God's law is _____, but there is a solution to this problem.
3. We must come to _____ God and learn how to _____ the gospel.
4. The phrase, "Son of God", refers to Jesus' _____; the phrase, "Son of man", refers to His _____.
5. The name "*Jesus*" means "_____".
6. Jesus proved that He is the Son of God by the _____ and _____ that He did.
7. Jesus raised a man named _____ from the dead.
8. The chief priests wanted to put Jesus to death because they were _____ of the people following Him.
9. God raised up Jesus from the _____. He is now both _____ and _____.
10. The innocent _____ of Jesus was shed for our _____.
11. To avoid eternal punishment we must come to _____ God and learn how to _____ the gospel.

12. God's plan for _____ man from his sins is seen first in the garden of _____.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ The penalty for sin is death, eternal separation from God.
2. ____ Jesus is the subject of the New Testament.
3. ____ Jesus is not eternal.
4. ____ Jesus was half God and half man.
5. ____ Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary.
6. ____ Jesus was equal to the Father.
7. ____ Jesus once fed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fish.
8. ____ Jesus never sinned.
9. ____ When Jesus was crucified, it was part of God's plan to redeem mankind from his sins.
10. ____ Man could still have salvation even if Jesus had not died on the cross.
11. ____ The miracles performed by Christ proved that He was the divine Son of God.
12. ____ On one occasion Jesus told the Jews, "*Before Abraham was, I AM*".

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Lesson Three

THE PROBLEM OF SIN

Have you ever chosen to do something you knew was wrong to do? The Bible calls those wrong actions *sin*. In a general sense, sin means that when God gives us a law (or commandment), and we refuse to do it, this makes us without law, or lawless.

"Whoever commits sin also commits lawlessness, and sin is lawlessness" (1 John 3:4).

In other words, the Bible teaches that certain things are wrong, such as stealing. Thieves are counted among the unrighteous (1 Corinthians 6:9,10), who shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven. Paul says plainly: "Let him who stole steal no longer..." (Ephesians 4:28). Stealing is wrong;

if we steal, we have broken God's law — we have sinned.

Rejecting truth is also sin, since the Bible is Truth. One book of the New Testament which discussed the subject of sin is Romans. It is not as though man has never known truth; he has turned away from it and rejected it (Romans 1:18-20). The next few verses show how mankind has treated God and His Word.

"Because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made

like corruptible man and birds and four-footed beasts and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen” (Romans 1:21-25).

God wants all men to know the Truth. That is the reason He gave us the Bible. But if we reject it, He will let us become fools. He will allow us to be blinded by error (things that are not true) and even to be lost eternally (2 Corinthians 4:3,4). He will allow us to be deceived by false teachings. Many have already perished *“because they did not receive the love of the truth”* (2 Thessalonians 2:10).

Do you love the Truth, above all else?

All Have Sinned

When God chose Abraham and his descendants to be His own special people, there came to be two classes

of people in the world: **Abraham's children** (who were later called **Jews**) and **Gentiles** (people from every other nation in the entire world). In the book of Romans, the apostle Paul shows that both Jews and Gentiles were guilty of sin. The Gentiles rejected Truth and became worshippers of idols; the Jews were given God's holy law, but they did not keep it. Everyone (Jew and Gentile) has committed sin.

“As it is written: There is none righteous, no not one” (Romans 3:10). *“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

Have you committed sin? Of course you have. The above Scriptures make it plain that each of us chooses to sin.

But you may wonder, “What kinds of sins are there?” Actually, there are many kinds of sins. A list of a few of them may be found in Romans 1:29-32; 1 Corinthians 5:11 and 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21; Ephesians 4:26-32; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; and Revelation 21:8. Below are some categories of sins.

There are **sins of the flesh**. These refer to unlawful

ways of satisfying fleshly desires. Included are sexual immorality (having a sexual relationship with someone not your wife or husband), adultery, homosexuality, unscriptural divorce and remarriage, drunkenness, revelings, etc. God wants His people to be holy and pure.

"But as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:15,16).

"Beloved, I beg you as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul" (1 Peter 2:11).

There are **sins of attitude**, such as pride, envy, jealousy, covetousness, anger, hatred, malice, being unthankful or unforgiving, etc. Some of these are expressed by the tongue, which we are warned to control.

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting

holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Not only must we NOT do the things that are wrong; **we must also do the things that are right and good.**

"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin" (James 4:17).

The Wages of Sin

When we choose to sin, what happens? We lose our fellowship with God. Adam and Eve, in the very beginning of man's existence, lost that special relationship with God when they sinned (Genesis 3). The Old Testament prophet, Isaiah, told Israel how serious their sins were.

"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, nor His ear heavy, that it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God, and your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear" (Isaiah 59:1,2).



Since God is holy, He cannot approve of or fellowship sin. In fact, He must punish sin. *"The wages of sin is death"* (Romans 6:23).

What will happen to us if we are guilty of sin when we die? We will be lost. There is a day coming when the Lord Jesus shall be

"...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..." (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

Every one of us has sinned. All of us have lost our fellowship with God. We all deserve death, spiritual death — eternal separation from God and all His good blessings. We have earned this punishment because of our sins. We certainly do not want to suffer forever, but we deserve it.

But God, the very Holy One we have offended, does not want us to be cast out of His presence forever. Since

He is holy and just, however, He must punish sin. He decided that there was a way to save us from our sins. He let Jesus take our place and bear our punishment.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed.... He poured out His soul unto death, and He was numbered with the transgressors, and He bore the sins of many..." (Isaiah 53:5,12).

"Transgressions" and "iniquities" are synonyms with "sins".

Yes, *"the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord"* (Romans 6:23). Since Jesus is part of the Godhead, we can understand what Paul meant in Romans 3:26 when he said that God is both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. Read 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 again. Do you know God? Have you obeyed the gospel? If not, you are still lost in your sins. The next lesson will tell you how you can be saved through Jesus.

Lesson 3 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. Refusing to do a commandment of God is _____.
2. Men exchanged the truth of God for the _____.
3. In order to be saved one must receive the love of the _____.
4. The two classes of people in the world are _____ and _____.
5. Adultery, homosexuality, and drunkenness are sins of the _____.
6. Pride, jealousy, and hatred are sins of _____.
7. To him who knows to do _____ and does not do it, to him it is sin.
8. The wages of sin is _____, the gift of God is _____.
9. When Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, He will take vengeance on those who do not _____ God and on those who do not obey the _____.
10. God let _____ bear the punishment for our sins.
11. God is _____ to require a penalty for sin, but He is also our _____ in providing a way for us to be saved from our sins.

12. Since Jesus is part of the _____, we can understand what Paul meant in Romans 3:26 when he said that God is both _____ and the justifier of the one who has _____ in Jesus.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ Stealing is a sin.
2. ____ The rejection of Truth is sin.
3. ____ God allows people to be blinded by error and lost eternally.
4. ____ Many, but not all, men are guilty of sin.
5. ____ Committing sin does not affect our fellowship with God.
6. ____ Since God is holy, He can not approve of or fellowship sin.
7. ____ Everyone deserves to suffer forever.
8. ____ God wants everyone to suffer forever.
9. ____ God does not have to punish sin.
10. ____ The Gentiles rejected Truth and became idol worshippers.

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Lesson Four

SALVATION FROM SIN

We have all sinned (Romans 3:23), and we are all worthy of death (Romans 6:23). *"But the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord."* God certainly is full of grace to offer salvation to every person in every nation. *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men"* (Titus 2:11). God shows the depth of His love by even giving us the opportunity to be saved, since we have been rebellious and sinful. *"But God demonstrates His love for us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us"* (Romans 5:8).

How does God save us from our sins? He saved us by letting Jesus pay our penal-

ty for sin. Since we all are guilty of sin, we could not take each other's places. Only someone without sin could suffer our punishment. Jesus *"committed no sin nor was guile found in His mouth"* (1 Peter 2:22). Therefore, He was qualified to take our place.

The price God required to save us was the blood of an innocent sacrifice. *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission"* (Hebrews 9:22). (Remission means *"the forgiveness"* of sins.) Though He was not guilty of committing any sins, Jesus was nailed to a wooden cross by wicked and sinful men. He suffered great pain for hours. After He died, a soldier pierced His

side with a spear; blood and water came out (John 19:34). This blood was offered for our sins (Hebrews 9:12). With this blood Jesus washes our sins away (Revelation 1:5). Nothing can make us clean or remove our sins except the blood of Jesus.

If our sins are not cleansed by the blood of Jesus, we will be punished by being separated from God and all His goodness, forever (2 Thessalonians 1:9).

Jesus was separated from the Father on the cross as He tasted spiritual death for every man (Hebrews 2:9). The pain of that separation was so awful that it caused Him to cry out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

How much more love could Jesus show than to be punished for our sins and then take His blood and wash them all away? But the question remains, "How do you get your sins removed and receive eternal life?"

Man's Part in Salvation

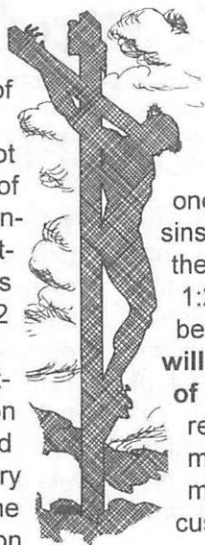
Although salvation comes by the grace of God and is available to all, there is a response man must make; otherwise all men would be saved no matter what they did, no matter what their attitudes were.

Jesus died for everyone's sins — for all the sins of every individual in the whole world (1 John 1:2), but not all people will be saved because **many will not accept the terms of God's gift**. In order to receive salvation, we must meet God's requirements, which are discussed below.

First of all, we must believe and know that God exists.

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

We must also believe that Jesus is His Son, whom



He sent to save us from our sins.

"Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (John 8:24). [Lesson #2 dealt with the identity of Jesus.]

The second step is to repent of our sins. Jesus made it clear that unless we repent, we shall all likewise perish (Luke 13:3). What does the word "repent" mean? There are several parts to the definition of this word. To begin with, we must understand what sin is [see Lesson #3]. Next, we must recognize what sin does to us: *it separates us from the fellowship of God and condemns us to eternal punishment.* Sin also caused the innocent Jesus to be crucified; He had to shed His blood for our sins.

Thinking about these truths should cause us to feel sorrow for what we have done. That feeling of sorrow is not repentance, but it can bring about repentance.

"For godly sorrow produces repentance to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of

the world produces death" (2 Corinthians 7:10).

Genuine sorrow over our sins will cause us to change our way of thinking and our actions, also. John, who prepared the way for Jesus, told the people to "bear fruits worthy of repentance" (Luke 3:8). In other words, there must be a change in the way we live.

"Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31).

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present age" (Titus 2:11,12).

If we are ready to change the way we live (doing God's will instead of our own), then we should be ready to con-

fess before men that Jesus is the Son of God (Matthew 10:32,33; Acts 8:37; 1 Timothy 6:12). Faith and confession of Jesus are combined in the passage cited below.

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved, for with the heart man believes to righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made to salvation" (Romans 10:9,10).

The last step in having one's sins removed is to be baptized for their forgiveness. Faith and baptism are combined in Mark 16:16, in which Jesus said,

"He that believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

Notice that salvation occurs after a person both believes and is baptized. It is not a matter of doing one or the

other; both are necessary before sins can be washed away.

The New Testament book of Acts contains several accounts of people being saved from their sins as the gospel spread into the entire world. The very first gospel sermon was preached on the day of Pentecost after Jesus had ascended into heaven (Acts 1:9-11) and after the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles (Acts 2:1-4).

Peter's sermon convinced many that they had crucified Jesus (the Son of God), and then they cried out, asking what they should do to be forgiven (Acts 2:36,37).

"Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38).

"Then those who gladly received his word were bap-

*For as many of you
as were baptized into Christ
have put on Christ.
Galatians 3:27*



tized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them” (Acts 2:41).

These people had become convinced through Peter’s preaching that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Since they believed that fact, they wanted to know what else they should do. Peter told them to repent and be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins.

The solution to the problem of sin is the same today. Anyone who wants to be saved must *repent and be baptized* in order for his sins to be forgiven.

It is not *the water* that cleanses us. Jesus washes away our sins **in His own blood** (Revelation 1:5). He washes them away when we are baptized (Acts 22:16).

Why does He wait until then to do it? Lesson #5 will show the answer to that question more clearly. But part of the reason is that He has given us a commandment; will you willingly obey it?

“There is also an anti-type which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the

filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ” (1 Peter 3:21).

Have you been baptized Scripturally?

Please notice that we are not asking if you have been **sprinkled** as a baby. Many people had been sprinkled with water when they were still babies, but **sprinkling does not** constitute Scriptural baptism. Sprinkling as a substitute for baptism started only in the third century and is based only on human tradition (Matthew 15:9). The first person who received sprinkling as a substitute for immersion was **Novatian** in the year 250 A.D.

What we are asking is this: Did you receive the kind of baptism that **was commanded by Christ**? Did you receive the **right kind** of baptism that we can read about in the New Testament (Romans 6:3,4)?

Secondly, have you been baptized for the **right reason**? Many, in some denominations, have been immersed in water, but they were immersed for the **wrong purpose**. Some say that "baptism is just an outward sign of an inward grace." Those who espouse this doctrine claim that they were baptized because they were already saved. Such teaching contradicts the plain and simple statements of Jesus Christ and His apostles (Mark 16:15; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:27). The traditions of men make our worship and even our obedience to God a useless thing that He will not accept.

If you want to do what is right and be baptized scripturally, we would be glad to assist you in whatever way we can. You may write to our address or call us. See the copyright page for this information.

Lesson 4 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. Jesus committed no _____.
2. Jesus shed His _____ for our sins; without it there is no _____.
3. When a soldier pierced His side, _____ and _____ came forth.
4. Jesus tasted spiritual _____ for every man.
5. In order to be saved we must believe that God is and that Jesus is His _____. Unless we believe, we shall _____ in our _____.
6. Sin separates us from the _____ of God and condemns us to _____ punishment.
7. God commands all men everywhere to _____. If we do not, we shall all likewise _____.
8. Repentance means denying _____ and worldly _____ (Titus 2:11,12).
9. Peter told people on the day of _____ to _____ and be _____ for the _____ of their _____.
10. The _____ of Christ washes away our sins _____ we are baptized.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ There are some nations to which God will not give grace.
2. ____ Jesus paid the penalty for our sins.
3. ____ Jesus washes our sins away with His blood.
4. ____ Jesus was separated from the Father on the cross.
5. ____ All men will be saved no matter what they do.
6. ____ Repentance means feeling sorry for our sins, but we do not need to change the way we live.
7. ____ Confessing that Jesus is the Son of God precedes salvation.
8. ____ Baptism has nothing to do with salvation.
9. ____ Salvation occurs after one has believed and been baptized.

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Lesson Five

WATER BAPTISM

Although none of us deserves salvation, God wants all of us to be saved (2 Peter 3:9). None of us could ever do enough good deeds to earn salvation, but in order to have our sins forgiven, we must meet the conditions God has set forth.

These include **faith** in Him, **repenting** of our sins, **confessing** that Jesus is the Son of God, and **being buried with Christ in baptism**. At that moment the blood of Jesus washes away our sins.

Most religious groups will agree with all of the other conditions (faith, repentance, confession), but *many will deny that baptism has anything to do with salvation*. This lesson

will demonstrate that baptism is essential to salvation, and why.

By now it is clear that salvation is a process that begins with hearing the Word of God, which produces faith. But *at what point is a person cleansed from his sins?* Some teach that God saves a person *the moment he believes*; others think salvation comes at the point of repentance or confessing the Deity of Jesus. What people (even good and sincere people) think and say *does not matter*. What does **the Bible** teach?

As we saw in Lesson #4, Peter taught the people to be baptized for the forgiveness of their sins. It is in the act of bap-

tism that the process of salvation is completed (initially).

Consider the man called Saul (who later became the apostle Paul) who persecuted the church. Having persecuted Christians in Jerusalem, he was on his way to Damascus to stir up trouble there, also. On the way he was struck blind, and Jesus talked to him from heaven. Paul now knew that the Jesus he had been persecuting was the Son of God (Acts 9:4-6).

But was he saved yet?

Saul was so repentant that he neither ate nor drank for three days (Acts 9:9). He spent the time continually *praying* (Acts 9:11). **Did any of these things save him from his sins?** No. He still had his sins when Ananias came to him. If anyone could be saved by fasting and prayer and being sorry for what he had done, Saul would have been.

But Ananias spoke to him with these words: "*And now why are you waiting? Arise and be baptized, and wash*



away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16).

Saul’s sins could be washed away only when he was baptized, thus completing the salvation process.

Jesus likened this process to physical birth. When a baby is conceived in the mother’s womb, the child needs time to grow, develop, and be able to survive once it is born. After the child is born, he is taught the important matters of life.

When the Word of God (called “the seed” in Luke 8:11) is planted within one’s heart, it takes time for him to understand it and decide to obey it. When one is *baptized*, he is **born again** (a spiritual birth). Jesus taught these truths to a man called Nicodemus. Jesus told him, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God*” (John 3:5).

Baptism is the last step in the “new birth” process. The jailer in Philippi was taught the Word of God some time after midnight (Acts 16:25). When he asked what to do to be

saved, Saul (who was now the apostle Paul) answered him:

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. And immediately he and all his family were baptized. Now when he had brought them into his house, he set food before them; and he rejoiced, having believed in God with all his household” (Acts 16:31-34).

Notice that hearing the Word of God was so important that the jailer awakened his family to hear what Paul had to say. The message Paul preached to these people must have *included baptism*. Furthermore, they must have regarded baptism as *essential to salvation*, or **they would not have been baptized at such an unusual hour**. Notice that they all rejoiced after they were baptized, “*having believed in God.*”

Next we want to consider the Ethiopian eunuch.

“Then Philip opened his

mouth, and beginning at this same Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:35,36).

Notice that if Jesus is preached properly, *baptism is taught*. There is no other reason why anyone would want to be baptized when Jesus is preached — unless to “preach Christ” means to tell someone *how* to have his sins forgiven, **which includes baptism for the forgiveness of sins**.

Let the Bible explain this further. We know that those who do not obey the gospel will be lost (2 Thessalonians 1:8). But what does it mean to “obey the gospel”? If the gospel is *the death of Christ on the cross for our sins, His burial, and His resurrection* (1 Corinthians 15:1-4), how can we **obey** that? We obey a “*form*” of that doctrine or teaching (Romans 6:17,18). We **die to sin**; we are **buried with Jesus in baptism** into His death; and we **arise** to walk in “*newness of life*” (Romans 6:3-7). This is how a person “*obeys*

the gospel” in baptism.

Many religious groups substitute “sprinkling” for baptism, but a **burial requires that a person be completely covered**. Remember the Ethiopian eunuch who wanted to be baptized? Here is the way it was done:

“So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more, and he went on his way rejoicing” (Acts 8:38,39).

Baptism, then, is only for those who have **believed in Christ, have repented of their sins, and confessed the name of Jesus as the Son of God**. It is by **immersion** (*being completely covered by the water*) and **for the forgiveness of sins**. It is the picture of Jesus’ burial and resurrection, the final step in being born again. Anyone who has not yet been baptized for the forgiveness of sins needs to give serious thought to this part of the salvation process.

Lesson 5 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. Baptism is a _____.
2. Peter taught people to be baptized _____ the forgiveness of sins.
3. When Saul (Paul) was baptized, his _____ were washed away.
4. The Word of God is the _____ planted in human hearts.
5. The Ethiopian eunuch, after hearing Jesus preached to him, asked, "*What hinders me from being _____?*"
6. The gospel (in its narrowest definition) is the death of Jesus for our _____, His _____, and His _____.
7. Repentance (dying to sin) and baptism are that _____ of doctrine (Romans 6:17,18).
8. After being baptized, we are raised to walk in _____ of life.
9. Both Philip and the eunuch went "*down into*" and "*up out of*" the _____.
10. Baptism is the _____ of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ The blood of Jesus washes away sins at the moment we are baptized.
2. ____ Baptism is not essential to salvation.
3. ____ Saul (Paul) was saved on the road to Damascus.
4. ____ Saul (Paul) was saved because of his prayer and repentance.
5. ____ The final step in the “new birth” process is baptism.
6. ____ The Philippian jailer and his family rejoiced in their salvation after they were baptized.
7. ____ The person who does not obey the gospel will be lost.
8. ____ Sprinkling is the same thing as baptism.
9. ____ In Bible baptism a person is completely covered by water.

See Page 26 for these answers:

10. ____ The first person to receive sprinkling as a substitute for immersion was Novatian in 250 A.D.
11. ____ “Sprinkling” and “pouring” as baptism are based only on human traditions.
12. ____ Traditions can make our worship to God useless.

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Lesson Six

THE CHURCH

When a person is baptized for the forgiveness of his sins, he is washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus (1 Corinthians 6: 11). Every sin that a person has ever committed is washed away by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5). He also has become a child of God because of his faith and obedience to the gospel.

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:26,27).

A Christian is a "new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Remember, the Christian died to sin (old things have

passed away); the sinful man has been put to death and has been born again (John 3:1-7).

"Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life" (Romans 6:4).

The question most frequently asked at this point is, "But what happens if I sin now? Must I be baptized again?" The answer is that a person must **repent** of any sin which he commits and **confess it to God** Who is "faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We do have the important responsibility to make sure that we

are trying our best to obey God in all things.

"But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).

In other words, once we come in contact with the blood of Jesus (in baptism), His blood continues to cleanse as we make every effort to please God — to walk according to His truths in loving obedience.

Another blessing is that at the time of baptism, the Lord adds the saved person to the church (Acts 2:47).

What is the church? It is NOT a man-made organization. The Bible portrays it as

the body of Christ. Jesus died to pay the purchase price of this body of redeemed people; He "purchased it with His own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is so precious to Him that He nourishes it and cherishes it (Ephesians 5:29).

The book of Ephesians discusses the church and its relationship to Jesus. Paul writes that God "put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, which is His body..." (Ephesians 1:22,23). He also writes that Jesus is "the head of the church" and "the Savior of the body" (Ephesians 5:23). Paul then mentions several other things about Christ and the church:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it, that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, that He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having any spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians 5:25-27).



It is easy to see that Jesus

not only loved us enough to die on the cross for our sins; but He also wants us to grow and mature as Christians. It is, likewise, easy to see how many churches there are: there is **one head and one body** (church). Paul states that very truth in Ephesians 4:4. *“There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling.”* This description makes perfect sense; after all, as human beings, each of us has one head and one body.

Jesus is head over the entire church. In the New Testament the word *“church”* is used in two senses: it is used in the sense of the entire body of believers (as we saw it in the book of Ephesians); and it also refers (most of the time) to a local congregation of God’s people, such as *“the church of the Thessalonians”* (1 Thessalonians 1:1). All individual congregations of God’s people make up the church as a whole, but each congregation is Christ’s church in one particular geographical area.

How many different kinds of churches are there? The

Bible speaks of *only one*. Remember, Ephesians 4:4 says that there is *“one body”*. In any area today, however, one will find a number of churches — all with different names. These religious groups did not come from the Bible. Some man (or group of men) started them. The Lord is head over *just one body*. Paul wrote:

“For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free — and have all been made to drink into one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).

When we were baptized for the remission of our sins and the Lord added us to the church, we probably brought with us many ideas and practices that are false. We must learn the truths that are taught in the Bible, and our goal must be to *“be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Corinthians 1:10).

When Christians began to divide themselves into separate groups in Corinth, Paul accused them of being carnal (fleshly) rather than spiritual.

"For when one says, I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal?"
(1 Corinthians 3:4).

Those who are saved by the blood of Christ are all in one body — His body. Unity is what Jesus prayed for (John 17:20,21), and it is what all true believers want. We have not been placed in separate spiritual bodies that hold conflicting views; there is *one* body, one church. Even Jews and Gentiles (who hated one another) are now members of one body. Consider the following text:

"Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh — who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands — that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

"But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been made near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of division between

us" (Ephesians 2:11-14).

Now all people everywhere (rich or poor, black or white, male or female) can be united in the church (Galatians 3:27,28). Paul goes on to say that the church was a mystery which was hidden in ages past but now is made known to all (Ephesians 3:1-7).

What a privilege to be part of the church of Christ, a spiritual kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world (Ephesians 1:4)!

"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called the children of God!" (1 John 3:1).

We have several responsibilities in return.

First of all, having been cleansed of sins, we must do everything we can to keep ourselves pure (1 John 3:3). Second, having been born again, we must grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2). During that process we will learn that the whole body (the church) is

"joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share..." (Ephesians 4:16).

If you have already obeyed the gospel, you are blessed indeed to be part of the church. In the last two lessons, we will discuss worship and the Christian walk.

Lesson 6 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. The Christian confesses his sins to _____.
2. We come in contact with the blood of Christ in _____.
3. The church is the _____ of Christ.
4. Jesus nourishes and cherishes the _____.
5. The word "church" sometimes refers to the _____ body of believers, and sometimes it refers to the _____ congregation.
6. "For by one _____ we were all baptized into one _____."
7. Christians should be "*perfectly joined together in the _____ mind and in the _____ judgment.*"
8. When Christians are divided, it is a sign that they are _____.
9. As Gentiles we were without _____; we had no _____.
10. We must keep ourselves _____, grow _____, and be sure that in the church we are a part that does its _____.

11. The church was prepared from the _____ of the world.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ There are some sins that the blood of Jesus cannot cleanse.
2. ____ Through baptism we put on Christ.
3. ____ When a Christian sins, he must be baptized again.
4. ____ The Lord adds a saved person to a man-made denomination.
5. ____ The church has one head and several bodies.
6. ____ There is only one church, with Jesus being its one head.
7. ____ Jesus has broken down the middle wall of division between us and made both Jew and Gentile one.
8. ____ All men and women of all races can be one in the church.
9. ____ Being a Christian is a great privilege involving great responsibilities.

ORIGIN OF SOME DENOMINATIONS

| <u>Name</u> | <u>Founder</u> | <u>Place</u> | <u>Date</u> |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Roman Catholic | Constantine | Rome | 4th Cent. |
| Lutheran Church | Martin Luther | Augsburg, Germany | 1530 |
| Presbyterian Church | John Calvin | Switzerland | 1535 |
| Anglican Church | King Henry VIII | England | 1535 |
| Baptist Church | John Smyth | London, England | 1607 |
| Methodist Church | John Wesley | London, England | 1729 |
| Evangelical Church | Jacob Albright | Pennsylvania, U.S.A. | 1803 |
| Mormon Church | Jacob Smith, Jr. | New York, U.S.A. | 1830 |
| 41 Seventh Day Adventist | Wm. Miller & Ellen G. White | Massachusetts, U.S.A. | 1831 |
| New Apostolic Church | Pruess | Hamburg, Germany | 1862 |
| Jehovah's Witnesses | Charles Russell | Pennsylvania, U.S.A. | 1874 |
| Pentecostal Holiness | Group | South Carolina, U.S.A. | 1898 |
| Aglipayan Church | Gregorio Aglipay | Philippines | 1902 |
| Iglesia Ni Cristo 1914 | Felix Manalo | Manila, Philippines | 1914 |
| Assembly of God | Group | Arkansas, U.S.A. | 1914 |
| United Church of Christ in the Philippines | Sobrena | Philippines | 1948 |

Jesus said: *"Every plant which my heavenly Father planted not, shall be rooted up"* (Matthew 15:13).
 The Psalmist wrote: *"Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it..."* (Psalm 127:1).

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Lesson Seven

TRUE WORSHIP

A Christian enjoys a special relationship with God. Having been added to the body of Christ at baptism, each member becomes part of a large family — the church.

Everyone who has obeyed the gospel is part of that spiritual family for which Christ died. As individuals, each of us can worship God when we are alone, all by ourselves. We can also worship Him together as a family at home. We are free to sing praises and offer up prayers to Him any time of the day, any day of the week. It is not necessary to go to God through a priest or other designated and ordained person. We can freely worship any time, any place.

But God has set aside the first day of the week (Sunday) as the time for the church to meet. In fact, it was the first day of the week when 3,000 souls were baptized for the forgiveness of their sins (Acts 2:38-41) and were added to the church (Acts 2:47).

From that day nearly two thousand years ago until now, Christians have met upon the first day of the week to worship God: to remember Jesus' death on the cross for our sins, to study God's word, to pray, to give part of our money or goods back to God, and to sing. We will discuss each of these after a look at the nature of true worship. Consider carefully the Scriptures quoted below.

The Nature of True Worship

"Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord" (Joshua 24:14).

"Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you" (1 Samuel 12:24).

"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:23,24).

"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 (Colossians 3:17).

The first three Bible passages quoted above are all very similar to each other. All three used the word *truth*.

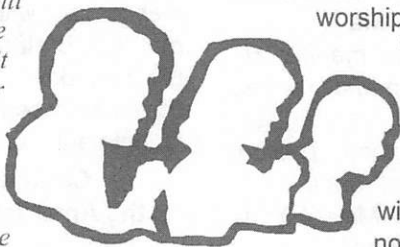
Worship, if it is to be correct, must be *according to truth*. We must do those things (and *only* those things) that God has commanded.

The fourth verse cited also makes this point. Whatever we do *in deed* (including worship) and whatever we do *in word* (teach) must be in the name of Jesus, which means by His authority.

If God does not authorize the worship we give Him, then it is not *true* worship. Genuine worship must also be "with all your heart" or "in sincerity" or "in spirit". Worship that is without love cannot be offered to Almighty God. He would be insulted just as He was by those of old who offered Him their worship but said, "*Oh, what a weariness*" (Malachi 1:13).

The Lord's Supper

When the church was established in the first century, the disciples met on the first day of the week to *break*



bread (Acts 20:7; 2:42). That phrase refers to the Lord's Supper, a memorial to what Jesus did for us on the cross.

Paul reminded the Corinthians of its purpose. *"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.*

"In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23-26).

The **unleavened bread** used in this remembrance represents the body of our Savior who was crucified for our sins. The **fruit of the vine** represents the blood that was shed for us. Each first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 11:23-33) we gather together

around His table to remember the sacrifice of Jesus.

Giving

"For you know the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich (2 Corinthians 8:9).

God loves "a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7), and one of our privileges as Christians is to give back to God some of what He has blessed us with. Paul commanded brethren to give on the first day of the week as they had been prospered (1 Corinthians 16:1,2).

Continuing in the Apostles' Doctrine

When the three thousand were baptized on the day of Pentecost, they knew their sins were forgiven, but they needed to learn the teachings of the new kingdom. Therefore, the apostles taught them the things that had been revealed to them by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:42). Whether they spoke or wrote through inspiration, their words were Truth, the Word of God (1

Thessalonians 2:13). Like the Bereans, we should search the Scriptures daily (Acts 17:11) to make sure that we are being taught the Truth. We also need to study God's Word so that we may grow spiritually (1 Peter 2:2).

Prayer

Paul says that we are to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17). Each Christian should approach the Father through Jesus many times every day (as well as in the assembly on the first day of the week); God must continually be in our thoughts and in our hearts. We thank Him for His greatness and His gracious salvation, knowing from His word how much He loves us. We may also make requests of God, but they should not be for purely selfish things (James 4:3).

"Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4:6,7).

Singing

Christians also have the responsibility to speak to one another

"in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

The New Testament authorizes us to sing to God and one another; it never tells us to use instruments of music to accompany that singing. Remember, we are to do **only that which Jesus authorizes** (Colossians 3:17). There is no record where either He or His disciples ever sang spiritual songs with musical accompaniment.

The Sin of Jeroboam

A man named Jeroboam changed the way God said to worship (1 Kings 12:25-33). This decision caused him and the people to sin "a great sin" (2 Kings 17:21). By his example we see that no one has the right to add to what God has commanded for worship; no one has the right to take anything away, either. We must be content to worship as God has commanded us.

God Hates Idolatry

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath showed it unto them.

“For the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

“Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things.

“Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves: Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen”

(Romans 1:18-25)

Lesson 7 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. The _____ day of the _____ (Sunday) is the time Christians are to meet to offer up their _____ to God.
2. The bread represents the _____ of Jesus which was given on the cross; the cup (the fruit of the vine) represents His _____.
3. Paul commanded Christians to give on the _____ day of the week as we have been _____.
4. The apostles spoke through the _____ of the Holy Spirit.
5. We should _____ the Scriptures _____ to make sure that we are being taught the _____.
6. Christians are taught to pray without _____, our requests should not be for purely _____ things.
7. Christians should speak to each other in _____ and _____ and _____ songs.
8. A king named _____ changed the way God said to worship. In doing so the nation committed a _____ sin. No one has the right to _____ to or take _____ God's rules for worship.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ Since we can worship God as individuals, it is not ever necessary to meet with the church.
2. ____ Truth is not an important part of worship; sincerity is all that is needed.
3. ____ To “break bread” may refer to the Lord’s Supper.
4. ____ Christians should observe the Lord’s Supper once a month.
5. ____ God does not expect His children to enjoy giving.
6. ____ Studying the word of God will cause us to grow spiritually.
7. ____ God does not want to hear our requests.
8. ____ The New Testament never authorizes us to use musical instruments to accompany our singing.
9. ____ Christians do not need authority for what they teach or practice.

SEEKERS

Bible Study Course

Lesson Eight

NEW LIFE IN CHRIST

A Christian is one who has died to sin (repentance), been buried with Jesus in baptism, and raised to walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4); he has been “*born again*” (John 3:5). Since we have died to sin, we must reckon ourselves “*to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Romans 6:11). Will sin no longer be a problem?

“Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. And do not present your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin, but present yourselves to God as being alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness to God” (Ro-

mans 6:12,13).

We have been “*crucified with Christ*” (Galatians 2:20). We have put to death the old man of sin; our new life must be different from our old one. There are many changes that we must make. We are to be holy — because God is holy (1 Peter 1:14-16). God has not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness (1 Thessalonians 4:7).

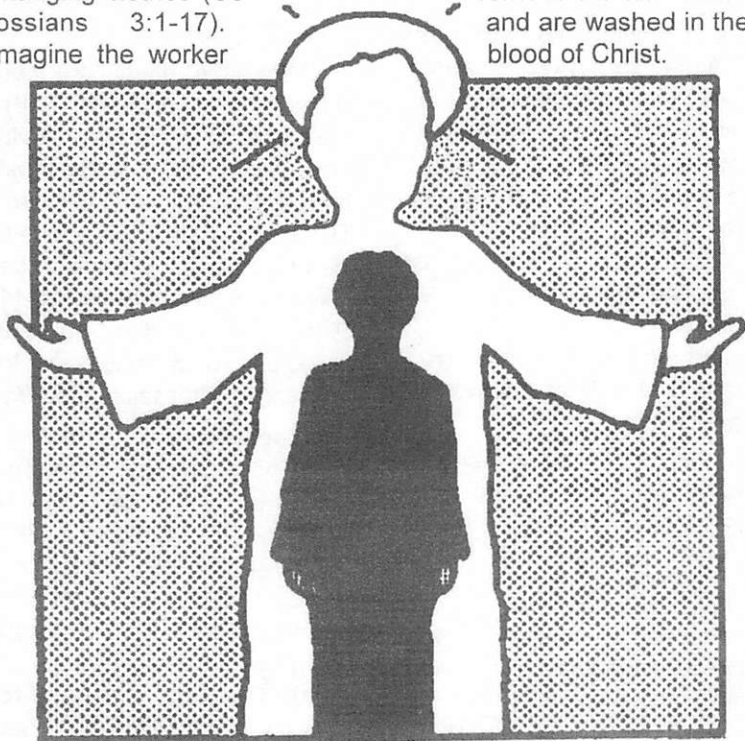
Because of our repentance, God washed away our sins when we were baptized (Acts 22:16); we were added to the body of Christ, the church (Acts 2:47). God has promised, based on our faith and obedience, to forgive us of our sins (Acts 2:38) and to give us eternal life (Hebrews

5:9). We have faith in His promise (Colossians 2:12).

"Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (2 Corinthians 7:1).

Paul compares the Christian life to one who is changing clothes (Colossians 3:1-17). Imagine the worker

who has spent all day laboring in the fields. His hands are full of dirt, and his body is covered with sweat (sin makes us spiritually filthy). He comes home and removes the dirty clothes. Then he washes away the sweat and grime with soap and water and puts on clean clothes. When we repent of our sins and are baptized, we remove the old clothes and are washed in the blood of Christ.



Would we want, again, to put on those old garments that are still dirty and sweaty? Of course not. We want to wear the fresh, clean clothes of righteousness. We want to be the holy people God has made us (1 Peter 2:9). Following are verses in which Paul makes this comparison:

"If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hid with Christ in God" (Colossians 3:1-3).

Even our thinking must be changed (2 Corinthians 10:5). We must become more concerned about heavenly (spiritual) matters than the things of an earthly nature. We must put to death those ideas that would lead us back into sin: *"fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry"* (Colossians 3:5).

Paul next talks about those things which, like dirty clothes, we must remove.

"But now you must also put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him" (Colossians 3:8-10).

The list of things in verse 5 concerns problems of a sexual nature; those listed in verses 8-10 concern attitude and speech. When we become Christians, we make changes in our lives. The way that we think changes. Life is viewed in light of eternity, not just in terms of daily living. Those things that are most important now relate to Jesus and His church. We know that Jesus is coming back for His people (alive or dead) to take them to heaven. Jesus is our life (Colossians 3:4). Until the time He returns (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9), we must devote ourselves to Him.

Our attitudes must be different from the sinful ones we once had. We must control anger rather than expressing it

for all to see. We must watch what we say: a filthy mouth should not be found in a cleansed soul. Our tongues should not be used for corrupt speech or to deceive people. Certainly people devoted to Truth cannot tell lies.

But Christianity is more than just putting off the old thoughts, attitudes, and actions. We must put on the new clothes that God wants us to wear.

"Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you must also do.

"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body, and be thankful" (Colossians 3:12-15).

Changing oneself is not easy. Pride must be changed into humbleness of mind; anger must be changed into kindness, longsuffering, bear-

ing with one another, and forgiveness. Selfishness must be changed into love. Becoming a Christian means becoming a new person — not only in relationship to God, but to other people, also. We are to conform ourselves to the image of Christ (Romans 8:29). Even if we must suffer for righteousness' sake, we are to follow His example (1 Peter 2:21-24).

The new life also brings a freshness to all earthly relationships. It means we will be better husbands and wives (Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22, 23). We will be better servants (workers) and masters (Colossians 3:22; 4:1). We will be better citizens (1 Peter 2:13-17).

How glorious it is to be a Christian, a new person with better earthly relationships! The greatest blessing of all is to be one of God's children walking in the light, rather than one of Satan's walking in darkness.

"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

Obligations

If you have been baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, you have many blessings and also many obligations or duties. The first one is to put God first in your life (Luke 14:26-33; Matthew 22:37-39). The second one is to *"work out your own salvation with fear and trembling"* (Philippians 2:12).

Then you must *"love your neighbor as yourself"* (Matthew 22:39). You have obligations to your brethren in the church as well as to those who are not Christians. All brethren are to *"love one another"* as Christ loved us (John 13:34,35; 1 John 4:7,8). There are a number of passages that speak of ways to help each other, such as of teaching, admonishing, encouraging and serving one another (Ephesians 5:19; Hebrews 3:13; Galatians 5:13, and many others).

What about those who are not Christians? How should we treat them?

"Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. Let your speech

always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one" (Colossians 4:5,6).

Paul said that he was debtor to all men; he owed them the gospel (Romans 1:14); so do you if you are a Christian. Most of all, in dealing with those who are not believers in Christ, we must remember that we are in the world as individual representatives of our Lord. We must live in such a way that others see a true picture of Him.

If you have not yet obeyed the gospel, please consider carefully that your sins have earned you eternal damnation, but God wants you to have eternal life (Romans 6:23).

Contact someone in the churches of Christ and ask him to baptize you for the forgiveness of your sins (Acts 2:38). You will then be a part of the church you can read about in the Bible, a part of the church for which Christ died. As you grow in the faith and walk the Christian walk, God will richly bless you.

The lifestyle of the Christian:

“Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!

“Let your gentleness be known to all men. The Lord is at hand.

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God,

“and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.

“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy — meditate on these things.

“The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you” (Philippians 4:4-9)

Lesson 8 Questions

Fill in the blanks with the proper answer.

1. Even though a person becomes a Christian, there is still a problem of _____ to overcome. We must remember that we are _____ to sin and _____ to God.
2. Being a Christian means taking off one's _____ clothes and putting on _____ ones.
3. The Christian should set his affection on things _____, not on things on the _____.
4. When we become Christians, we make _____ in our lives.
5. A _____ mouth should not be in a _____ soul.
6. _____ must be changed into kindness; and _____ must be changed into love.
7. We are to _____ ourselves into the image of Christ.
8. We are instructed to _____ out our own salvation with _____ and trembling.
9. God must be put _____ in our lives, and we must _____ our neighbors as ourselves.

Mark the following statements true or false.

1. ____ We must be holy because God is holy and has called us to holiness.
2. ____ God has promised eternal life to those who are faithful and obey Him.
3. ____ Fornication and other sexually-related sins must be put away.
4. ____ It is all right for Christians to become angry and lie once in a while.
5. ____ A Christian changes the way he thinks, his attitudes, the way he speaks, and the way he behaves.
6. ____ Jesus will return some day to take His people to heaven.
7. ____ Being Christians will make us better husbands, wives, workers, and citizens.
8. ____ Christians have no obligations to those who are not Christians.