

# Sermon Outlines from Down Under

Allan E. Flaxman

**Published by**  
**J.C. Choate Publications**  
Winona/New Delhi/Cape Town/Cebu City

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First Printing in U.S.A., 2,000 copies  
Cover Design: Betty Burton Choate  
Typesetting: Eulene Ramsey  
Layout and Design: Barbara Ann Oliver

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To  
Alice and Valerie.  
Two wonderful women  
who in turn have stood by me  
through health and sickness, joy and sorrow  
and have helped me along life's pathway in ways  
more than words can tell.  
A.E.F.

## Biography

Allan E. Flaxman was born in Five Dock, an inner suburb of Sydney, N.S.W., Australia, on the 16th March, 1916. Five Dock was a "working-class" suburb and his father (Ernest) and mother (Ruby) were from "working-class" families. (Though that is not strictly true of his mother, whose father — a Tuckwell — was a retail and wholesale pastry-cook and confectioner, with businesses in Sydney, Newcastle and Bathurst.)

Allan was brought up in a religious atmosphere, his father being a Baptist, and his mother, though nominally a Methodist, mostly attended the Baptist Church. She later obeyed the Gospel and became a faithful Christian.

By a series of what appears to have been "chance happenings", Allan, at age seven, was sent by his father to a Sunday School, being conducted by a John McGregor, on the verandah of John's home. This was at Merrylands, a comparatively new Sydney suburb to which his parents had just moved. John, with his wife and daughter were standing out alone in protest against the introduction of instrumental music to the worship services of the Church of Christ. Allan's father thought of them simply as "Strict Baptists".

By the time Allan had reached the age of twelve, under the very thorough teaching of John McGregor, he was reasonably well grounded in New Testament Scripture. He obeyed the Gospel that year.

Allan began secular work for a living at the age of fourteen. The Great Depression was in full swing and he had to leave school and take a job, in an effort to boost the family income. He was not close to finishing Secondary School. He enjoyed learning, however, and soon became an avid reader. This love of reading has stayed with him all of his life, giving him a broad knowledge, if not a deep one. He preached his first sermon at the age of twenty-one for the still tiny congregation at Merrylands.

He met Alice Burt when they were both about twelve years old, while they were attending the Merrylands Sunday School. They were married in 1941, and his father died quite suddenly the same year. The following year he was drafted into the Australian Army and served there for over three years.

Their daughter, Gaye, was born in 1945. In 1947 an opportunity came to him to go to Abilene, Texas, and further his education at Abilene Christian College, (as ACU was then know). During his time there (where his grades were mostly "A's and B's") he travelled widely for preaching appointments through Texas, as well as into Oklahoma, New Mexico and into Colorado.

Returning to Australia in the closing weeks of 1949, he was supported by the Riverside Church in Fort Worth, Texas. That support terminated in 1955, and of necessity he had to return to secular work to keep food on the table.

However, he continued his preaching wherever opportunity presented itself, and while still earning a living with secular work he founded the completely new congregation in Sydney, which was know as the Lakemba Church. Foundation members consisted of Alice, his daughter Gaye, his son, Bryan, one other Christian, Cam La Spina, and himself. Over the years the congregation grew and eventually, property was bought. Alice, who stood faithfully with him over the years, died in 1976. Then, some three years later Allan converted and married his present wife, Valerie. He retired from full-time work with the Lakemba Church (now the Bankstown Church) at the age of 67, but continued to preach in a part-time capacity and to write tracts and articles, etc. — living off a very small government pension. Valerie, like Alice, has stood faithfully by his side to this time of writing (1997) through approval and adversity, through sickness and in health over the past eighteen years.

The sermon outlines contained in this book are of just a very few of the sermons Allan has actually preached over many years. He is now 81 years old and no longer able to preach because of a voice problem, although he can and does teach Adult Bible

**Classes.** His membership is now with the Blacktown Church, an outer suburb of Sydney. He has written a number of tracts — one especially liked called “How Do I Become a Christian?”.

## Introduction

The following sermon outlines are just that. Simply skeletal in nature, for the most part, merely the “bones” of the original sermons. You may use them as you wish. To get the greatest value from them you will need to add the appropriate “flesh” and to bring them alive with the addition of more of God’s Word. Illustrations, wisely interwoven, will add light to the lessons that each sermon presents. Don’t feel guilty about using them. However, may I suggest that you will get the greatest value from them if you make them, in a sense, “yours”, by looking for and using your own illustrations, etc. You will find these in many places, including your own personal experiences as well as in the lives of those close to you. Another great source of illustrations is God’s Great Book of Nature. Be forever observant and alert for possible illustrative material.

Of course, ultimately, your best sermons will be those you build for yourself from the “ground up”. These “outlines” however, will be of use to you while you are developing the ability to do just that. Later, I rather suspect, there will be more than a few times when you have to prepare a sermon in a hurry, and you will need, as we say in Australia, a “kick start”.

One other matter. I’ve not included in these outlines, at their conclusions, any “Appeal to Obey the Gospel”. In preaching all of my sermons, over the past many years, I have consistently made that “Appeal” at the close of each one of them. I think it should be made. I deplore the laxity of many of our modern preachers who fail to take this opportunity to encourage this all important “act of obedience”. But, I believe the individual preacher can best “blend” this “Appeal” into each sermon for himself. So, I leave it to you, and may you have many successful “Appeals” as you make use of these “Sermon Outlines”.

A.E.F.

## **A Statement from the Publisher**

Although Bro. Allan Flaxman was born in Australia and has spent much of his life there, I have known of him and his work for many years. To me he is somewhat of a pioneer preacher in his country.

Coming to the States for his education, he soon returned to his homeland to work for the Lord and has remained there up to this time.

While Betty and I were visiting in the Sydney area back in 1996, we happened to visit with the Blacktown congregation where Bro. and Sis. Flaxman worship. This was a special treat to us.

On meeting the Flaxman's I not only invited Allan to be a staff writer for our quarterly magazine, The Voice of Truth International, but I also asked him to prepare me some of his sermon outlines for publication. Being a veteran gospel preacher I wanted to honor him with this book. I am glad he gave a positive response and that means that he will now continue to preach through his sermon outlines.

Allan, thank you for providing these outlines for this publication. As they are being used by brethren throughout the world, we pray that they may be a means of reaching many souls for Christ. We admire you and your wife and your years of faithful service to the Lord.

J.C. Choate  
Winona, MS 38967  
February 8, 1999



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# Christians — Before and After

**Read: 1 Peter 2:9,10.**

## **Introduction:**

1. "I don't go to church now because my parents forced me to go when I was young." Most of us have heard this blame-shifting comment.
2. Though, if it be genuine, the chances are that the parents have failed in another matter. They have failed to show WHY they should attend Church. They have not explained to the children what "state" we were in before we became Christians, and all that God has done to lift us out of that state.

## **Body:**

- I. In this study we should first notice what "we were not" before we became Christians.
  - A. We were **not** a "People".
    1. "People" make up a "community", "tribe", "race", "nation".

Most of us belonged to these before we became "Christians". So, what does Peter mean?
    2. Simply that because we were not the "People of God", we were not really a "People" at all.

This would be a blow to say, the Romans and Greeks (National & Racial Pride).  
Most of us too, "proud" to be Australians or whatever!  
Many of us are "Tribe" proud, too (the Family Tree)!
    3. Peter says: Tribe, Race, Nation, in real terms —

Valueless! They have no effect on our relationship to **God!**

Being a Jew, Peter was used to the idea of being one of God's Chosen People.

His national pride was based on his nation's relationship to God.

He saw gentiles as dogs—of no importance, by comparison!

4. The significance of being a Christian is clear. It's the new relationship to God. **Before**, we were "*Not a People*".

B. We were still "*in darkness*"!!

1. In Scripture, "darkness" is an emblem of three things: "Ignorance", "Sin" and "Misery". **Jesus** quoted Isaiah — (Matthew 4:16). Simply meaning, those once ignorant of God, now, actually saw and heard Christ — God's Son.

Ignorance became knowledge!

**Jesus** also related "darkness" to "sin" (John 3:19). Darkness was a cover for sin! Men wanted that cover.

The saying, "if ignorance is bliss, tis folly to be wise" is not true! Wisdom is of God.

**Jesus**, again, related "darkness" to the misery of Hell (Matthew 8:12). ("*Outer darkness*" — "*weeping and gnashing of teeth*".)

Our text says, **Before** — "we were in **darkness**" **Ignorant** of God's will for us!

**Sinful**—Thus separated from God!

**Spiritually**—miserable!

- C. Even worse, **before** we became Christians, we had **not** obtained mercy from God (Verse 10). Mercy has been described as undeserved remission of due punishment,

to an offender or enemy.

(Romans 5:10; Colossians 1:21) indicate that we were once "*enemies of God*"!

Our sinful behaviour made us so (Isaiah 59:2).

(As sinners we had joined the enemy camp of Satan!)

What then was our past condition?

1. We were "*Not a People*"!—a humiliating and horrifying state!
2. We were In Darkness!—On reflection producing
3. We were Outside of God's Mercy!—Nothing but misery!

II. Now let's see the marvellous change in our state since we became Christians.

A. We are now a "*Chosen Generation*" (Race of People)—Verse 9.

1. As Abram was called out of Ur (to become father of God's Chosen Race), We Christians—"*Called out of Darkness*" (To become God's "*Chosen Generation*"). We have been chosen on the basis of our obedience to the Gospel.
2. Our relationship to God is **now** a right one. We rightly call Him "*Our Father*". He listens to our prayers!—**comfort!** We are assured of the **Eternal Promises**

B. We are now a "*Royal Priesthood*" (Verse 9).

1. "*Royal*"—because of the dignity of High Office (born into Royalty, not Elected)!
2. We hold the priestly right to approach God through our High Priest — Christ (Hebrews 3:1; 4:16).
3. How great indeed is our standing in the world!

We look at Kings and other World  
Dignities. As Christians we stand very tall  
beside them! We are a "Royal Priesthood".

- C. But, as well, we are now a "*Peculiar People*" (Verse 9).
  - 1. Not funny peculiar in appearance or behaviour!
  - 2. Not simply a purchased people, though that wonderful fact is true.
  - 3. Rather, Special because we are owned by God! Distinctly different to those Not Owned by God.
  - 4. Our peculiarity then is our relationship to God. Owned by Him!
- D. Now, too, we are a "*Holy Nation*" (Verse 9). Special. God's Nation.
  - 1. A Consecrated nation, set aside for a Holy Purpose.
  - 2. A Dedicated nation, set for the defense of the Kingdom.
  - 3. A Sacred nation, protected by God.
- E. All this because we have obtained Mercy (Verse 10). Not earned. Pardoned!!

III. Our exalted state brings with it a joyful obligation— "*That we should show forth the praises of God*" (Verse 9).

- A. We praise God in the five acts of public worship. Our text presents us with good reasons for doing so.
- B. We should also praise God in our daily lives.
  - 1. Use wisely every opportunity to Praise God. But consider carefully four things: What you say; How you say it; When you say it; To whom you say it. Else your intention to Praise God may have quite the opposite affect.
  - 2. Remember, Jesus said, "...neither cast your

*pearls before swine...*" (Matthew 7:6).  
Yet God has done so much for us—and  
continues to do so daily, that praise should  
spring naturally to our lips, and our  
behaviour reveal our praise!

**Conclusion:**

1. Our text says that at one time  
We were **not** a People. Of no consequence.  
We were **in** Darkness. Ignorant of God's will.  
We were **outside** of God's Mercy. Already  
Lost! Heading for Hell!
2. But our text also says, we are **now** God's "*Chosen  
Generation*".  
A "*Royal Priesthood*".  
A "*Peculiar People*".  
A "*Holy Nation*".
3. Because of these things we "*Show forth the praises of  
God*".

# The Goodness and Severity of God

**Read: Romans 1:13-23.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Focus on Goodness and Severity.
2. Some virtually believe that in the Old and New Testaments we are in effect dealing with two different Gods!! Personality Change?!! Wrong (see Hebrews 13:8). Good to the Believers! Severe to the Unbelievers!

## **Body:**

- I. God has always been and still is good to mankind.
  - A. There is ample evidence of God's past Goodness to men.
    1. The world was created Good (Genesis 1:4,10,12, 18,21,25, 31).  
Plus, a Special Garden—Paradise (Genesis 2:8).
    2. After the Flood—God's further assurances (Genesis 8:22).
  - B. God's elaborate scheme of Redemption.
    1. Begins with God's call to Abram (Genesis 12:1-3).
    2. Explanations: A Chosen Nation — Future World Blessings (Genesis 12:7).
    3. Promised Land (Genesis 12:2,3). Given— (Joshua 21:43-45).
    4. Justice to the sinful Amorites (Genesis 15:16).
    5. Promised Saviour (Deuteronomy 18:15-18; Matthew 1:21,25).
    6. The Supreme and Complete Sacrifice — Christ, comes: (John 1:1-4,14 with 11,12 plus 3:16 and 1 John 3:1).



- C. And, God's Goodness continues.
1. Goodness to all (Matthew 5:45).
  2. "*Whosoever will...*" (Revelation 2:17).
  3. Provides both a map and a compass (Psalm 119:105).
  4. Church built for Fellowship and Comfort.
  5. Prayer - Speaking with our Maker!!
  6. Beauty and Power of our Creator all around us.
  7. Plus: Assurance of Heaven and Warnings of Hell!  
**How Great His Goodness!!**

II. But God is also Severe with mankind!

- A. God's Severity is too frequently overlooked in this Christian Age! Shocks some.
1. Mostly men act as though God will not deal with them Severely.  
The Bible indicates otherwise:
    - a. Adam and Eve (Genesis 3).
    - b. Those to whom Noah preached for 120 years (Genesis 6).
    - c. Cities of Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19).
    - d. Israelites who died in the Wilderness.
    - e. Ananias and his wife Sapphira (Acts 5) and many other examples.
  2. Many act in this way today! I've heard men say, "If I do go to Hell — so what, I'll have lots of mates"!!  
These have not carefully considered the Bible picture of Hell.
- B. Even some Christians doubt the severity of God!
1. The Flood—this was a world-wide catastrophe!!
  2. Sodom and Gomorrah—cities wiped out completely!! (Hiroshima.)
  3. Jewish Nation—Totally Rejected! Population

scattered World Wide!!

4. "Oh, but that was before the Cross." Then, 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18 will likely be quoted, to apply to good living, though non-Christians.

We can't pick and choose our Bible passages as though picking through a bowl of fruit. The passage mentioned was written to those who have obeyed the Gospel. The same God who comforts them, warns the non-Christian in 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9. Jesus warns them, too (Matthew 25:14-30). Make no mistake—Our Good God, is also Severe.

III. But there is a basis upon which God deals with mankind — being Good to us, or Severe.

- A. Belief or Unbelief—Faith or Lack of Faith is the basis upon which He works. (See Romans 11:20-23.)
  1. Adam and Eve—Lacked Faith.
  2. Ante-diluvians—Lacked Faith.
  3. Sodom and Gomorrah—including Lot's sons-in-law—Lacked Faith.
  4. Israelites in the Wilderness — (12 spies)—Lacked Faith
- B. By contrast we see real faith acted upon: Abel; Noah; Abraham; Isaac; Jacob; Moses and others— (Hebrews 11).
- C. Today—Real Working Faith is the basic Christian Doctrine.
  1. Not those who "sort of believe"! Who ignore or dilute God's Word!  
Who try to mix the un-mixable—Evolution and the Doctrine of Christ.
  2. True, obedient believers are assured of Salvation.

They experience the Goodness of God.

Failure at this point incurs the Severity of God.

**D. What must be Believed?**

That Jesus is the Christ—His absolute Authority. His terms and conditions must be accepted to enjoy the wonderful Goodness of God.

**Conclusion:**

1. God is seen to be both Good and Severe.
2. To experience God's Goodness—Become a faithful child of God
3. Remember—To refuse God's terms and conditions is to bring on the eventual Severity of God.

# The Power of Christ

**Read: Ephesians 1:19-23.**

## **Introduction:**

1. I've heard good Christians say that this or that suggested project can't be done, and then give a dozen reasons why it is too hard! Now there are times when they are very right, **but**, all too often they are being defeatists, because they have overlooked the Power of Christ.

## **Body:**

- I. The Almighty Power of Christ is absolute.
  - A. This was the great message He announced just before His Ascension (Matthew 28:18-20).
    1. What is the truly Good News here? (Christ's Power).
    2. The Lesson? The full impact of His Resurrection.
    3. The Question? Did Jesus really have the Power to
      - a. Forgive Sins on His Terms?
      - b. Oversee World Events until His Return?
      - c. Could He actually Return as promised?  
YES! For All Power had been given to Him  
(Verse 18).
  - B. This is the very point Paul is making and emphasizing (Ephesians 1:19-23).
    1. Paul refers to the "*exceeding greatness of His power*".  
We used to say, "As fast as a steam engine"!  
Even today those mighty Steam Engines Look the part.  
Then came Jet Power dwarfing Steam.

Then Space Rocket Power with enormous power!

But, how puny alongside of the "*exceeding greatness of His Power*".

2. How great is Christ? (See John 1:1-4,14.)  
He made everything that was made (John 1:3).  
Steam Power; Jet Power; Rocket Power;  
Nuclear Power, and any other power as yet undiscovered.
3. Consider our planetary system:  
The precision with which it operates!  
Christ made it! Yet it is but a pin point in the universe Christ made!!

C. "Yes! We know. But what about the military powers of nations?"

Paul, by the inspiration of God, has the answer—  
(Ephesians 1:21). Far above such Powers! No need to feel overpowered by earthly Powers. Not then, not now!

D. "Yes, but what about Spiritual Powers?"

This is dealt with in this same Letter (See 6:11-18). No need to despair or to quit.

II. A genuine, honest belief in Christ's Almighty Power should make us Positive Thinkers and Positive Doers.

A. God has always required His followers to be Positive Thinkers and Positive Doers. A few examples:

1. Noah, Genesis 6. Could easily have been negative in view of the massive task confronting him, but he thought and acted positively.
2. Abram, Genesis 12. (Much the same as Noah.)
3. Moses, Exodus. (After some initial weakness, he

acted as positively as did both Noah and Abram.)

4. Joshua—Jericho, Joshua 6. (As positive as Noah.)
- B. Despite Christ's declaration of power, the Apostles did act negatively for a while (John 21:3. "*I go fishing*").

But when they saw the power at their disposal there was a dramatic change to a positive drive (Acts 2).

### III. Notice now: The Power of Christ does not keep Christians off the Danger List.

- A. Remember the persecutions and sufferings of the early Christians as pictured in the New Testament?

1. Christ not only made no promises to protect them from this—actually warned them to expect it (Mark 10:30)!

- B. But the Power of Christ leads us to confidently expect,

1. Some Big Harvests (Pentecost—Acts 2).
2. Sometimes, just a few (Athens— Acts 17:32-34).
3. And His Power, guarantees Final Victory (Romans 8:37).

This should inspire us to both Positive Thinking and Positive Acting.

- C. But Notice: Relying on the Power of Christ does not mean acting without careful planning.

1. God has always required planning then action.
2. God's plan to save men was in place before the creation of the world.

(See 1 Peter 1:18-20; Ephesians 1:4.)—And this necessarily infers that creation itself was

planned.

3. God obviously planned The Flood!
4. Does God expect us to plan? Yes! (Even on such an important matter as becoming a disciple of His—(See Luke 14:28-33).

### **Conclusion:**

What have we learned?

1. The tremendous Power of Christ (Ephesians 1:19).
2. This knowledge should make us positive thinkers and doers.
3. Christ's Power ensures us of Final Victory. Our task is
  - a. To be Positive.
  - b. Lay careful plans.
  - c. Go to work on these plans to spread the Gospel and Christ's Power will take care of the rest.

# The Christian Race

## Introduction:

1. Remember the happy excitement at the time of your baptism?
2. Then later—some disappointments and problems? Eventually you overcame these and worked at living Christianity.
3. Still, even now the way sometimes seems hard, and just, sometimes, the temptation is to give up!
4. News Time: You are not alone!! God is aware! He's given us Scripture to help (Read Hebrews 12:1,2).

## Body:

- I. There are certain things Christians must do to stay in the Christian Race (Verse 1).
  - A. This Race is an Endurance Race.
    1. It's not a sprint. Not a few laps of the track. It's not even a marathon!!
    2. The whole context of our text shows it to be an Endurance Race.  
(Read 10:35-39.) It cries out, "Don't give up"—  
"Don't draw back"—"Keep on going".
    3. Chapter 11 is the Faith Chapter. These great Godly people ran the Endurance Race. Their strong message is, "Don't ever give up!"
  - B. As runners in this race we are told to do two things to help us to keep on keeping on (verse 1).
    1. Every weight must be disposed of. Heavy boots—Heavy clothing—Heavy meal—That bag of stones!!
    2. Applied to the Christian—what must be "laid aside"? Each individual will find different



- things to be the hindrance.
- a. Pride and Vanity. (Genuine humility is no weight.)
  - b. Bad Temper. (Controlled temper is no weight.)
  - c. Personal possessions—treasured before God.
  - d. Perhaps a sport—though perfectly all right in itself.
  - e. Just any weight which might impede our progress and endurance.
3. With Abram it could well have been, Home; City; Friends; Family; Located security.  
Moses: Riches and treasures of Egypt; His standing in Egyptian society.  
The security of the Egyptian Palace.  
What weights must you and I lay aside?
4. Second: We must lay aside our “besetting sins”.  
A runner can’t afford to wear entangling robes  
—Besetting sins.  
Most of us would have some “besetting Sin”:  
Perhaps certain associations;  
Ambitions for worldly possessions; Denominational ideas; Unreliability;  
Even, perhaps, periods of doubt or skepticism.  
Get rid of them!!

II. Now, we are encouraged to “lay aside” these “weights” and “besetting sins”, by the “Cloud of Witnesses”.

A. Cloud simply means a great number.

1. A great crowd of spectators, viewed as a mass of faces.
2. The writer here paints a picture of huge amphitheater, packed with witnesses of our

### Endurance Race.

- B. Who are they that make up this cloud of witnesses?
  - 1. They are those who are mentioned in chapter 11:4-40.  
By their Faithful and Courageous lives they shout encouragement to us.
  - 2. Whenever we feel our feet drag, their shouts of encouragement spur us on to greater efforts and to final success.

### III. Our greatest example of endurance—our greatest source of encouragement is Jesus Christ, Himself (verse 2).

- A. We are sometimes so conscious of the Deity of Christ, that we overlook His Humanity.
  - 1. Jesus was not only God, He was also Man!
  - 2. As God, He foreknew His own destiny: (1) His death by crucifixion; (2) His Resurrection; (3) His Glorification.
  - 3. But He had to face the crucifixion on the Human level!  
Imagine knowing all of your life that finally you would be (1) brutally arrested, (2) be mercilessly flogged and then (3) be horribly crucified to death!! Would you be looking for a way out? Would you want to ask, Is this world of brutal sinners worth it?
- B. But with joy, Jesus looked beyond the cross to His Glorification (Hebrews 12:2).
  - 1. With this view in mind He (1) Endured contradiction of sinners, (2) Endured the flogging and other brutality, (3) Endured the horrors of death by crucifixion and (4) Despised the shame of a criminal's death!!

2. What an example! What an encouragement, as we push ahead with the Great Christian Endurance Race.

**Conclusion:**

1. All Christians are engaged in an Endurance Race. When the race becomes exhausting, we are encouraged by God's Word to look beyond the present problems, to God and to Heaven and to a Crown of Righteousness.
2. To look to the great men of Faith and to hear their shouts of encouragement.
3. To see in Christ our Greatest Example of all.

# “Troublesome Times Are Here”

**Read: 2 Corinthians 4:6-10—Text: verses 8 and 9.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Christianity! Good, Sound, Genuine Christianity is what this world needs and lots of it!
2. Few will deny that the world scene is a mess and is getting rapidly worse!  
Yet nothing really positive seems to be being done to truly apply the brakes.
3. Shortly, we'll take a look at what we Christians can do to help—But, first:

## **Body:**

- I. This world faces enormous and awesome problems, in many ways. Let's look at some of them.
  - A. We have wars in progress **now!** And others are threatening!
    1. Horrifying slaughter is involved.  
Because there is no global war at present we are apt to think of the world as being at peace.  
Wrong! There is war in the Middle East, in parts of Russia, and in the Balkans to mention a few places.  
Nuclear War seems less threatening than it was—  
But don't dismiss the possibility!
    2. Why are there these wars and threats of war?  
What is the solution?
  - B. As well we have this terrifying morass of moral decay.  
(Rules of right conduct are rapidly disappearing!)
    1. Human Life is no longer being held as sacred

- by an increasing volume of people! (Shocking murders—Mass murders—Bombings of public places and of Public transport. Arson and Vandalism everywhere!
2. Disgusting and horrifying sexual misbehavior (Sodomy). Governments approve.  
Why? What is the solution?
- C. Look at the non-Christian Eastern Religions:
1. Islam—Buddhism—Hinduism, with fanatical missionaries everywhere!
  2. Communism: Really a religion and far from dead.
  3. Denominationalism: Most denominations have sold out to the theory of evolution (Theistic Evolution)!  
Why? What is the solution?
- D. Now look at the Lord's Church itself!
1. Error is once more corrupting it! Paul's warning : (II Thessalonians 2:3-12).
  2. Preachers of error are neither Challenged nor Marked. It is II Timothy 3:1-7,13; 4:1-4 —all over again!!  
Why? What is the solution?
- II. Faithful Christians—alone, hold the compass and chart and hold to the Captain who can steer us safely through these troubled times!
- A. The total rejection of the Bible as being God's Word is the basic cause behind these troubles!
1. Why these wars, the moral decay, the breakdown in true Christianity?  
Simply because the Bible record of creation is not believed!  
But, the evolutionary theory is blindly believed,

- and, pushed in the media.
2. If we are no more than an extension of the animal kingdom, who really cares about the Bombing, Killings and Moral decay?  
Who makes the standards, if the Bible is not God's Word?
- B. We must Wake Up!! Christianity is not a Snack.  
It's hard work!!
- The Bible exhorts, Watch and be Steadfast  
(Matthew 26:38-40; 1 Corinthians 16:13; 1 Thessalonians 5:6; Ephesians 6:12-18).
1. Take every opportunity to show the weaknesses of the Evolutionary Theory  
Use every opportunity to show the Bible to be God's Word
- C. Evolution is a great hoax. Note the following thoughts:
1. A big shock to many scientists: The moon, it was found, was not deep in cosmic dust! (Evolution says it should have been!)
  2. The Mississippi River: We are told it deposits 300 million cubic yards of sediment into the Gulf annually. If the world is billions of years old, why was the Gulf not filled long ago??

### **Conclusion:**

1. We are living in troubled times. The Lord's Church is under attack by liberal preachers and doctrines.
2. We must Awake! Fight both Evolution and Liberalism, and the Ear-ticklers who proclaim them (2 Timothy 4:1-4).

# It Is Worthwhile!

**Read Romans 12:1-13.**

## **Introduction:**

1. It is not new for we humans to become discouraged, to Give Up!  
Fortunes have been lost, Discoveries missed, Marriages wrecked, and wars lost, simply because people gave up!
2. If what you are doing here as a church is right, keep at it—Don't give up.  
It is worthwhile!

## **Body:**

- I. It is our business as Christians, to serve the Lord (Verse 11).
  - A. The Scriptures make this clear (Romans 1:9; Colossians 3:23,24; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:14).
    1. So service is our business—Always has been (Romans 6:17,18).
  - B. Our text refers to the quality of our service.
    1. Not slothful—lazy! Do you know some Christians who are slothful in their service? (Not here, of course!)
    2. This quality of service is a matter between yourself and God.  
If I could force you to change from being slothful, your change would be useless, because it would be for the wrong reason.  
If change is necessary, it must be because your love for God compels you to serve Him better.

3. In New Testament times a whole congregation became slothful (Revelation 3:15,16). Their attitude made God sick!
- C. Our text says, "*Fervent in spirit.*"
1. Our service is to be fervent ie. very warm, ardent, enthusiastic. And this Quality should not take lots of fiery sermons.
  2. Seriously consider four things: What you have been saved from; What you have been saved to; What it cost Christ to do this for you, and, How many lost there are who need to hear the Gospel. This should greatly increase your enthusiasm—your quality of service.
- II. Next, we should notice that the fundamentals in serving the Lord are Prayer and Care (See Verses 12,13).
- A. We must continue instant in prayer (Verse 12).
1. "*Instant*": ie. constant—continually (I Thessalonians 5:17). Never give up on your Prayer Life.
  2. Prayer is simply talking to God. It's hard to keep talking to God and not be enthusiastic in our service to Him.
- B. But it is not prayer alone, but care also, that is needed (Verse 13).
1. First, caring for our needy brethren. Not just money, but time, encouragement help, etc.
  2. Then, "*given to hospitality*", ie. addicted to it! (Hospitality is treating guests with kindness and generosity.)
  3. This treatment of guests assumes having guests (Galatians 6:10; Matthew 25:35).
  4. The big lessons here are: (1) Stop placing so much importance on material gains and, (2) Begin



thinking much more about the needs of others.

5. So, if you have God in mind constantly, by reason of your prayer life and the needs of others in mind because you are given to hospitality you will naturally be fervent as God's servant should be.

III. But there is more: The certainty of tribulation during your service, is out-weighed by the certain hope of final victory (V. 12).

- A. God has not promised His servants a bed of roses.
  1. Fervent service will almost certainly bring trouble. Jesus predicted this (John 16:33).
  2. Paul, and the other apostles, experienced this, but continued to serve fervently.
  3. The infant church suffered much persecution, but were encouraged to press on in service, regardless.
  4. Paul tied up the idea in a neat package (Romans 8:35-37).
- B. So the message is (V. 12), Suffer the problems, set-backs etc. with patience. Keep on rejoicing in hope and, be assured of Final Victory.

#### **Conclusion:**

1. Our business and the church's business is to Serve The Lord.
2. The Fundamentals of our service are Prayer and Care.
3. Troubles and set-backs are inevitable, but, "*Be of good cheer*" (John 16:33).  
"*We are more than conquerors*" (Romans 8:37).  
It is Worthwhile!

# Your Heart Condition

## Introduction:

1. A man's physical heart condition is very important. When diseased his quality of life declines, when it stops his life ceases.
2. The Bible uses the word **heart** mostly to refer to the "inner man", the Real You.

## Body:

- I. Is your heart the Dead Heart of unbelief?  
(Australia's Dead Heart—Huge desserts!)
  - A. Spiritually, this has been and still is a very common heart disease.
    1. Adam & Eve (Genesis 3).
    2. Antediluvians (Genesis 6:3, 5).
    3. Israelites (Numbers 13:26-29; Hebrews 3:8-10).
    4. Jewish Religious Leaders Dead Hearts (John 10:24-26).
    5. Dead Hearts common throughout Apostles' ministry (eg) Athens (Acts 17:30-32).
  - B. Even Christians must watch that they don't develop this deadly heart condition.
    1. Paul warns of this danger (Hebrews 3:12).
    2. Many of us have seen this happen (2 Thessalonians 2:7-12).
    3. Peter describes the graphic results (2 Peter 2:20-22).
      - a. Remember not a sudden change but a two stage movement:
        - (1) Entanglement.
        - (2) Being overcome.
    4. Guard against it by keeping the body in subjection

(1 Corinthians 9:27).

And by leading a prayerful, Bible-studying life.

- II. Is your heart the mechanical heart that simply acknowledges the Facts of Christianity, and no more?
- A. We meet these people constantly. They are often
1. Your street neighbors,
  2. Your workmates,
  3. Your close relations (All too often).
  4. They often admit that there is a God, and, many grant that the Bible is God Inspired.
  5. But their belief is mechanical—from a mechanical heart.
  6. Not really **bad** people, fairly honest, would do you a good turn, **but**, Their hearts are not moved by God's great love!!
  7. Some, have even gone through the actual action of baptism, but their hearts have had little part (Mark 4:16-18).
- III. Finally, is your heart the Living Heart?—one that believes in Christ with great depth of feeling!
- A. This is the Living, Pounding heart of which Paul speaks (Romans 10:8-10).
1. This is the heart that
    - a. Stands appalled at the enormity of SIN (Romans 7:13)!
    - b. Is horrified to know that SIN separates man from God (Isaiah 59:2).
    - c. Is amazed at God's love for sinful man (John 3:16).
    - d. **Feels** the tearing flesh as great spikes are driven through His hands and His feet (Luke 23:33-37).

- e. Gazes in sheer astonishment at the **risen** Christ and cries out with Thomas, "*My Lord and my God*" (John 20:19-28).
- 2. Nothing mechanical here! This heart throbs with life.
  - a. It takes up the Holy Scriptures with awe and wonder (Psalms 119:105).
  - b. Looks in wonder on the birth of Christ (Matthew 1:21-25).
  - c. Watches wide eyed as Jesus calmly walks on the sea; feeds the 5000; Stills the raging storm; raises Lazarus from the dead, and much, much more!
- B. Such a heart looks for and finds **action**.
  - 1. His question soon is, "*What must I do?*" (Acts 2:38).
  - 2. Then soon after baptism, "Now, what can I do for Christ?"
  - 3. The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) will open up a wide range of things to do, And the Living Heart will automatically search out ways to serve His Saviour.

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Many dead hearts can be raised from the dead when presented with the Gospel.
- 2. The Living Heart will try to do this when touched by the need.
- 3. The Living Heart  
Stands **amazed** at man's Sinfulness.  
Is **astounded** by God's Love,  
And, having himself obeyed the Gospel asks, "Now, what can I do to serve my Saviour?"

# The Old and New Testaments

## Introduction:

1. The tragedy of division in Christendom
  - a. Christ taught UNITY (John 17:21-23).
  - b. Denominationalism is divisive (1 Corinthians 1:10-17).
2. One cause for division is a failure to understand that in this Christian Age we are under the New Testament **only**.

## Body:

- I. Why do we have both an Old and a New Testament?
  - A. We begin by learning about the Three Dispensations (Agreements between God and man). They are,
    1. The Patriarchal Age
    2. The Mosaic Age
    3. The Christian Age
  - B. The Old Testament began to be written by Moses.
    1. Genesis covers events from creation to Moses (The Patriarchal Age).
    2. Exodus to Malachi covers time from Moses to Christ (The Mosaic Age).
    3. Matthew to Revelation covers time from the birth of Christ to the present day, And from Acts 2 till Christ returns is known as the Christian Age.
  - C. During the Mosaic Age the Jews (Israelites) were under The Law (Ten Commandments etc., given by God through Moses for the Israelites).
    1. Obey the Law and God was satisfied! (None succeeded, except for Jesus.)
    2. There were constant promises to the Israelites by

God, that He would send them a Messiah (A Great Deliverer) who would make Salvation possible for everyone (Deuteronomy 18:15-18 and other places).

3. This Great Deliverer came in due time—Jesus Christ. (See Galatians 4:4,5 with Matthew 1:21-25 and 16:15-18.)

His coming ushered in the New Testament.

II. Now the presence of the New Testament raises the question, "Was there something wrong with the Old Testament?"

A. The Apostle Paul, himself, raises this question (Romans 7:7).

1. He answers the question: (Verse 12, The Law is holy, Just, and Good.
2. Not surprising, really—God gave it!
3. The Ten Commandments form the basis on which many of our National Laws are built today.

B. So, it being so good, why was it changed?

1. Man demonstrated over a 1500 year trial period, he would not keep the Law.
2. With one exception—Christ did keep it (Hebrews 4:15).
3. Sin offerings of the Old Testament merely rolled sins forward for another year. Time to pay (Hebrews 10:1-3).

Everyone died, spiritually speaking, in debt, awaiting the Supreme sacrifice of Christ.

4. The Law made man aware of his sinfulness (Romans 7:7).
5. A New Testament was desperately needed to provide a way of salvation.

III. The foregoing being true, raises another important question:  
Is the Old Testament still binding upon us who live in  
the Christian Age? Does The Law (Ten  
Commandments etc.) still apply?

A. Answer, "No"!

1. Scripture is emphatic on this. Here are just a few  
examples:

2 Corinthians 3:6-14. "*Done away*"—  
Abolished!!

Galatians 4:21-31. "*Cast out*": Superseded!!

Hebrews 8:6-13. Vanished away!!

Hebrews 9:11-15 New Testament only!!

B. What then does the New Testament offer that the Old  
Testament did not offer?

1. "*Salvation by grace, through faith...*", **not** by  
works (Ephesians 2:7-9).

2. No longer must man keep every "*jot and tittle*" of  
the Law to be saved.

**Rather:**

He is saved upon his belief in Christ, and his  
acceptance of the simple terms of salvation  
(Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38).

3. This does not give man a "*license to sin with  
impunity*" (Romans 6:1-17).

C. The Old Testament still has value to us today, though  
great care must be taken never to misapply it.

1. It throws light on God's dealings with man through  
the Ages.

2. Answers many questions:

a. Creation (Genesis 1&2)?

b. Man's Fall from the Grace of God  
(Genesis 3).

c. We are living in a world cursed by God for  
man's sake (Genesis 3:17).

- d. Proof that man could not save himself by works (Romans 15:4).  
and much, much more.

**Conclusion:**

1. To understand the Bible and to avoid much religious division, we must first see clearly the difference between the Old and New Testaments. Works and Grace.
2. We must see that the Old Testament has been done away—is **no longer** binding on man.
3. The Old Testament is still valuable to us today, but we must take great care to guard against misapplying its laws and promises.



# The Kingdom of Heaven—Now!

## Introduction:

1. The courage of ancient prophets in proclaiming **truth**.
2. We Christians today must follow their example.
3. The doctrine of Pre-millennialism is being peddled by some of our brethren. We propose to expose the error of this doctrine and to proclaim the **truth**.

## Body:

- I. First, we must remember to always allow plain New Testament teaching to decide what is being taught by symbolic and figurative passages of Scripture.
  - A. This rule is so obvious it should hardly need mentioning.
    1. Yet, too often, even some of our brethren rush to reverse the rule, going to highly symbolic books, such as Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Revelation etc., to reach conclusions. They then try to make plain Scripture fit their conclusions!
    2. This is fatal to determining the **truth**!
- II. Now, the Bible teaches plainly that the "*Kingdom of Heaven*" (of God/of Christ) is already established.
  - A. Today, many Christians have not grasped this fact, and have been led to believe that its establishment is still future.
    1. Many believe that the Jews are still God's chosen people, and that Christ will in the future reign over all the saved for 1,000 years in literal Jerusalem, when He returns!
    2. Now let us see what the Bible actually teaches on

these matters.

- a. Daniel 2:44 says, the Kingdom was to come in the Days of the Roman Kings. (The Roman Empire was in power during New Testament times.)
  - b. Matthew 3:1,2, John the Baptist says, "*Kingdom is at hand*".
  - c. Mark 1:15, after John the Baptist was imprisoned, Jesus says the Kingdom is "*at hand*".
  - d. Matthew 6:9,10, Jesus teaches, "*Thy kingdom come*".
  - e. Mark 9:1, Jesus says that the Kingdom would come during the lifetime of some of those present at that time.
  - f. Matthew 18:3, Jesus' disciples were still not in the Kingdom.
  - g. Luke 22:18, at the Last Supper it was still future.
- B. Now notice that Jesus said that the Kingdom would come "*with POWER*" (Mark 9:1; Luke 24:49).
1. This power came at Pentecost (Acts 2).
    - a. Notice the change in the Apostles (Miraculous Powers given to them.)
    - b. Peter's Sermon (Powerful & Outspoken).
    - c. Great Response to the Sermon (Powerful—3000 obey the Gospel).
    - d. God adds the saved to the Church (Acts 2:47).
  2. This whole event explains Christ's reference to the Church/Kingdom in Matthew 16:18,19.
  3. Paul speaks of himself and all Christians being "*in the Kingdom*" in his day (Colossians 1:12,13).
  4. Jesus says, "*My kingdom is not of this world*"

(John 18:36).

Therefore, taken together, these facts make the idea of some future kingdom a flat contradiction of plain Scripture.

- III. But, the Kingdom of Christ, being in existence **now**, necessarily infers that Christ is reigning **now**!
- A. (Zechariah 6:13) This Scripture says that Christ shall **sit and rule** on His Throne.
1. He sits now at God's right hand (Acts 2:30-35).
  2. Therefore, if sitting then reigning.  
This locates His Throne—in Heaven, **not** on Earth.
- B. (Zechariah 6:13) He would be a Priest on His Throne!
1. He is our High Priest in Heaven, **not** on Earth (Hebrews 4:14).
- C. Where Christ cannot be a Priest, He cannot have His Throne (Zechariah 6:13).  
He cannot be a Priest on Earth (Hebrews 8:4).
- IV. When Christ returns this world will come to an **end**—Jerusalem with it!
- A. 1 Corinthians 15:23-25 says that the Resurrection and Judgment will take place (verse 23 with 1 Thessalonians 4:14-17 and 2 Thessalonians 1:7)  
This will be the End of Christ's Reign, **not** its Beginning! (1 Corinthians 15:24).
2. At this time He will "*deliver up the Kingdom*" to the Father—**not** establish it! (1 Corinthians 15:24).
  3. He will "*abolish all earthly rule*"—**not** begin to reign on Earth (verse 24).
  4. "*Must reign till...*". In context, "*Till He returns*",

which in effect says He is Reigning **now** (verse 25).

- B. Three other things will take place when Christ returns:
1. The saved will be "*caught up to meet Christ in the clouds*" (Acts 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 4:16,17).
  2. Those who have not obeyed the Gospel will begin their eternal punishment (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).
  3. This earth will be destroyed by fire (2 Peter 3:10-12).

**Conclusion:**

1. Jesus said that the Kingdom would come during the lifetime of some then living (Mark 9:1).
2. As late as the Last Supper Jesus said that its coming was yet in the future
3. Jesus also said that His Kingdom would come "*with power*", and that the Apostles were to "*wait in Jerusalem*" till they received such power. It was given to them at Pentecost (Acts 2).
4. Paul, during his lifetime, said that he was in the Kingdom, as were all Christians.

# What Is Christian Faith?

## Introduction:

1. Hebrews 11:1 is not truly a definition, rather, it explains what Faith does for us.
  - a. It gives substance to hope.
  - b. It gives conscious reality to the unseen.
2. We have Faith or Belief in something when we have weighed the evidence in the balance (scales) of Reason.
3. But in addition to belief, Faith has another ingredient—Trust.
  - a. We may truly believe in the existence of some person, yet not Trust him or Believe him.
  - b. So, a Christian not only truly believes in God and Christ, but also Trusts and Believes Them.
  - c. We measure the strength of our Faith on these grounds.

## Body:

- I. Who is the object of Christian Faith?
  - A. Millions profess Faith, but few mean Christian Faith.
    1. There are many non-Christian Faiths (Buddhists, Mohammadans, Hinduists etc.).
    2. Then, there is the Christianized World of Faith (it has very little Trust in Christ).
  - B. The True Christian has Jesus as the object of his Faith.
    1. He believes Jesus is God's Son (James 2:19).
    2. He trusts Jesus' power to save.
    3. He unreservedly believes what Jesus says, and acts on that belief.

4. Let's look at these words: **Belief**: The acceptance of the truth or reality of something. E.g., I believe that a man named Clinton is at present, President of the USA.  
 (This does not mean that I have Faith in him.)  
 And, again, I believe that Pope John Paul II is presently head of the Roman Catholic Church.  
 (This does not mean that I am ready to trust or obey him.) Christian Faith, by contrast says: "I don't merely accept the Truth that Jesus is God's Son, but it includes a complete Trust in Jesus, believing everything He says, and I am acting on that belief."

II. Now, Christian Faith views as REAL (1) Both God and Satan and (2) Both Heaven and Hell!

- A. This is because Christian Faith includes believing everything that Christ says.

The same Jesus who spoke about God the Father, spoke with equal confidence of the reality of Satan, and, the same Jesus who spoke with assurance about Heaven and Everlasting Life, spoke with equal conviction about Hell and Everlasting Punishment.

- B. Note the following Scriptures:

*"God the Father"*: John 17:1-3; 10:15; 29,30,36-38

*"Satan"*: Matthew 4:10; Mark 4:15; Luke 22:31

*"Heaven"*: ( God's abode and the future abode of the saved.) (See Matthew 5:12,16,45,48; Luke 6:20).

*"Hell"*: (The place of eternal punishment) (See Matthew 5:22,29,30; 10:28; 25:41; Luke 16:19-31.)

III. Now let's look at the Motivating Power of real Christian Faith.

- A. Faith motivates because it gives solid reality to the

unseen.

1. It reveals Jesus Christ as a **real** Person.  
Characters in novels are often shadowy,  
lacking substance.  
Christian Faith removes the shadows, revealing the  
Person and personality of Jesus.
2. So, when Christ speaks to the Christian, His words  
have that ring of truth, and authority that is  
the motivating voice of the True Leader!
- B. Through Faith, then, we see the mighty forces of God  
and Righteousness locked in combat with the forces  
of Satan and Evil (Ephesians 6:12) and,
  1. We Christians—God's Creation, are part of that  
mighty conflict. (See Ephesians 6:13-18).  
Thus we are Motivated by Faith—we Move!

### **Conclusion:**

1. What is Christian Faith? It is absolute belief coupled  
with absolute trust in the object of our Faith,  
Jesus Christ.
2. This Faith gives absolute reality to God and  
righteousness and to Satan and evil; to an  
Eternal Heaven and to an Everlasting Hell!
3. Then this Faith
  - a. Motivates Christians to act as obedient servants of  
God;
  - b. Makes this Christian Living Real and Rational.
  - c. It is Self Activating; Self Renewing and Self  
Strengthening.

# The One Church

## Introduction:

1. The history of Denominationalism is a long and sorry one!
  - a. Began with the development of the Roman Catholic Church.
  - b. Worsened greatly with the progress of the Reformation Movement.
2. It is becoming obvious that too many of our own members do not understand that God accepts only **one church—His!**  
(Some of our members seem to think of His Church [C. of C.] as just a better denomination or even as the best available!!)
3. This slide into error must be stopped for obvious reasons. We must get the facts right about the Lord's Church.

## Body:

- I. Jesus promised and prayed that there would be just **one church**.
  - A. The word church, of course, refers to the people who comprise it, **not** the building,
  - B. Except where it refers to congregations of the church the word as used in the New Testament is grammatically singular.
    1. (Matthew 16:18) Here, Jesus makes several statements:
      - a. He calls Simon "Petros"—"a stone", and, by contrast refers to Simon's reply, "*Thou art the Christ...*" as "petra", "a massive living rock" (verse 16).



- b. Notice too, *“I will build my church”*. He did **not** say, churches or sects or, denominations. Neither did He say He would build someone else’s church! He did say, *“My Church”*—singular.
- C. Jesus makes another important statement here: He said, *“The gates of hell shall not prevail against it”* (verse 18). This implies that it would last through the entire Christian Age.
1. Evil will not destroy it.
  2. Other religions will not destroy it.
  3. Sects and denominations will not destroy it, and,
  4. Wicked Rulers, Atheists, Evolutionists, absolutely nothing will ever destroy it.
- D. Jesus taught this idea of One Church elsewhere.
1. (John 15:1-6) He paints here a picture of One Vineyard, with God the Father as The Husbandman.  
There is a very different scene before us today:  
Many vineyards (denominations), each with its own earthly headquarters and earthly head!  
All in opposition to each other!  
All differing on basic doctrines!  
**But, Surprise! Surprise!** Each claiming God as its Husbandman!!
  2. The Parable gives the figure of the *“Vine and the branches”*. This pictures individuals as being in the Vine, ie. In Christ. In a desperate attempt to justify denominationalism, many have called the branches denominations!  
This is a gross misinterpretation, and one suspects that their scholars know it to be.
  3. (John 10:16) Here Jesus uses the figure of one

fold and one Shepherd.

One Flock!! No, the scene before us today is far different to the one Christ pictures!

E. Christ prayed for Christian Unity (John 17:20,21).

1. This prayer for unity implies One Church, One Flock!
2. If the denominations really care about Christ's prayer, why don't they throw away their man-made creeds and become **one** under Christ?

F. The Bible shows that Paul and other inspired writers understood Christ's teaching on the One Church:

One body: (Ephesians 4:4; Romans 12:4,5; 1 Corinthians 12:20).

Body equals Church (Ephesians 1:22,23; Colossians 1:18).

II. Now see that Christ shed His blood and died for just **one** church—**his**.

A. This is emphasized in Acts 20:28-31.

1. Jesus has purchased just One church with His blood. His Church—The Lord's Church (1 Peter 1:1,2; 18,19).
2. Notice too, Romans 5:9. Who were declared just by the blood of Christ? Answer: Those in the Lord's Church. Not those in some denomination—there were none!
3. See also Ephesians 1:7 (Written to the Church of Christ in Ephesus).  
(Ephesians 1:22,23; 2:13-22.) Not even Jew and Gentile Christians or congregations. Just **one** Body, **one** Church for which Christ shed His blood and laid down His life!!

## **Conclusion:**

1. The New Testament teaches just **one** true church.
2. Christ **only** promised to build **one** church—**His!**
3. The Apostles clearly understood this teaching.
4. Christ shed His blood for only **one** church—**His.**
5. This means that the Church of Christ is not a Better denomination or, even the Best denomination, **but**, is in fact, **not** a denomination at all!
6. It is the **one** church for which Christ died. You must be in it to be saved.

# Learning God's Will

## Introduction:

1. Are we losing sight of our **uniqueness**?
  - a. We must keep in mind that we are Restorationists, ie. we are appealing for a Restoration of Christianity as it was taught and practiced by faithful Christians in New Testament times.
2. Our stand demands that we emphasize the authority of the New Testament.

## Body:

- I. Let's begin by noticing three wise sayings used by those we often refer to as the Early Restorationists.
  - A. "No Book but the Bible and No Creed but Christ".
    1. Those Restorationists realized that there were many books competing with God's Word!  
This was not new (see Matthew 15:3-9, The Talmud etc.).  
And during the Church's infancy (Titus 1:13,14).
    2. This practice is rife in our day. eg. Book of Mormon; Mrs. White (SDA); Mary Baker Eddy; Judge Rutherford; J.Ws; and others.  
We must be alert and beware!!
    3. Creeds must be strongly opposed (see Revelation 22:18,19; Deuteronomy 4:2).  
Creeds:  
If Less than the Bible - They take from the Bible.  
If More than the Bible - They add to the Bible,  
and  
If the Same as the Bible - They are obviously not needed.
  - B. Another Restorations saying was, "Speak where the Bible Speaks and be silent where the Bible is

silent”.

1. This is an important admonition for us today!
2. It says, in effect, “We must have New Testament authority for our every doctrine and practice”.
3. But the saying goes beyond this. It requires that we actually “speak where the Bible speaks”.  
*“The whole counsel of God”* (Acts 20:27).

Not only that we not teach error, but that we teach the whole Truth.

C. There was a third saying: “Do Bible things in Bible ways and call Bible things by Bible names”.

1. Boredom seems a constant complaint of modern times!

A symptom of this is the constant call for change. Often only change for the sake of change.

Change is sometimes a backward step. (Eg. Rise and fall of nations! Old and modern architecture!)

2. This scream for change has invaded the Lord’s Church.

Change, of course, is not always a bad thing. But we must guard against change should it even threaten to violate New Testament Authority.

3. Those early and great Restorationists, called for a Return to the Old Paths, and, that we  
*“Seek out the Ancient Landmarks”* (Jeremiah 6:16; Proverbs 22:28).

Sadly, such words would be repulsive to many Christians today!

Let’s do Bible things in Bible ways.

II. Next we see that God expresses His will for us through His Word in three ways.

A. First, there is the Direct Command. (Eg. The

commandments to Believe and Repent and be Baptized (John 11:25,26; Acts 17:30; Acts 2:38).

1. When people in this Christian Age are told in the New Testament to Do something or, Not to Do something, that is a direct command.
- B. But God instructs us through His Word in ways other than by direct command.
  1. By necessary inference.  
There is an important difference between a mere inference and a necessary inference. (Eg "It took me four tanks of petrol to go to Melbourne last week.".)  
A necessary inference is, I used a petrol powered vehicle.  
But, they are only mere inferences that I drove the vehicle and that the vehicle was a car.  
Those inferences could well be wrong!
  2. Now to Scripture: The command to be baptized carries with it the necessary inference that there be found sufficient water to be baptized (immersed).  
But, it does not necessarily infer that it must be running water (a river).  
(It could be a lake, the ocean, or a man-made pond.)
  3. Be careful on two points:  
Don't miss out on a necessary inference and,  
Don't mistake a mere inference for a necessary inference.
- C. God also conveys His will to us by Apostolic Approved Example.
  1. Now this too has to have a God-given command on which to rest.  
(Eg. The Apostle Paul used sailing ships. He

obviously approved this method of ocean travel. But this form of travel is not bound on us today, because it rests on no God given command relating to travel.)

2. Well, what is the difference between that and Acts 20:7 which we use to authorize our observance of the Lord's Supper on the First Day of the Week? A Big difference!

The Apostolic Approved Example of Acts 20:7, rests on a God-given command to take The Lord's Supper (Luke 22:19; 1 Corinthians 11:24-26).

Then, from 1 Corinthians 11:20, we know that Christians were meeting for this purpose and Hebrews 10:25 some were rebuked for failing to assemble.

The **only** information missing then, is the when to assemble for this purpose. And by Apostolic Approved Example, Acts 20:7 tells us when. As easy as that!

### **Conclusion:**

1. We must have New Testament Authority for all we believe and practice.
2. We should try to keep to God's pattern of sound words.
3. We should use to advantage the wise sayings of the Early Restorationists, and
4. Remember, we learn God's will for us from His Word, not only by
  - a. Direct Command, but also by
  - b. Necessary Inference, and by
  - c. Apostolic Approved Example.

# Salvation and Good Works

**Read: Ephesians 2:8-10.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The “wreck of the Dunbar” - (One man saved). \*
2. Now let’s look at God saving whose soul was a spiritual wreck.

## **Body:**

- I. We are saved by the Grace of God (V. 8).
  - A. To say we are saved, implies, of course, that we were lost.
    1. The context affirms this: *“Dead in trespasses and sins”* (V. 1). Death = Separation. Our sins had separated us from God. So, we were Spiritually dead.
  - B. Paul then affirms: *“By God’s grace you are now saved”*.
    1. Grace, as related to our study means unmerited favor.
    2. To do someone a favor is to do them some kindness: A school child is given an early mark; an employee, a bonus. Not necessarily acts of grace. Each doubtless earned the reward.
    3. So, the word unmerited is important in understanding God’s Grace. We have done nothing to suggest we have earned God’s favor.

*“While we were yet sinners”, still in rebellion against God, “Christ died to save us”* (Romans 5:8). How great indeed is God’s



## Grace by which we are saved!

### II. But our salvation by Grace is conditional on our Faith (V.8).

- A. There is much confusion on the subject of Faith.
  - 1. Some: A mere acknowledgment that there is a Supreme Being. Not so! (James 2:19).
  - 2. Others: Simply belief (Faith only). No need for obedience: Repentance not needed (Acts 17:30), or Confession of Jesus being the Christ (Romans 10:10), or Baptism (Acts 2:38; 1 Peter 3:20,21).

Dare we take the scissors to these Scriptures?

- B. What then is the Faith referred to in our text?
  - 1. It is belief without reservation, plus absolute trust and absolute submission to His Will.
  - 2. Not simply a belief about Christ or, even in Him—but actually Believing Him (Matthew 10:32,33; Luke 13:3,5; Mark 16:16).

### III. Our text says our salvation (not our faith) is a gift from God (V.8).

- A. We must understand that we are saved by the shed blood of Christ.
  - 1. (Hebrews 9:22) No remission without the shedding of blood. The shed blood means the complete sacrifice. Total offering. Yet, bulls & goats were not sufficient! (Hebrews 10:4).
- B. To where then could the sinner turn for remission of sins?
  - 1. At this point God steps in to provide the perfect complete sacrifice.  
The Word becomes flesh (John 1:1-3,14). He

then becomes our Sacrifice (John 3:16; 1:29,34,36). Salvation truly the great gift from God.

**IV. Yet the saved are created to do good works (V. 10).**

**A. Doing good works is a Christian duty! Not to gain salvation, but because he is saved.**

1. Doing and walking imply action. Not simply avoiding evil but, actually doing good (James 4:17).

**B. No particular good works is specified, so the entire range of good works is open to us.**

1. But don't confuse our specified duties of worship, Bible study, prayer etc., with the good works of our text. Jesus makes this clear (Luke 17:7-10).

2. So we saved sinners must do good works because we are saved by the Grace of God!!

**Conclusion:**

1. We are saved by the unmerited favor of God.
2. Our salvation is a Gift from God.
3. This salvation is through obedient faith.
4. We are saved to do good works.

# Our Great High Priest

## Introduction:

1. The importance of the High Priest under the Mosaic Law (Leviticus 16:11-19,29,30). This was the annual duty of the High Priest — Only he could perform this duty (Hebrews 10:1,2,4).
2. Now to our text for this sermon: (Read Hebrews 4:12-16. Mainly verses 14,15).

## Body:

- I. First let's see that the whole of humanity desperately needs a Great High Priest.
  - A. To understand this the heinousness of sin must be seen.
    1. God created the universe, including man. Its beauty and orderliness was very plain to see. Its crowning glory was man, created in God's image (See Genesis 1 & 2).
    2. How do we feel about something we have created (say furniture, or needle-work, whatever)? Why, we cherish it. How greatly God must have cherished it as He surveyed His mighty creation.
    3. But suppose someone were to come along and destroy our creation! Most likely we would be very angry.
    4. Yet man, God's special creation, soon began to destroy his own beauty as he plunged headlong into sin (Genesis 3).  
How justifiably angry God became about this (Genesis 3:9-13,16-21,23,24).
    5. And man didn't improve, but got worse! (Genesis 4 and 6:5).

During the Mosaic Age His chosen people were in constant rebellion against God, despite His special goodness to them when they repented!

B. So, in view of man's constant sinfulness against God we can see they very badly needed a Great High Priest — A Mediator to face God for us!

1. Priests there came to be (mostly heads of families).
2. Melchizedek, a very notable one, and an extraordinary one (Genesis 14).
3. The Israelites, in time, had their High Priests. But, as the Bible says, even the best were not good enough (Hebrews 9:6,7).

Obviously mankind needed a Great High Priest that was better than the best. Christ became that Perfect High Priest.

He alone could be the Perfect (sinless) High Priest.

He alone, and at the same time, could be the sinless sacrifice for sin!

II. Only Christians have the Great High Priest to plead their case, even though every person who has ever lived, or ever will live, needs Him.

A. What we are saying is that only Christians have access to God through Christ!

1. The Moslems and Hindus and all other religions have rejected Christ.

So they have no High Priest acceptable to God, no Advocate and no Mediator between themselves and God!! That's frightening!!

2. What of the denominations? Truly and mostly,

they acknowledge Jesus as God's Son. But they have rejected His terms of Salvation (belief, repentance, confession and baptism) and other matters, including acts of worship. Can we do these things and then expect Him to be our Great High Priest? (see Hebrews 8:5).

- B. And our Great High Priest knows both God and Man at first hand (v.15).
  - 1. His Link with man — He became flesh... (John 1:14).  
He can and does feel for us. Tempted on the human level yet, without sin (v.15).
  - 2. But notice those words—without sin. That's His Link with God.  
That makes Him the Perfect High Priest. Better than the best Advocate!
  - 3. Everyone else who rejects Christ must finally face God alone, unsaved and without an Advocate!

III. This is a very good reason to "*hold fast to our profession*" (v.14).

- A. As simply Christians, is what we believe—our Faith. (Ephesians 2:8) tells us we are "*saved by grace through faith*".
  - 1. So, we are saved by our faith in the shed blood of Christ.
- B. Our text tells us to hold fast to this!
  - 1. Never let it go!  
Don't ever let some atheist, or anyone else, loosen your grip.  
Don't let a works Salvationist break your hold on this profession.
  - 2. We could think, perhaps, any activity is better than

none. Not so!

Were I being plucked by helicopter from the sea —  
50 miles off Sydney

Heads, I'd cling to that rope! Absolutely nothing  
could persuade me I'd do better were I active  
— swimming for it!

C. Now Jesus is in the Heavens, pleading our cause  
(1 John 2:1).

1. But it's better than that. He has willingly become  
our Perfect Sacrifice (Hebrews 10:1-14).
2. It is because He then presents the Christian before  
God as saved that writer can say, "*let us  
hold fast our profession*".

#### **Conclusion:**

1. Read the text again.
2. With man's sinfulness frankly admitted, and a Just  
God to be Faced, man obviously needed a Great  
High Priest.
3. Jesus became, and is, that Great High Priest, and only  
Christians have His great Services!
4. No wonder we are urged to "*Hold fast to our  
profession*".

# The Sons of God!

**Text.** 1 John 3:1-3.

## **Introduction:**

1. Many today interest themselves in searching out their Family Tree.  
(May find they are Sons of convicts, or of Royal Blood!)
2. Of course we are all Sons of Adam, and of course, Sons of Noah—through Shem, Ham or Japheth.
  - a. But the Bible points to the fact that Christians are Sons of God (1 John 3:1-3)!

## **Body:**

- I. God's love for fallen humanity is truly amazing! "*Behold what manner of love...*"
  - A. God's love for us is undeserved — but has been evident from the beginning.
    1. We've done nothing to cause God to love us.  
Rather the opposite! Look at some of the best men in Scripture: Adam:
      - a. God placed him in an earthly paradise, gave him a healthy body, and a beautiful wife.
      - b. Adam made no attempt to keep Eve from sinning, and promptly sinned himself!
      - c. Then had the audacity to blame God!
    2. And this is the rebellious history of mankind!  
Noah: Drunken lewdness.  
Abraham: Lied about his wife.  
Isaac: Lied about his wife too.  
Jacob: Cheated, Stole, Practiced favoritism.

Moses: Struck the Rock, Rank disobedience!  
David: Stole a man's wife, committed adultery,  
then murder!  
Peter: Denied Christ with cursing! And, these  
are the pick of the bunch!

- B. Not only is God's love for us undeserved, it is also amazing in its quality and extent!
1. Sin is rebellion against God Himself. Not just against, say, parents or against civil law—but against **God** (Psalm 51:4)!
  2. Yet, through the ages, God has kept saying, Repent and I'll forgive! Note the following were given time to repent!
    - a. The antediluvian's—120 years.
    - b. The Amorites—400 years.
    - c. The Israelites in the wilderness—40 years, and many more examples after they entered the Promised Land. Truly, "*God commendeth... while we were yet sinners*" (Romans 5:8).
- C. Now, the Apostle John says to us, Behold this Love!!
1. Look at the parable of The Vineyard (Matthew 21:33-44). Notice:
    - a. Prophets come and are rejected.
    - b. The Son is sent and is killed.
    - c. Yet Kingdom is still set up and given to all who truly repent! What manner of love!
  2. Jesus promised forgiveness (Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:47), and
    - a. To the very worst of sinners: (Luke 23:34 and Acts 2:37-39),
    - b. Even to the Gentiles, despite their behaviour (Romans 1:20-32).
    - c. Yet, His Grace and Love abounds (Romans



5:20,21),

d. Even to calling us His Sons!! (1 John 3:1;  
John 1:12).

Yes, indeed, "*Behold what manner of Love*"!!

II. But John speaks of a promise of even greater things to come (v.2.)!

A. The Sons of God now! What shall we be?!

1. John says, We don't know exactly. Not fully revealed. Just a glimpse.

2. When He (Christ) shall appear — we shall be like Him (Philippians 3:20,21).

3. Just a glimpse—but what an exciting glimpse!  
Perhaps we could not understand a full view.  
(Caterpillar to Butterfly!!)

B. What was different about the Risen Christ?

1. He was no longer bound by place, distance, form, or, time!

a. Walls and closed doors were no longer barriers (John 20:19-26)!

b. He could change His appearance (John 20:11-16; Luke 24:13-31).

c. The Transfiguration (Luke 9:2,7). (A pre-view??)

2. Paul speaks of massive change (Philippians 3:20,21; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Corinthians 15:51-53).

a. No longer earth-bound (Acts 1:9-11). Where did He go? To the right hand of God (Acts 2:33-35 and 7:55,56).

III. Our consequent obligations and desires (v3).

A. To be pure should be our desire and is our obligation.

(Read and comment on 1 John 3:43-10; 1 John 1:6-

10; Romans 7:15-25; 5:20-6:18.)

- B. We purify ourselves by (1) Remembering we belong to God and (2) That God calls us His Sons!!

**Conclusion:**

1. God's love is amazing! Forgiven sinners, now the Sons of God!
2. We are given an exciting glimpse of what we shall be!
3. Thus we are motivated to be
  - a. Loyal to Christ and
  - b. To purify ourselves.

# The Church at Work

**Text: Mark 16:13-19.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The Church is not an assembly of Christians whose sole purpose is to gather together for formal worship.
2. The Church is a living, pulsating organism, with a special work to do!

## **Body:**

- I. What is the Church? (Greek: Ecclesia.) But, Bible descriptions are best.
  - A. The Church is the body of Christ (Ephesians 1:20,22,23).
    1. What is really meant by that?  
Do we mean His physical body? Surely not! It was crucified and died.  
Is it His Risen body? When Christ's physical body rose from the grave, it had undergone some remarkable changes!  
Paul calls that risen body Christ's Glorious Body and compares it with our present body (Philippians 3:21).
    2. What was different about Christ's risen body?  
Walls and closed doors meant nothing (John 20:19).  
Gravity could be set aside! (Acts 1:9-11).
    3. Could this be the body Paul calls the Church?  
Surely not. It ascended into heaven (Acts 2:31-36).
  - B. What then does Paul mean when he calls the Church the body of Christ?
    1. He seems to use the expression in two ways:

- a. A body of people. (ie) one might say, A fine body of men (say, soldiers). So with the Church:  
A body of people belonging to Christ thus  
The body of Christ.
- b. Then there is metonymy. Jesus made frequent use of the metaphor.  
“*I am the vine*”—door—shepherd; called Herod a fox and other instances.  
So, the Church is the body of Christ in this sense: It functions like a body functions (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

- C. And there are some things special about this Body.
  - 1. It's a washed body (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).
  - 2. It's a reconciled body (2 Corinthians 5:14-19).
  - 3. It's a body delivered from Satan and redeemed (Colossians 1:10-14).
  - 4. It's a body at war with evil (Ephesians 6:12).
  - 5. It's a body at work (1 Corinthians 12:12-27; Colossians 2:19).

## II. What work does God expect from this Body?

- A. Basically, one thing: That the body preach the Gospel (Mark 16:15,16).
  - 1. To preach is to proclaim aloud—to publicly proclaim.
  - 2. The Gospel is The Good News: (ie.)
    - a. That Jesus is the Christ and
    - b. That He has been given all power (Matthew 28:19-28), and
    - c. All the implications of these two facts.
  - 3. One important implication is that every believer has the right to repent, submit to Christ in baptism and be forgiven (John 1:12)!

- B. But in the process of preaching the Gospel, the body must Live the Gospel.
  - 1. Christians, as individuals, should live as becometh the Gospel (Ephesians 2:10; 5:1-9).
  - 2. Likewise the Church (body) will live the Gospel as well as preach it.
  
- III. Now, what specifically is the local congregation to do in Preaching and Living the Gospel?
  - A. The Church, as we've seen is to Proclaim the Gospel.
    - 1. To do so will be to employ various methods.
      - a. Preaching in the Church Building.  
This necessarily implies bringing the unsaved into the building to hear the Gospel.
      - b. Preaching the Gospel wherever we can gather an audience of the unsaved to hear it.  
New Testament examples reveal great results.  
(Think how long it would have taken to convert 3000 on a one-to-one basis!) Still, don't give up on Personal Work.
      - c. Gospel Missions: Properly planned they still work! Try using a rented hall , as a neutral venue.  
Then there is the Gospel Tape Lending Library and of course, the Written Word —(tracts, booklets etc.)
  - B. But the Church, as a Body, must live the Gospel.
    - 1. James, among others, point to the futility of preaching the Gospel to the cold and hungry (James 1:27; 2:15,16; 1 John 3:18; Galatians 6:10; Ephesians 2:10; Titus 2:14; 3:8).

2. The Church must do good works and be seen to do them (Matthew 5:16). Look for the hurt in the community (the needs) and set out to help!

**Conclusion:**

1. The Church is the Body of Christ.
2. God expects it to Proclaim the Gospel and to Live it.
3. We should look for the needs in the community, then try to do something about those needs. Result? Souls will be won for Christ.

# “Standing on the Promises”

**Text: Hebrews 8:6-13.**

## **Introduction:**

1. A New Covenant has resulted in Better Promises.
2. Today we will look at just three points:
  - a. The certainty of God’s Promises
  - b The nature of Old Testament Promises—and, by contrast,
  - c. The nature of New Testament Promises—which are Better.

## **Body:**

- I. When God makes a Promise you can absolutely depend upon it.
  - A. By contrast man-made promises are all too often Uncertain!
    1. Often our loved ones—those we trust most, are the very ones who break their promises!
    2. Some politicians make promises with little intention of keeping them.  
The maxim says: Promises are like pie-crusts—made to be broken. Some seem to actually believe this!!
  - B. Breaking promises is not something new! The Old Testament offers many examples:
    1. Adam (Genesis 2:15-17) Was this a one-way conversation? More than likely Adam made some promises. If so, those promises were soon broken.
    2. The Israelites: After Moses gave the Law, they promised to keep it (Exodus 24:3).

But by (Exodus 32:1-6) the promise was broken.  
(These but two examples.)

- C. By contrast, God's promises never fail! Note some examples:
1. To Adam: "...*thou shalt surely die.*" (Genesis 2:17). (None escape.)
  2. To Noah: The Flood (Genesis 6:5,12,13,17; Genesis 7:19-24).
  3. To Abraham: (Blessings (Genesis 12:1-3; 13:14-16). The Land. (Joshua 21:43-45). The Seed: (Galatians 3:16).
  4. The promises made to Israel re the Coming of Christ. Some details:  
Genesis 3:15—The Seed Of Woman.  
Genesis 12:3—The Seed Of Abraham.  
Genesis 49:10—The Tribe of Judah.  
Isaiah 9:7—Heir to David's Throne.  
Micah 5:2—To be born in Bethlehem.  
Daniel 9:25—Time of Birth.  
Plus, the Betrayal; Death; Resurrection. All these promises God kept.

II. Now let's look at the nature of God's Old Testament promises.

- A. Almost all of these promises were of a material nature: (Land; Crops; Herds; Flocks; Gold, Silver etc.).
1. In effect, God says to them: "Serve Me, and all these things will be yours. And, I'll fight your battles and destroy your enemies!"  
Psalm 1:1-3 sums it up. (Deuteronomy 11:13-15), Rain and Crops etc. and, Psalm 112—Fear God and be blessed with wealth and many descendants etc.
- B. Yes, and these promises stood firm whenever the



Israelites remained faithful. Whenever they ceased to be faithful God kept His other promises to bring them poverty, defeat and captivity. (All of an earthly, material nature!)

- C. Sadly, too many Christians mistakenly believe these promises apply to us today. Too many of our preachers preach it, or leave the impression they are teaching it.

This results in disappointment and for some new Christians to lose their faith!!

III. Now, let's look at the Better but very different promises of the New Testament, under the New and Better Covenant.

- A. Far from promising Christians prosperity, God has warned of adversity. This could initially disappoint—but facts must be faced.
  - 1. Here are some of Christ's warnings (Matthew 5:10,11; John 15:20;16:33).
  - 2. Also, those things and those loved ones we treasure most must take second place to Christ, if we are to be His followers (Luke 14:25-27).
- B. Was this the experience of His followers in Bible times? Yes! (Acts 8:1;13,50; 14:22, Persecution, Tribulation.)
  - 1. Paul spoke of it: (Romans 5:3;12:12—Valuable to us today).
  - 2. He had lots of it: (2 Corinthians 4:8,9; 7:4; 11:23-28).
  - 3. Thessalonians: (1 Thessalonians 2:14,15; 2 Thessalonians 1:4,5).
  - 4. Indeed, all Christians will experience some (2 Timothy 3:10-12).
- C. So, how can the New Testament Promises be

considered as Better Promises?

1. Simple! The Old were largely material, temporal in nature. While the New with the troubles and persecutions experienced in obtaining of Eternal, Spiritual Blessings.
2. Here are some of the promises made to Christians:
  - a. Sins forgiven and forgotten by God. (Acts 2:38; Hebrews 8:12). (Contrast Hebrews 10:1-4.)
  - b. A reconciled relationship with God (2 Corinthians 5:15-19).
  - c. Made nigh (Ephesians 2:12-18).
  - d. Security and Peace (Romans 8:33-39).
  - e. Christian Fellowship (1 John 1:3-7).
  - f. Saved from Eternal Hell (Romans 3:23; 6:23; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38).
  - g. Saved to Eternity with God (Matthew 25:46; John 10:27,28; 1 John 5:13).

These Great and Better Promises give meaning to life, bring peace for the soul and provide the comfort we all need.

### **Conclusion:**

1. God's Promises are certain.
2. Don't confuse New Testament and Old Testament Promises.
3. The Faithful will experience troubles and persecutions, yet will obtain the Better Promises, bringing Rest for the Soul.

# The Doctrine of Christ

**Text: 2 John 9.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The word doctrine is seldom used in the Old Testament.
2. It is used frequently in the New Testament (Matthew 7:28). People were astonished at Christ's Doctrine (Matthew 16:12). Beware of the Doctrine of the Pharisees.  
(Acts 2:42) "...continued in the Apostles' Doctrine."  
(Titus 1:9; 2:1) Hold fast to Sound Doctrine. (And much more.)
3. Our text specifically refers to the Doctrine Of Christ, which we will see, (1) Separates; (2) Motivates, (3) Comforts.

## **Body:**

- I. The doctrine of Christ is a separating doctrine.
  - A. Doctrine = The body of teaching. (All of it. eg. K. Marx.)
    1. So, the Doctrine of Christ is that body of teaching from Christ, that distinguishes it from all other religious teachings. It comes to us through God inspired men (Galatians 1:11,12).
  - B. The Doctrine of Christ Separates because to deviate from it is to lose both the Father and the Son (2 John 9).
  - C. What else does it separate us from?
    1. From the World (2 Corinthians 6:17; Titus 2:14).  
The world measures success by the accumulation of wealth (Luke 12:15-21).

Doctrine of Christ puts Spiritual Things first  
(Matthew 6:25-34; Titus 2:14).

2. It separates us from all other religions! This upset the Gentiles in Bible times (Acts 17:22-34). It still does today in this 20th Century!

It separates from the Eastern Religions and from Denominationalism.

Some today actually rejoice in denominationalism —Calling on people to Attend the church of your choice. But the Doctrine of Christ calls for the Unity of all Christians (John 17:20,21; 1 Corinthians 1:10-14).

3. So, knowing and heeding the Gospel of Christ is very important. It causes us  
To be able to recognize error quickly!  
To be ready to oppose error lovingly, yet with courage and faithfully preach the Doctrine of Christ (Galatians 1:6-9; Hebrews 2:1-3).

## II. The Doctrine of Christ is a Motivating Doctrine.

### A. It Motivates us to reach out to a Lost World.

1. The world today presents us a very Black Picture (Romans 3:23; 6:23).  
The Religious Leaders of Jesus' time were condemned by Him (Matthew 23:13-17).
2. Today, it seems little better! The religious world is just not abiding in the Doctrine of Christ!
3. The Modernist denies the Deity of Christ! The Sectarian raises his human-creed above God's Word!
4. Too many members of the Lord's Church would not recognize doctrinal error if they fell over it!  
Too strong? Try them with these few

questions:

- a. Why does the shed blood of Christ save?
- b. When does it save?
- c. How does it save?
- d. How long does it continue to save?
- e. Why Weekly communion?
- f. Why is sprinkling **not** baptism, even though dictionaries say it is?

And, of course, other questions. (Consider carefully Peter 4:17,18).

- B. The Doctrine of Christ motivates us to reach out to this Lost world. A challenge to change things! We deal with Dead People daily (Ephesians 2:1-7)! Remember, often those who are our nearest and dearest are numbered among the lost!

### III. But the Doctrine of Christ is also a Comforting Doctrine. (Read text.)

#### A. We all like to feel Comforted.

1. Isn't it great, after a hard day's work—just to flop into our special comfortable chair and relax, feel comforted? Or, for Mother to come home after fighting the bustling crowds shopping, just to kick off her shoes and relax? (If she can!) How we all long for the sensation of Comfort!

#### B. Much more important is our need for Spiritual Comfort (rest). Jesus reminds us (Matthew 11:28-30), Rest for the Soul (Doctrine of Christ)

(John 14:1-9), (Christ comforted His disciples.)

#### C. Security plays a big part in Comfort.

1. We like to feel secure. It comforts us. So, locks on doors, home secure against storms!

- Security in employment! Security in Old Age!
2. Security for the Soul! How we need it! How very comforting! The need is not new (Psalm 61:1-3; 94:22; 18:35).
  3. For the Christian (Colossians 3:3), a secure hiding place and (1 Peter 1:3,4), no doubt, no argument, reserved!
- D. Who could not want the Doctrine Of Christ? What Comfort! What Security!

**Conclusion:**

1. When we have the Doctrine of Christ, we have both the Father and the Son.
2. The Doctrine of Christ separates Christians from
  - a. The World and
  - b. Every other religion.
3. The Doctrine of Christ motivates Christians
  - a. To be faithful to Christ,
  - b. To reach out to the lost with the Gospel of Christ.
4. The Doctrine of Christ gives both spiritual comfort and security.

# Lost by Neglect!

## Introduction:

1. It's tragic to see a man die, never having shown any belief or interest in God, lost eternally!
2. But there's something more tragic than this! When a man dies, having been a faithful practicing Christian, but who at last let his faith die and his love for Christ to vanish away! (Read our Text: Hebrews 2:1-3a.)

## Body:

- I. We are to "*give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard*" (v.1).
  - A. Earnest heed = very careful attention.
    1. We sometimes hear without heeding (eg.) the radio weather report. Children often hear without heeding. Or hearing but failing to heed sometimes causes us to re-tell an event inaccurately.
    2. Many heard Christ, but not all heeded Him!  
And, sadly, many do this today.
  - B. To the things which we have heard (v.1).
    1. We've heard many things from many sources,  
So, what things in particular?  
Some things are easily eliminated: not, baking cakes or foot-ball or work or science fiction!
    2. Plainly, the writer speaks of Salvation (v.3). But what in particular about it?  
Clue!/? Therefore—For this reason.  
Chapter 1—Contents shows:
      - a. The Greatness of Christ!
      - b. His exalted place in the universe!

- c. His absolute and complete authority!
  - C. So, it's those things concerning Christ and our Salvation to which we must give the more earnest heed.
    - 1. This does not end with belief, repentance, confession and baptism, but includes every practice of Christianity. (*"Work out your own salvation..."* Philippians 2:12.)
      - It would include the five acts of Lord's Day Worship; constant and regular Bible Study (2 Timothy 2:15) and regular, frequent prayer. There is too, our daily battle with our behaviour And, our continual striving to show our love for God, for our fellow Christians and for the lost.
  - D. These things must be heeded from God's Word, Never from other sources. We have not already arrived (Philippians 3:12-16)!
    - 1. There is only one source which is right and cannot be wrong: God's Word.
- II. Now, verse 2 says that Old Testament laws had built into them just punishments for their breach.
- A. No law is worth the ink unless such punishments are built into them, (eg.) the T Junction road law: Penalty or punishment is built into the law. And, of course, the punishment must be a real deterrent and fitting to the Law.
  - B. So it is with God's laws in the Old Testament (eg.) Steal—(Exodus 20:15) and the punishment (Exodus 22:1). Adultery—(Exodus 20:14) and Punishment (Leviticus 20:10). So the writer of Hebrews is able to say that the punishment for breaking the Law is Just.
- III. Now, the 2000 year old question is still unanswered!



How shall we escape if we **neglect** so great Salvation??

- A. Two phrases here deserve our close attention.
1. *"Lest at any time we should let them slip"* (v.1).  
Some translations read, *"...let them drift"*. Both indicate that something is happening through lack of control (eg.), I let that slip. The tongue was not controlled or, I slipped up on that job. (Not enough heeding!)  
Our text says this can happen with God's instructions by failing to pay heed to His Word.
  2. To drift is easy! You need do Nothing to Drift away.
- B. Then, there's the word Neglect.
1. Neglect ends in ruin!! I frequently pass a neglected garden. I'm sure it was once very beautiful. Now it's just completely over-grown with grass and weeds. Nothing but a sad and real ruin!!
  2. This can be just as true in Christianity! Simply **neglect** worship, assembling with the brethren taking in spiritual food etc., and very soon
  3. Christians, or even a Congregation, becomes over-grown with doctrinal error till it bears little resemblance to the flourishing spiritual garden it once was.  
All because of **neglect!**

### Conclusion:

1. Our task? To give the more earnest heed.
2. It's still all too easy to let slip or to drift away.
- 3 Remember, the 2000 year old question It's never been answered. How shall we escape, if we let slip the instructions of God??

# This Priceless Treasure

**Text: 2 Corinthians 4:7.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Philips calls it, This priceless treasure.
2. What is the most priceless treasure you have ever seen? (Diamonds, gold, houses, aircraft, ships, or whatever?) Yet really, they all have a Price!
3. But then, can we actually comprehend some Prices? Governments talk casually about billions of dollars! Billions! Can we really visualize a billion??
4. We are about to talk about a Treasure that can't even be measured in billions of dollars. (Read 2 Corinthians 4:1-7.)

## **Body:**

- I. First we will notice the enormous power of this Priceless Treasure.
  - A. To understand its power, it helps to first see the power of sin.
    1. Sin wrecked the lives of Adam and Eve and the entire human race (Genesis 3:17-19; Romans 8:19-23)!
    2. Sin, unrepented of, drowned a populated world and changed the face of the globe itself (Genesis 7:17-24).
    3. Sin, by its Power, has brought degradation and destruction to men and nations: Sodom and Gomorrah (Genesis 19:23-25). Egyptian Empire (Exodus 14:15-31). Nation of Israel. Babylonian Empire (Daniel 5:25-30).

Roman Empire.

The Human Race (Romans 1:18-32).

4. Paul gives an awesome description of sin's power (Ephesians 6:12).
- B. Question: "Can man stand alone against such super-human power of destruction"—Sin!??
  1. To ask the question is to answer it. A more hopeless, one-sided battle defies imagination! Man must emerge from such a battle, crushed, broken and ruined.
- C. But man need not go down crushed and defeated.
  1. The enormous power of this Priceless Treasure is there for his use!
  2. Paul calls it the power of God to save (Romans 1:16).

This great power changes helpless man to be "*more than conqueror*" (Romans 8:37).  
Provides a crown for the victor (2 Timothy 4:8).
  3. Think of it! The evil power that
    - a. Brought the world to a watery grave,
    - b. Reduced Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes,
    - c. Crushed mighty Empires and,
    - d. Dragged men down to degradation and ruin, is completely overwhelmed by the power of this priceless treasure—the Gospel!!

II. Now let's look at the fragile beauty of this Priceless Treasure!

- A. Can something as powerful as this priceless treasure, be also both beautiful and Fragile? (An enigma?)
  1. That the gospel is beautiful, few will deny.

The very concept of the Great Creator stooping to rescue His rebellious creatures is beautiful

beyond words. That this rescue operation would extend to the Crucifixion of Christ, His Son, is amazingly beautiful! This much is usually conceded.

2. But fragile? Yes, the gospel is priceless, beautiful, powerful and fragile!
3. It is fragile because it can be handled deceitfully (v.2).

Think of a fine Crystal Goblet, a thing of beauty (describe).

How would you handle it? Would you break it to change its design? If you did would it still be the same goblet?!

4. Yet the Gospel is equally fragile, and men have attempted to change its design!  
So it has Warning written all over it. (Gospel—Fragile, Handle With Care.)

### III. Now let's look at this priceless treasure's earthy container.

- A. Christians are the earthen vessels (2 Corinthians 4:7).  
Little beauty; easily broken; and short lived. (Not the Soul, of course.) (Clay. Genesis 2:7; 3:19.)
- B. This clay vessel should be honored to be trusted with such a priceless treasure (1 Thessalonians 2:4).
  1. What a tremendous responsibility!! Such power entrusted to us!  
(Compare with Jumbo Jet's pilot entrusted with great power.)
  2. This priceless treasure should be enhanced by the earthen vessel presenting it. (As a great painting would be enhanced by an appropriate frame (Matthew 5:16.)
- C. Our task as earthen vessels, is to constantly display

this priceless treasure.

Do this properly and continually, and our task in this respect is at an end.

The power that is in the treasure will do the rest!

1. Not all who view this treasure will allow its power to touch them. They simply refuse help!! They will finally pay the price.
2. But many will sell all that they have to become its container.

**Conclusion:**

1. We are earthen vessels containing a priceless treasure, God's power to save.
2. This, though having enormous power, is fragile and must be handled with care!
3. Our responsibility is to keep it on constant display.

# Christ's Own Invitation!

**Text: Matthew 11:28-30.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Sometimes some of us engage in wishful thinking!
  - a. This is not a very realistic way to face life.
  - b. Eventually facts must be faced.
2. This is true of Christianity.
  - a. Too often it's thought that being a Christian means
    - (1) All problems are now solved (turned over to Christ).
    - (2) And all troubles are at an end!
  - b. Completely false! This idea leads to disillusionment! Even, loss of faith!
3. Let's look at Christ's own invitation.  
(Matthew 11:28-30).

## **Body:**

- I. First we notice a load to dispose of.
  - A. Humanity is loaded with many burdens (Primary school, teenagers, early marriage years, family years, and old age). Each have their own burdens.
  - B. But these are not the burdens or the yoke of which Jesus speaks.
    1. The subject is not the body but rather the soul.
      - a. Sin is our greatest burden! Sin automatically brings its own punishment.  
Transgression of any of God's laws means disastrous results (electricity, gravity, laws of stress and strain — say in building, natural laws).
      - b. On the spiritual level, sin ends in feelings of

- guilt—an immense burden!
2. But sin is made even harder to bear because man is God Conscious.
    - a. God-consciousness is built into man as surely as instincts are built into animals.
    - b. It's as impossible for man to ignore God-consciousness, as for a migratory bird not to migrate.
  3. But sin separates from God (Isaiah 59:1,2). That's where the trouble starts. The unforgiven sinner has restless, peace-destroying, loaded-down feelings that make all other unpleasant feelings seem as light afflictions (2 Corinthians 4:17).
  4. Too often men fail to see this fact.
    - a. Mostly, men feel it is the burdens of daily living that's causing unhappiness.
    - b. So they try all manner of hiding or covering the problems with veneers of happiness! It doesn't work. Or they try to forget, using drink, drugs, etc.
  5. So the burden of unforgiven sin continues to crush! This is the real burden of which Christ speaks, saying, "Come unto Me... I'll give you rest from the real burden".

II. Now look at a yoke to be worn, a burden to be carried and lessons to be learned.

- A. The first reaction here is that we have a paradox!
  1. Jesus first offers rest, then in the same breath says, but there's a yoke to wear and I'll be putting you to work! There's a load to carry!
  2. So is Jesus saying, "You'll just exchange one load

- for another, and one lot of work for another?"
- a. Yes, that's exactly right! But really, not so very paradoxical.
- B. Complete idleness—endlessly, is not real pleasure. (Solitary confinement with nothing at all to do is used for punishment.)
1. The yoke and burden cast off is the unbearable weight of unforgiven sin.  
In its place Christ offers a comfortable yoke along with a soul-satisfying work to be done.
  2. We humans need to face our status in the universe. We are not gods!! We are servants!! But we do have a choice of masters (Romans 6:11-16).
- C. Here's a very important observation: Christ is not talking about removing material problems. If He was, then most of His faithful servants have been neglected by Him, and completely missed out on His promise! (Note: The Apostles, Paul especially, and the early Christians generally and the persecutions they experienced.)
1. Denominational preachers often say, "Turn everything over to Jesus and all your problems will be solved and your sicknesses healed."  
Now that's just rubbish!!  
Jesus never promised this. Never! Quite the opposite (see Mark 10:30; 2 Timothy 3:12).
  2. Pray? Yes—continually (Ephesians 6:18,19; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; Luke 18:1).  
But remember too, God has given us a wonderful brain and enough brawn!  
Let's put them to use in His service.



### III. A Promise of Rest.

A. Yes! A rest for the soul (verse 29).

1. This is the most desirable of rests. A knowledge of a complete reconciliation to God (2 Corinthians 5:17-19). A beautiful, soul-satisfying rest.

B. To obtain that rest, we must heed Christ's own invitation:

1. "*Come unto Me...*" Sit at His feet — "*Learn of Me*"! Truly Learn. Use the open mind attitude.
2. Our understanding finds rest in our ever-increasing knowledge of Him and His will for us.
3. Our affections, in our love for Christ, giving quiet assurance and satisfaction.

### Conclusion:

1. Yes, come to Jesus. He will unload your burden of sin.
2. Then He'll put you to work, with an easy yoke and a light load.
3. He won't solve your every problem. This He has not promised to do.
  - a. But He does expect for you to pray and then act.
  - b. And He'll give you "*rest for your soul*". This is His own invitation.

# Stand Fast!

## Introduction:

1. "Ivory Soap Floats." Constant advertising was found to be important, Lest the public forget.
2. "*There arose a king who knew not Joseph...*" (Exodus 1:8). (It would only have taken one generation to forget Joseph.)
3. It takes but one generation for the Lord's Church to forget and return to the quagmire of error!! Let's look now at 1 Corinthians 16:13,14.

## Body:

- I. First, be watchful for the protection of the faith.
  - A. The idea here is to keep awake!
    1. It's all too easy to sleep when we should be very much awake.
      - a. Be wide awake while driving or engaged in secular work etc.
      - b. Be wide awake while at worship and Bible Study (much more important).
    2. Here is the idea of vigilance (as a sentry on guard).
      - a. In war situation the sentry's work is vital. Often stands at his post alone at night!
      - b. Yet safety, often for the lives of many, depend on the sentry's watchfulness.
    3. This responsibility to be watchful, awake, on guard is referred to in other Scripture (Matthew 24:36-42).
      - a. We Christians must be watchful of our own behaviour. We never know when our time will end. Be forever on the alert!

- B. Not only individual watchfulness, but also congregational watchfulness.
1. Watchfulness concerning faith (ie.) beliefs and practices, on the congregational level.
  2. God does think in terms of the Congregation.  
Many of Paul's letters were written to Congregations as such.
  3. So this congregation, as such, must be watchful as to its faith and practices.
    - a. But of course that's just fantasy, isn't it? The very idea that this congregation might drift into error is beyond belief, isn't it?
    - b. I wonder did the Laodiceans once think that way? (Read Revelation 3:14-19.)
  4. Consider the Australian churches of the early Restoration Period! Do we really think that those early congregations really believed they would return to error?  
But they did! And the following generations just accepted the errors as though truth. They failed to watch!
  5. We must be watchful for the not-so-obvious error!  
Instrumental music is obvious! But Pentecostalism, Congregational Benevolence Eating in the church building wrongly condemned etc.  
So, let's begin by being watchful about our congregational faith (beliefs) and practices. Be constantly on guard!

## II. Stand Fast in the Faith.

- A. This is a military command = spring to attention!  
No movement!

- B. This should be our attitude toward error.
  - 1. Unmoving, unwavering, steadfastness in defense of God's Word (the faith).
  - 2. Not good enough to merely watch for error, but whenever seen we must stand fast against it.
  - 3. Warning: Be careful though not to bend over backwards into error! Just stand straight up.

### III. "*Quit you like men*" concerning the Faith!

- A. Literally, behave in a manly fashion concerning the faith.
  - 1. Be brave and courageous in defense of the faith.
  - 2. Don't be alarmed by the enemies of the faith
  - 3. Don't act the coward in defense of Bible authority. (It is said that a soldier once told his shaking knees that if they just knew where he was about to take them, they really would shake, for sure!) Christianity is said to be a religion for heroes.
- B. Observation: Women can be manly, but hardly, masculine.
- C. God has always required such courage.
  - 1. Joshua (read Joshua 1:1-9).
  - 2. David (read 1 Chronicles 28:20).These and other instances show the importance of being brave (not cowardly) in defense of God's truth.

### IV. Be strong in your determination to hold to the Faith.

- A. Be firm about the Faith.
  - 1. Don't be wishy-washy. Insist that God's Word is final and binding.
  - 2. Don't be bound in Christianity by laws mere men

have made.

- V. Now, this watchful, positive, solid, brave, stand for the faith, must be done in love (v.14).
  - A. It is so easy to lose sight of Christian love while defending the Faith.
    - 1. Bullying and unkindness and disregard for the feelings of others is not what God wants (Ephesians 4:31,32). That command is as binding as those on baptism and repentance.
  - B. While being ever watchful against error, we must be equally careful to be kind and tender hearted.

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Be on constant watch for error. Speak out bravely against it wherever you see it.
- 2. Be brave in the face of the Enemies of Truth.
- 3. Do it all with Love.

**Series of Four**  
**Theme: "What Faith Can Do For You"**  
**Sermon 1**  
**A Voice from the Dead!**

**Text: Hebrews 11:4.**

**Introduction:**

1. The subject of faith is extremely important.
  - a. Because it is impossible to please God without faith (Hebrews 11:6).
  - b. Because we are saved by faith (Romans 5:1).
  - c. And, remember, our faith must be a live faith (James 2:24,26).
2. We will begin our Series with a look at Abel's faith.  
(Read: Hebrews 11:4.)

**Body:**

- I. First, we ask, "What is faith, and how do we obtain it?"
  - A. There is enormous confusion on this question.
    1. Some say faith is a feeling, that it's an inner voice!
    2. Others, it's simply a belief that Jesus was an historical person.
    3. Such ideas have no Bible foundation.
  - B. (Hebrews 11:1.) This is not a Bible definition of faith, as many suppose!
    1. It explains what faith does for a person.
      - a. It gives substance and reality to our hopes!
      - b. It stands as proof of things not seen. (Past, Present and Future.)
  - C. Bible approved faith is an absolute, unwavering

belief, coupled with complete unreserved confidence (trust) in the Father, the Son (Christ), and the Holy Spirit and in the written word of God (Bible).

1. All Bible characters of faith had such belief and trust.
  2. It is true of all Bible characters of faith mentioned in Hebrews 11.
    - a. Take Abraham, for example (Hebrews 11:17-19. See full account in Genesis 22:1-14).
    - b. Do you have that kind of faith? It's the only kind of faith God approves.
- D. Now, how do we get this kind of faith?
1. God certainly does not give it to some and withhold it from others (Acts 10:34).
  2. Faith in anything is the result of weighing the evidence in the balance (scales) of reason. (Electricity, air, John Howard, Bill Clinton, etc.)
  3. This belief extends to trust. E.g., travelling by plane, pilots, Airline standards, air traffic controllers, etc.
  4. But how do we get faith in God and Christ? (Romans 10:17) From hearing God's Word. This is a vital Fact. It's simply Cause and Effect. God's Word the cause and faith the effect.
  5. Warning: God no longer speaks directly to anyone (Hebrews 1:1,2). The written word is now complete (2 Timothy 3:16,17). So the Bible is the Source of our Faith in God and Christ.

## II. Now, Abel's faith was not a questioning faith!

- A. We are aware of certain facts regarding this event.
1. God is not a respecter of persons (Acts 10:34).
  2. So, God must have given both Cain and Abel exactly the same instructions.
  3. Yet God rejected Cain's offering (Genesis 4:5).
  4. Hebrews 11:4 tells us plainly why God accepted Abel's offering. It was offered by faith.
  5. So, obviously, Abel heeded God's word. (It's equally obvious that Cain's offering was rejected because it was not offered by faith. He did not heed God's word.)
- B. What was the essential difference between the faith of the two men?
1. Cain: He believed and trusted God—up to a point. He brought a sacrifice as God commanded, but, he reasoned himself out of the kind God commanded.  
He questioned a part of God's instructions! He obviously thought he could do better. His sacrifice was not by faith.
  2. Abel: By contrast, he offered the sacrifice God instructed. His was simple unquestioning obedience to God. His sacrifice was by faith.

## III. Abel's faith has been an influence for good through the centuries.

- A. Thousands of years have passed since Abel's death.
1. Yet, though long dead, our text says he still speaks today of real faith.
  2. We know but a few things concerning Abel. (Mention those things.) Yet of these few things his faith speaks the loudest.
- B. Countless thousands have been influenced for good



because of Abel's faith.

1. The writer of Hebrews holds him up to us today.
  2. Abel, through his faith, says to us today, Follow God's instructions exactly. Don't deviate, even a little.
- C. God's instructions to the un-saved today are:
1. Believe,
  2. Repent,
  3. Confess your belief in Christ,
  4. Be baptized for the forgiveness of sins,
  5. Walk faithfully in your new life (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 10:10; 6:4).
- D. To the saved, God says,
1. Continue your unquestioning faith in God's word.
  2. When you do fall into sin — remember, if you truly repent, the blood of Christ continues to save (1 John 1:7). To so behave, you, like Abel, will continue to speak, even from the dead.

### **Conclusion:**

1. Abel's faith is shown in his unquestioning obedience to God.
2. This kind of faith saved him spiritually.
3. This is the only kind of faith that will save you today, and it will leave a lasting influence for good, long after you are dead.

**Series of Four**  
**Theme: “What Faith Can Do For You”**  
**Sermon 2**  
**The Shout of the Hammer!**

**Text: Hebrews 11:7.**

**Introduction:**

1. This is the second in our series of four, “What Faith Can Do For You”.
2. Our Lesson will centre around Noah (Hebrews 11:7).
3. The sound of his hammer echoes down the centuries to us today, revealing an astounding faith we should be ready to emulate.

**Body:**

- I. Noah was a God-fearing, righteous man before he built the Ark (Genesis 6:9).
  - A. Look at his character reference! (v. 9.)
    1. He was a just man. That implies honest in his dealings, fair in his judgments, truthful in his speech and actions and reliable in his ways. These are qualities any just man must have. (Are you just?)
    2. He was perfect among his contemporaries (v. 9.) I.e., perfect within human limitations. He was also perfect by comparison with others. Sincerely trying to live a genuinely good life.
    3. Then, too, Noah “*Walked with God*” (v. 9). Not only morally good in corrupt world, but also, spiritually good. So, whatever religious observances God required, Noah heeded,

and did so from the heart.

B. Now this high standard was no new thing for Noah.

The character reference was given before the flood, and it would seem that he had always been this kind of person. Question: Could a character reference such as this be given to us?

II. The quality of Noah's faith is revealed in his building the ark.

A. If ever there was a test of faith that came close to Abraham's, surely this was it!

1. Let's try to get the picture, the setting.

a. The whole world was more corrupt than ever before or since!

b. If verse 9 describes well Noah's righteousness, then verse 5 is a good description of the wickedness of his fellow men:

(1) This wickedness was Great! (Depth and Breadth of it!)

(2) There were mighty men — men of renown, (i.e.) men of great power.

(3) Men, held in great respect and honored because of their wickedness!

(4) They were not just accidentally wicked—rather, their thoughts, contrivings and plannings were all based on what was evil and sinful.

2. Yet in the face of this, in this very environment, Noah began to build the ark!

(Surely there is a lesson here for us.)

a. Can you imagine that hostile audience, those spectators? (Politicians and debaters sometimes attract hostile audiences.)

b. But these would not be merely scoffers. They

would be actually planning evil against Noah! And likely that Noah would at times have to recruit extra workers from among these men!

- B. Yet the hammers continued to be heard as the ark took shape and the years rolled by (120 years).
  - 1. The Bible indicates it was a huge boat. The building time can be readily understood.
    - a. Yet, day after day, and year after year the hammers would still be heard!! And every blow shouted Noah's faith in God—drowning out the hate-filled cries of a hostile and sinful world.

### III. How loud is your hammer shouting?

A. Noah's faith is the kind that God still requires today!

- 1. A faith absolute and complete—positively no doubts.
- 2. Unquestioning. (God's details on the ark, the finishing dead-line, etc.)
- 3. It continued on over a period of 120 years, and with no sign of rain!
- 4. It held strong despite the evil environment.
- 5. It was an active faith. Building materials, tools, provisions, etc. all had to be found continually! (It's easy to over-look many of these facts when we read through the Bible record.)

B. What about your faith?

- 1. Do your actions reveal it?
- 2. Many stumble at the very first act God requires—baptism!
- 3. Others at regular weekly worship!
- 4. Yet others at the daily living of Christianity.

(Mostly, there's an attempt made to justify this behaviour. But, it really amounts to a lack of faith!)

5. Is your faith a continuous faith? Day after day and year after year??

**Conclusion:**

1. The enduring nature of Noah's faith—its high quality speaks to us today. Noah's hammers ring out down the corridors of time.
2. Your actions reveal your faith, or lack of it.  
(Your belief and trust in God.)
  - a. A faith like Noah's will not only save you, it will keep you saved.
  - b. And, it will help save others both now and in the future, and long after you leave this world, as it sounds out down the years.

**Series of Four**  
**Theme: "What Faith Can Do For You"**  
**Sermon 3**  
**The Tight-Lipped Street-Woman**

**Text: Hebrews 11:31.**

**Introduction:**

1. Hebrews 11 tells the stories of many giants of faith.  
The last spoken of in detail is the harlot Rahab.
2. The story of Rahab is to be found in Joshua, chapters 2 and 6. (Tell the story briefly.)

**Body:**

- I. Rahab's strong faith was based on evidence.
  - A. God did not require a blind faith in Bible times.  
(Never has and Never will.)
    1. Many today believe that He did, and that He does today.
      - a. Many think that we believe in God because:
        - (1) We think that we had better. It might be that He just does exist! Or,
        - (2) Mum or Dad tell us that there is a God.  
So! Or,
        - (3) The preacher says there is, and he's a nice fellow, though he's probably fooled himself!
      - b. Many so-called self-styled Agnostics have never seriously examined the evidence!
    2. But God has always required that our faith be built on the basis of evidence He has supplied, (e.g.) the plagues of Egypt. (Tell the story briefly.)

Here was evidence of God and His power to both the Egyptians and the Israelites.

3. So it was with Rahab (Joshua 2:8-11).  
Note:
  - a. She had heard of the Israelites miraculous delivery from Egyptian slavery.
  - b. How God had dried up the Red Sea.
  - c. How two great kings of Amorites were destroyed.
  - d. How the rest of Jericho was terrified, but did not accept the evidence of God.
4. The difference between the rest of Jericho and Rahab was really their reaction to the evidence.

II. Rahab's faith saved her life because it was a working faith.

- A. But right here we run into a problem!
  1. Note: Hebrews 11:31 says she was "*Saved by Faith*", but James 2:25 says she was "*Justified (saved) by Works*"! And, Galatians 2:16 says, "*No flesh is justified by works.*"
  2. Actually there is no contradiction!
    - a. The writers are talking about two different kinds of works.
    - b. One is talking about the Law of Moses, and the earning of salvation by doing good deeds.
    - c. The other is talking about specific instructions from God directly related to the promise of Salvation.
- B. So, the works that saved Rahab were those directly related to her faith and salvation. (See Joshua 2.)
  1. She did not tell on the spies. (She was Tight-

Lipped.)

2. She sent the spies to the safety of the mountains.
  3. She bound the red rope in the window.
  4. She gathered her family with her into her house.
- C. This is the combination of faith and works that saves us today.
1. Not trying to balance the budget by doing good works.
  2. Rather, Obedient Faith (Spoken of by Paul in Romans 16:26.)

III. The thunder of Rahab's faith all but drowns out the fact that she was once a harlot!

- A. Some scholars have tried to water down that she was a harlot.
1. They argue that the Hebrew word means she was a keeper of a house for strangers. Most agree she was a harlot with such a house.
- B. Yet this fact is mentioned each time with her name. (Purely identification.)  
She is remembered (1) for her great faith and (2) for her works of faith.
- C. And today, Christ promises He will remember us for our working faith. Hear the promises (Matthew 7:21-23, 24, 25; Mark 16:15,16; 1 John 2:17).
1. There is no sin so great that God will not forgive it on His terms. (ie) faith, repentance, confession of Christ, and baptism. (Only rejecting the Gospel [Matthew 12:24-32] is unforgivable.)
  2. Can anything be more sinful than the murder of Jesus Christ? Yet Jesus prayed for the forgiveness of those who killed Him (Luke 23:34)! And on the day that the church began that forgiveness slotted into place (Acts



2:22,23, 36-41).

3. And you too can live down your past and be remembered and forgiven by God!  
By a genuine display of working faith in Christ.  
Those works begin repentance, confession,  
and baptism.

**Conclusion:**

1. Rahab's faith was built on solid evidence. Yours can be too.
2. Because her faith was revealed in her works—she was saved.

Your soul can be saved in this way—the only way.  
And in saving you, God will forgive and forever  
forget your sins.

**Series of Four**  
**Theme: “What Faith Can Do For You”**  
**Sermon 4**  
**Riots and Revivals**

**Text: Acts 17:1-7.**

**Introduction:**

1. This is the final sermon in our series of four, “What Faith Can Do For You”.
2. So far we have looked at the faith of Abel, Noah and Rahab from the list found in Hebrews 11. These are just three of a list of Old Testament Heroes of Faith.
3. Now we’ll look at one of the greatest Christian age heroes of faith: Paul the Apostle. (Read Acts 17:1-8.) Note: Wherever Paul went there were either riots or revivals.  
Sometimes both! “turn the world upside down” (V. 6).

**Body:**

- I. Paul had to give up a great deal for his faith!
  - A. Most of us don’t like to give up things.
    1. Material possessions: car; house; furniture; shoes etc.!
    2. Ways of doing things: dressing; serving meals; travelling route, etc.
    3. Ideas: on gardening: literature; amount of sleep; rearing children, etc.
    4. Religious beliefs: We often just drift into a belief, but it will take dynamite to shift us!
  - B. But look at what Paul gave up because of his faith

in Christ (Philippians 3:5,6).

1. His well-loved Jewish traditions (Galatians 1:14).
  2. The value he had placed on religious circumcision.
  3. His genealogy. Tribe of Benjamin (not a Rebel Tribe).
  4. True Hebrew. (Both parents. No Gentile blood.)
  5. Pride of being a Pharisee. (Possibly the strictest Sect.)
- C. Yet mostly today men cling desperately to their religious beliefs.
1. May only have inherited their beliefs, and seldom practiced them—But, try to change them and see how they cling!
  2. Yet, to truly please God, you may have to do as did Paul. Give up cherished beliefs to make way for Christ and truth.

II. Paul not only gave up much, but he also suffered much for his faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 11:23-28).

- A. Note the kind of suffering:
1. Floggings and being beaten with rods.
  2. Imprisonment.
  3. Stonings.
  4. Plus many natural disasters (perils, etc.).
  5. And daily heart-aches over problems in some of the churches!
- B. Note who they were who persecuted him:
1. Pagans (fanatical idol worshippers and Roman soldiers).
  2. His own countrymen (fellow Jews).
  3. False brethren (pretending to be Christians).
- All this because of his faith!

- C. Question: Is our faith worth that much to us?
1. How much are we prepared to suffer for our faith?
    - a. It's easy to boast while we are comfortable and safe!
    - b. But what flimsy excuses are often offered for being late to services, absent from worship, not giving as we really know we should and not serving when we know we should!!
  2. The best sermon is said to be a Christian example!
    - a. Are we heeding the sermon Paul preached by his wonderful life of faith?
    - b. How strong must our faith be to get us to Heaven? The Bible doesn't say, but it does say, "*To whom much is given, much is required*" (Luke 12:48).
    - c. Most in this congregation have received much in Spiritual teaching. So God would expect a strong working faith! Do you agree?
    - d. So, strengthen your faith to stand up under physical suffering, heart-ache, and discouragement.

### III. Paul's faith saved him eternally (II Timothy 4:6-8).

- A. We all have very strong faith in many things and many people.
  1. Victoria Falls, Africa and Niagara Falls, USA.  
I believe with all my heart that these spectacular Falls do exist, are real. Yet I've not seen either one! Purely faith, yet they are as real to me as though I had actually been there and seen them.
  2. Now, why don't you, right now, think of some

spectacular place you've never actually seen. Right? But you really believe it exists, don't you? Nothing will convince you it does not exist.

3. That's exactly how real heaven was to Paul! And the Righteous Judge was just as real (2 Timothy 4:8).
  4. And the Second Coming of Christ was equally real to Paul, as though he had already witnessed it (1 Thessalonians 4:16)!
- B. It was Paul's unshakable faith that caused him to give up so much and to endure so much.
- C. How strong is your faith?
1. Is Jesus real to you? (His life, death and resurrection.)
  2. What about His second coming? Is it real to you (1 Thessalonians 4:15-17; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; 2 Peter 1:16)?
    - a. Are you prepared to work, suffer, and give up things you once counted precious all because you believe so strongly in these matters?
    - b. Is your faith strong enough to get you to services every Sunday (a.m. and p.m. and to mid-week Bible Study? To cause you to give more dollars?
- D. Paul's faith caused Revivals and /or Riots. Does our combined faith cause Heaven a ripple in our district??
1. For Paul, faith made a reality out of things not seen.

**Conclusion:**

1. Paul gave up many things that were near and dear to him, because of his faith in Christ.

**What about you?**

- 2. Paul suffered physically and endured heart-ache for his faith. What about you?**
- 3. Paul's faith made the Righteous Judge and Heaven realities! It assured him a place in Heaven! What about you?**

# Heartfelt Religion

**Text: Psalm 50**

## **Introduction:**

1. God is never satisfied with mere formal worship  
Such worship is insulting to God. It implies He is not intelligent enough to notice!
2. Yet this has been going on for ages (Psalm 50), and many Christians are not guiltless of this today!

## **Body:**

- I. Man's pride often distorts his view of God (v. 7-13).
  - A. For this reason it is one of man's greatest downfalls.
    1. It works like this:  
Look how clever I am! In ancient times it was, I've made fire; hunted and killed animals; kept herds; gone from clubs to spears, to arrows to Swords. And, in more modern times it is, I've made gun-powder; found steam-power; discovered electricity and put it to use; split the atom and harnessed it; made great advances in the field of science; made giant strides in the field of medicine and landed men on the moon!! Look at me. How clever I am!!
    2. And this kind of pride leads to reasoning God out of the picture today, as it did in ancient times (Romans 1:20-23).
  - B. Psalm 50 shows how the Israelites had become proud in their own righteousness:
    1. So, their sacrificial offerings had become mere ritual. The act of worship was not heart-felt.

2. God rebukes them saying, "I'll continue...your sacrifices or not! You are doing Me no favor with your sacrifices"!! He continues, saying, "If I were hungry, do you think I would have to ask you for food?"!!
  - C. The Evolutionary Theory is built on man's pride!! No need for God. Makes man the highest Intelligence.
  - D. And, in religion today, pride causes man to usurp God's authority! His Word (the Bible) ceases to be our sufficient guide!
- II. The fact is, however, that man has no where to turn to, but to God (v. 22).
- A. God is in the position of being able to righteously and rightfully threaten rebellious man.
    1. He says, "Suppose I decide to tear you to pieces, then, to whom will you go for help?"!
      - a. Science? Why it can't even handle things such as earthquakes and volcanoes! Things such as weather patterns and droughts are beyond man's control. By thinking, can a man add 18 inches to his height? We are pretty helpless creatures without God.
  - B. But God does threaten rebellious man, and it's no idle threat!!
    1. This is a message man should both hear and heed.
      - a. Man's scientific knowledge won't help when he stands in the final judgment before God (Hebrews 9:27).
      - b. The only bright and sensible thing to do is to act now!! Reconciliation to God is the only solution.



III. And we Christians must remember that only heart-felt worship is acceptable to God (v. 14,15,23).

A. Because some make feelings and emotions alone the basis of their religion, we've too often acted as though there was nothing emotional about New Testament Christianity

1. Our worship has often deteriorated to mere acts—acts that are virtually disconnected from our hearts! Some, almost entirely disconnected!

B. This is exactly what the Israelites were doing (v. 7,8,16-20).

1. They acted as though they were doing God a favor by offering Him a sacrifice!!

In their worship they were merely going through the motions. Years later Jesus condemned this very practice (Mark 7:6).

2. Think of it now. How often are we guilty of this very thing?

Singing: often our songs of praise are like dirges and we like robots!!

Often we fail to entertain ourselves—let alone worship God.

Our public prayers: not followed, listened to, or thought about!!

Pre-Communion Remarks: Scant attention. So much noise from children would often prevent real attention.

Sermon: how many really listen carefully to all of it? Can genuinely say Amen to it?

True worship does not allow for interruption of concentration. But how many actually notice if blatant error is slipped into the sermon? Just not listening!!

C. But God requires that we offer Him only genuine

heart-felt worship (read vs. 14,15,23).

1. If we expect God to own us in the Day of Judgment we had better begin now to give God the only kind of worship He will accept and deserves.
2. Live the kind of lives that will match our heart-felt Christianity.

**Conclusion:**

1. Let's put our hearts deeply and sincerely into every minute of our worship.
2. God has made it clear He will not accept mere acts of worship.
3. God has warned, if we fail to so worship Him, there will be none to turn to in that final day of judgment.

# Sermon 1

## “There Is One Body”

**Reading:** Ephesians 4:1-6.

**Text:** Ephesians 4:4.

### **Introduction:**

1. There are seven Ones mentioned in these few verses.
2. We will look at just three of those Ones. Our subject now is There Is One Body.

### **Body:**

- I. First we ask what is meant by the word Body?
  - A. This word has many meanings. Here are some:
    1. The human or animal body, dead or alive.
    2. The main part of a speech or composition.
    3. The quality of a substance.
    4. A mass, a body of water.
    5. A group of persons or things, usually organized as a fighting force.
  - B. The Bible leaves no doubt as to how the word is used here. (Read Ephesians 1:22,23; Romans 12:5; Colossians 1:18.)
    1. So in our text Paul is saying that God recognizes just One Body or One Church!
- II. Now let us look at the need for just One Body (One Church).
  - A. First, unity points to strength.
    1. (E.g.) A fighting force, to be effective, must be unified. All its members must recognize just one authority and obey just one supreme

leader. (During World War II the Allied Forces had to look to one supreme leader.)  
The old proverb remains true: united we stand,  
divided we fall.

- B. But far more important, the New Testament itself shows the need for just One Body.
1. Jesus: (Matthew 12:25,26) "*A house (kingdom) divided against itself must fall*".
  2. For God to recognize a divided body is tantamount to admitting His defeat by Satan!
  3. Jesus adds another reason: "*That the world may believe*" This is built on the concept of One Body. (Read John 17:18-23 and comment.)

### III. But, is the One Body concept a practical one?

- A. To ask the question is, of course, to answer it. "Yes".  
God does not ask us to do the impossible!  
(A fridge magnet says, "God says it, I believe it and that settles it.")
- B. And, anyway, we know that the church began and continued for at least 100 years as one body.
1. It was a time of prolific growth (see early chapters of Acts and comment).
  2. When Paul went visiting churches already established, do you think any asked him, Which denominations will you visit, Paul?!!
  3. In fact, he strongly condemned denominationalism. (See 1 Corinthians 1:10-15; 3:1-4.)  
So, in view of this emphatic teaching, dare any say the one body concept is not practical?

### IV. Now, how do the churches of Christ fit into this concept of One Body (One Church).

- A. If the words Church of Christ are used in a denomina-

tional sense, then it certainly does not fit!

1. The Bible uses the words as a descriptive statement (Romans 16:16). The churches belonging to Christ. And there are various other Bible terms referring to the same body, used in the same way.
  2. But it does behoove us to be very careful not to use that term as meaning just another denomination or sect.
- B. There are some matters about the one body we must never forget:
1. Its members do not simply comprise the most nearly right or even the best denomination! Remember, in no sense whatsoever is it a denomination.
  2. Any group referring to itself as a church of Christ, does not make it the one body of which the Bible speaks.  
To be that One Body it must not only wear the right name, it must also believe and practice New Testament Christianity; be doctrinally correct.
- C. Attempts in the past to break down denominational barriers have failed for at least two reasons:
1. Because Union rather than Unity has been pursued, and,
  2. Because only compromise over man-made creeds have been tried (doomed to failure).
- D. To truly restore unity, four simple steps must be taken. Men must:
1. Throw out all pre-conceived doctrinal beliefs and practices.
  2. Throw out all man-made creeds. Begin again.
  3. Accept the Bible at its face value and consider all

- of its teachings as final and binding.
4. Keep open minds, being ready to change even cherished beliefs when it can be shown that the Bible really does teach differently.

**Conclusion:**

1. Yes, the Bible, God's Word, does present the concept of One Body (Church).
2. It condemns all divisions of the one body as sinful, and therefore requires faithful Christians everywhere to strongly oppose them.
3. The One Body concept is practical, built on the basis of God's Word being final and binding.

## Sermon 2

# “There Is One Spirit”

**Reading:** Ephesians 4:1-6.

**Text:** Ephesians 4:4.

### **Introduction:**

1. Last week our sermon dealt with the subject of One Body. Sometimes it would be good for us to look at the other Ones mentioned in these six verses.
2. But for this morning we will look at just one more One, The One Spirit.
  - a. We'll have time today to do little more than scratch the surface of this interesting subject. However, this sermon may cause you to study this subject in greater depth.

### **Body:**

- I. We begin by asking, “What is the Holy Spirit?”
  - A. First, we reply, He is a person, not a mere influence or a thing!
    1. Some teach that the Holy Spirit is a liquid! (Using Acts 10:45—Poured out!)
    2. Others would have us believe that the Holy Spirit is simply wind. (The primary meaning of the word spirit is wind, so they jump on this to prove their theory.)
    3. One denomination teaches, rather covertly, that the Holy Spirit is electricity!!
  - B. But the New Testament teaches very positively that the Holy Spirit is Person.
    1. Jesus referred to Him as a person, never as an

it or a thing (John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:7,8).

2. Note the following:

Acts 5:3. (He can be lied to.)

Acts 13:2. (He spoke.)

Acts 13:4. (He sent Paul and Barnabas.)

Acts 15:28. (He is able to judge.)

Acts 16:6. (He could forbid.)

Acts 21:11 and Hebrews 3:7. (He speaks.)

Ephesians 4:30. (He can be grieved.)

None of these things can be said of a mere influence or a thing.

C. Yet, He is not merely a person, rather He is one of the three persons in the Godhead.

1. Jesus equates Him with the Father and the Son (Matthew 12:31,32; 28:19).

He is also equated with God the Father in Acts 5:3;4:9 and 2 Corinthians 13:14.

2. The Holy Spirit comes to us from the Father and the Son (John 15:26; 1 Peter 1:11,12).

3. Seeing that there is but one Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4), the words Spirit of God, Spirit of Christ and Holy Spirit must refer to the same person.

4. And, as there is but one God (not three Gods), not any one of these three persons can be thought of as God without consideration of the other two persons.

(\* As rooms in a house illustration.)

II. Now, what is the work of the Holy Spirit during this Christian Age?

A. To answer this fully would be a sermon within itself, so we will only refer to some of His work at this time.



- B. First, hear Jesus on this subject.
1. The Holy Spirit was to be the Comforter (John 14:16-18).
    - a. In this role, He was especially helpful to the Apostles. They had been very close to Jesus (hearing His amazing teaching, witnessing His power etc.). Now they were to be suddenly without Him. Jesus assures them: *"I will not leave you comfortless"* (i.e.) fatherless; as orphans.
    - b. Acts 2:1-4 shows us how the Holy Spirit compensated for the absence of Jesus. What the Holy Spirit caused to take place then certainly restored their confidence and their courage.
  2. The Holy Spirit would be their teacher (John 14:26). Thus He comforted by His infallible teaching. So they knew that what they taught and wrote was infallibly right and could not be wrong! Now that must have been very comforting.
- C. And then there is the sense in which the Holy Spirit indwells every Christian (Romans 8:11; 1 Corinthians 3:16).
1. Well, what does He do as He indwells Christians?
    - a. He certainly does not turn us into mere puppets. (Else, why the warnings in 1 Corinthians 6:16-20?)
    - b. Rather He comes to our aid, especially in the matter of prayer. (Romans 8:26,27 N.E.V.).

### III. But why one Spirit?

- A. This concept of Only One raised much opposition to

Christianity from the very beginning.

1. Gentiles did not object to another god. They already had hundreds, perhaps thousands.
  2. But Christians were preaching just one God and declaring that all other gods were just false idols (Acts 17:24,25)!
- B. And the Gentiles of New Testament times had not only many gods but also many spirits, both evil and good. And many worshiped them (Colossians 2:18).
1. Paul tells us that there is but one Spirit that Christians should recognize—the Holy Spirit.
    - a. And he classifies the Holy Spirit as equal to Christ and the Father.
  2. So, in these verses we have reference to the Father, the Son (Christ) and the Holy Spirit, thus giving a complete picture of the triune Godhead.

### **Conclusion:**

1. The Holy Spirit is one of the three persons in the Godhead.
  - a. He is not a mere influence, but as real a person as are the Father and the Son real persons.
2. He is sent as the Comforter and in the infant church, to impart special powers.
  - a. He is the source of Truth to all of the Apostles and to the inspired writers of the Bible.
  - b. He indwells those who have submitted themselves to God's terms of salvation.
3. There is one Holy Spirit. He guided the Apostles into all truth, leaving no new truths to be revealed.

# Bible Baptism—Before and After

**Text:** Acts 2:38-42.

## **Introduction:**

1. Our Sermon this morning is about the pre-requisites to Baptism, about baptism itself and about the post-requisites to baptism.
2. Prerequisite is, of course, that which is required before... and we will see that the Bible is very clear about those things which are required of a person before he can be a candidate for baptism.
3. Then there are those things which might be thought of as Post-requisite to baptism if a soul is to remain saved.

## **Body:**

- I. When we look at the subject of baptism the prerequisites become pretty obvious.
  - A. One must see himself as hopelessly and helplessly lost in sin and therefore, separated from God (Romans 3:23; Luke 15:11-32 & Isaiah 59:2).
  - B. Then there must be a hunger to be reconciled to God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
  - C. Also a genuine belief in Jesus as the Christ, the Son of the living God.
    1. A faith in Christ that is truly alive (James 2:14,24).
  - D. Genuine repentance (Acts 17:30).
    1. An about turn as it were. A change of masters (Romans 6:11-17).
    2. Not an achieved perfection. (To claim this would be to do away with need for Christ!)
  - E. A sincere confession of faith in Christ (Acts

8:36,37). Not a confession of sins! (See also Romans 10:10.)

- F. We should note that each one of these prerequisites make infant baptism invalid!

II. Now let us take a look at baptism itself.

- A. The Greek word *Baptisma* was never translated from the original Greek into almost every one of our English Bibles! The translators simply Anglicized the Greek word, and left it at that.
1. Had they actually translated the word they would have had to use one of the words, dip or plunge or immerse.
  2. The Bible describes baptism as a burial and therefore sprinkling or pouring can never be what God requires of us (Romans 6:4).
- B. Why then was the practice of sprinkling and pouring ever introduced as baptism?
1. Probably grew out of the false doctrine of Infant Total Depravity!
    - a. Once this false doctrine was embraced every baby was then considered condemned at the moment of birth! How then to save the baby? It could not believe, repent or confess Jesus as the Christ. In desperation, it would seem, it was decided that the baby could be forcibly baptized. (Sprinkling developed from this!) Almost without exception the great Bible scholars and writers of Bible commentaries agree that baptism is immersion in water.

III. Now let us look at what we are calling Post Requisites to baptism.

- A. To begin with, we need to show, following our baptism, that when we claimed we were repentant, that this claim was genuine. Jesus says, in effect, our behaviour will reveal this (Matthew 3:7,8).
1. This must be a continuing process.
    - a. On the one hand—negative, keeping sin out (1 Corinthians 10:12).
    - b. On the other—positive, an ever-increasing, ever-improving process of good works (Philippians 3:11-14). These good works we do because we are saved, and are not done in pursuit of salvation.
- B. Post requisites to baptism will also include worship.
1. Knowing then, what acts of worship God requires is important. (Refer briefly then to the five acts of worship required of Christians: communion, singing, giving, Bible study and prayer.)
  2. Must be keenly aware that this time of worship is just that, and **not** entertainment!
  3. Must be careful not to absent ourselves at the appointed time of worship with the church (Hebrews 10:25).
  4. Then, it is required of Christians that we practice Christianity in our daily lives. That will include:
    - a. Constantly doing our best to spread the Gospel (Acts 8:4).
    - b. Watching carefully that we are getting our priorities right—God and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33).
    - c. Striving to live by New Testament standards (John 12:48).
    - d. Living a prayerful life. (Philippians 4:6).

- e. Remembering that the God you love and who loves you, watches over your every move and hears your every word. (1 Peter 3:12).

**Conclusion:**

1. What must one do before baptism? Recognize that he is hopelessly lost in sin and desire to change this. See Jesus as his only hope and believe Him. Repent toward God and confess his faith in Christ.
2. What must one do after baptism? Understand and engage in regular New Testament worship  
Strive daily to live by New Testament standards.
3. Remember, the God-approved action for baptism is simple—it's immersion in water.

# Bethlehem, the Obscure

**Text: Matthew 2:1,2.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Bethlehem = House of Bread. The Bread of Life was born here.
2. One of the very oldest Bible towns.
  - a. Rachel was buried there (Genesis 35:19).
  - b. Located some 5 to 6 miles south of Jerusalem, in beautiful fertile valley, about 2000 feet above sea level. The Bible has very little to say about it.
3. But these facts are interesting:
  - a. Ruth went there with Naomi and married Boaz.
  - b. David was born there.
  - c. Later he was anointed there as king.
  - d. Bethlehem later became the subject of prophecy as the birth-place of Christ.

## **Body:**

- I. Though born in Bethlehem, Christ was Before Bethlehem.
  - A. Of course, not everyone believes this to be so.
    1. Atheists, Skeptics, Agnostics reject this belief.
    2. Jews and those of the Islamic belief do not believe it.
    3. Christadelphians, J.Ws., and most Modernists, all reject this teaching.
  - B. But the Scriptures teach otherwise. (E.g.);
    1. The Apostle John believed it (John 1:1-3).
    2. Jesus taught it as fact (John 6:62; 16:27-29; 17:5).
    3. Both Peter and Paul taught it as truth.
      - a. He was in the Old Testament prophets (1 Peter

1:9-11).

- b. He was rich (in Heaven) and became poor (on earth). (2 Corinthians 8:9.)
  - c. He took upon Himself human flesh.
- C. So, we may well say that this obscure Bethlehem produced a Son, famous for His eternal existence!

II. Now let's look at Bethlehem and the birth of Jesus Christ.

- A. It was prophesied that Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
- 1. The Jews, of course, believed this prophecy (see Matthew 2:4-6; John 7:40-42).
- B. Yet events seemed to be about to show that this prophecy would fail!
- 1. Let's look at Luke 2:1-11. Note the possibilities, remembering that Mary and Joseph were living in Nazareth. If the tax plan had been introduced six months earlier, Jesus may well have been born in Nazareth. If they had set out for Bethlehem six hours later than they did, Jesus may well have been born on the way to Bethlehem!! Or supposing that Caesar Augustus had decided against taxing for another year. Then what?
  - 2. Yet, despite these possibilities, God foreknew accurately that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem.
  - 3. Born in this obscure, least of cities. Not in Jerusalem. Not in a palace, but in a cattle shed and laid in a manger (Isaiah 53:2).

III. What then does that birth in Bethlehem mean to humanity?



- A. Note first, man's rebellious attitude toward God, and the result (Isaiah 59:2).
  - 1. Many recognized man's fallen state, producing great men like Abraham.
  - 2. It also produced great philosophers such as Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and others, searching for a solution!
- B. Some saw the hopelessness of their fallen state. (Jews and Greeks in particular.)  
Paul expresses this very well (Ephesians 2:11,12).
  - 1. The Gentiles found no solution in any of their philosophies.
  - 2. The Jews found no solution in the keeping of the Law (Romans 10:1-3).
- C. But God solved the problem for us:
  - 1. He clothed Himself in human flesh.
  - 2. Was born in Bethlehem fulfilling prophecy.
  - 3. Became the only sacrifice suitable to our needs.  
(He was both human and divine.)  
(Read Luke 24:46,47; Acts 13:38,39.)
- D. This amazing event in Bethlehem has changed the world.
  - 1. It still changes the hearts of men.
  - 2. Saves those who truly believe.

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. Bethlehem remains obscure even today.
- 2. Yet, in this city the Saviour was born!
- 3. And His birth in Bethlehem triggered a series of events, leading to the cross, and eternal salvation to all who truly believe and obey.

# Personal Commitment

**Text: Matthew 25:3,4.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The individual is very important to the whole! A poem runs something like this:  
    “Little drops of water,  
    little grains of sand  
    Makes the wide blue ocean  
    and the mighty land.”
  - a. In a timber building, individual rotting pieces will finally wreck the entire structure.
2. So too with individual people—important!
  - a. A good nation depends on good individual citizens.
  - b. A good family depends on good individual members.
  - c. A committed congregation depends on committed individual members.

## **Body:**

- I. Congregational commitment is very important to its development and growth.
  - A. Congregations must do more than just keep house for the Lord. (ie) Lord's Supper.
    1. Spiritual growth on the congregational level: (Failure—note Ephesus, Revelation 2:4,5.)
    2. And numerical growth! New Testament congregations grew. (Acts 2-11).
  - B. Stagnation soon results in pollution. Spiritual stagnation in a congregation will soon pollute and finally destroy it.

- C. This points to the need for active congregational planning.
    - 1. Activity is a key word here! (Expended energy.)!
    - 2. Constant work on spiritual growth.
    - 3. Constant work at saving souls.
    - 4. Constant work at keeping the saved saved.
    - 5. Constant work at helping our fellow man.
  - D. These good things can only be accomplished when a congregation accepts a commitment to truly serve Christ.
- II. Yet, if congregational commitment can be called very important, then personal commitment must be absolutely vital!
- A. A congregation is not to be viewed as a solid mass.
    - 1. A forest is a forest because of individual trees!
    - 2. Those individual trees determine what kind of forest it is, cedar, pine, etc.
    - 3. So too with congregations. Made up of individuals who determine the kind of congregation it is.
  - B. So, if a congregation is to be committed, its individual members must also be committed.
    - 1. But before a member is committed to tasks in a congregation, he must first be truly committed to Christ.
    - 2. That means being truly anchored to Christ (Hebrews 6:19,20).
      - a. No drifting (Ephesians 4:14).
      - b. No having to think, "Should I make the effort to (attend, serve, etc.)?" Should be no hesitation whatsoever. "Yes".
      - c. With the early church there was  
A personal relationship with Christ

A personal commitment to Christ. This resulted in committed congregations—and growing congregations.

III. Now let's look at the power of personal commitment.

A. Jesus said of His disciples; "*Ye are the light of the world*" (Matthew 5:14-16).

1. If a congregation's light goes out, it's because individual members have let their lights go out!!
2. This was what was happening to the church in Ephesus.
  - a. They had lost their first love—no longer fully committed! Their candlestick was about to be removed (Revelation 2).

B. But the individual's light first flickers, then goes out when there is no oil.

1. The oil is the life of the light. (The old style kerosene lamp, for example.)
2. God's Word is the life of the Christian.
3. It must be constantly supplied to his soul, or he dies spiritually.
4. This means personal commitment to Christ, really putting your heart into serving Christ, before all else.

C. Then remarkable things happen!!

1. The story is told of the king who had to decide who of three men should inherit his throne. His test? An empty room to be filled with the cheapest and lightest weight material. One filled it with straw. Was rejected. Second filled it with feathers. Was rejected. The third took in and lit a candle, filling the room with light. Was accepted.

2. And this is what real individual commitment will do.
  - a. Whole areas will be lit up by each individual light.
  - b. If each member was thought of as being one candle power light bulb in a congregation of 60, if 30 are not truly committed, then its light power is reduced by half.

**Conclusion:**

1. The congregation must be committed whole-heartedly to Christ.
2. But for this to be, you must be personally committed to Christ.

There's nothing more useless in the dark than a blown light bulb!

(Read Poem.)

**Only Me!**

My neighbor does not see the Christ,  
His cross, His Calvary.  
My neighbor stands across the way  
And watches only me.

My neighbor does not hear His Word,  
But oh, how closely he  
Takes heed of how I bear my cross  
And meet my Calvary.

# Have Miracles Ceased?

**Reading: John 2:1-11.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The charismatic type religions are flourishing.
  - a. They are highly emotional, almost fanatical.
  - b. Strong emphasis on miraculous healing and speaking in tongues.
2. Reason for popularity?
  - a. They appear to be very enthusiastic and sincere.  
(Good qualities. We should be too.)
  - b. Very sick people are always hoping for a cure.  
Even a miraculous one.
  - c. It seems to be human nature to be drawn toward the mysterious.
3. Sadly, many from the Lord's Church have been misled by these false religions!

## **Body:**

- I. First let's answer the question, "What are miracles all about?"
  - A. To begin we need a definition of the word miracle in the sense in which we will be using it.
    1. The word is often used loosely. (eg.) It was a miracle he wasn't killed. And, It was a miracle he passed his examinations. What we really mean is that it was very fortunate, and/or it was very like a miracle.
    2. Then there is the sense in which everything that God does is a miracle. (eg.) He makes it possible for a brown and black animal, with four legs and two horns, eating green

grass to produce white milk! Now that's a miracle! (If you doubt it, try building a machine that will do exactly that.) And you'd have a cow to build the idea from!

3. But we do see it as a true miracle when, for a special reason, God departs from His usual method of performing one of His marvellous works, (eg.) turning water (directly) into wine. Compare with His usual method of making wine from grape seed (John 2:1-11).

- II. There was a very special reason for miracles being used during New Testament times.
  - A. Christ performed miracles to prove His claims to be the Son of God.
    1. This not always clearly understood. Some think that miracles were performed simply and only to relieve pain and suffering. That's not so!
      - a. If it were, why the favoritism? Why were just a select, few healed?
    2. Jesus did do many miracles. And they were not all to do with healing.
      - a. Nicodemus: This man (from the Sanhedrin) believed Jesus miracles showed that God approved Jesus (which would include His claims to be God's Son). (See John 3:2.)
      - b. John the Apostle: He says plainly that these miracles were "*..that ye may believe...*". (See John 20:30,31.) The writer of Hebrews too: Hebrews 2:1-4.
  - B. Later, the Apostles and others performed miracles.
    1. The reason? To confirm that God approved their teachings.

- a. These Apostles and others were making some amazing claims!
  - (1) Jesus is God's Son! He rose from the dead!
  - (2) God would forgive every sin through Jesus!
  - (3) A new birth must take place for men to be saved!
- 2. These amazing claims needed some proof to be believed.
  - b. And Jesus promised and sent the Holy Spirit for this very purpose! (See, Mark 13:11; John 14:26; 16:13; Luke 24:48,49; Mark 16:17,18; Hebrews 2:3,4.)
  - c. This power actually came on Pentecost (Acts 2:1-4).
  - d. Speaking in tongues—not gibberish, but unlearned, real languages (Acts 2:5-11).
- C. Still later (about 8 years, A.D. 41) the Gentiles too, were baptized with the Holy Spirit (Acts 10, 11). (Tell story of Cornelius.) The event was identified as Holy Spirit baptism (Acts 11:15,16). Purpose? To convince Jewish Christians that God would really accept Gentile converts as Christians (Acts 11:15-18). This Holy Spirit baptism did not save Cornelius. He was saved when he believed the words spoken, and obeyed the Gospel (Acts 11:13,14, & 10:47,48). Pentecost and at the household of Cornelius were the only occasions of Holy Spirit baptism.

III. Note now that only the Apostles could pass on the powers they had received by Holy Spirit baptism.

A. The story of Philip in Samaria:

- 1. Philip had this power. (Received it Acts 6:1-6,



used it Acts 8:6.)

2. These Samaritans had been baptized, so would have received the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). But could not perform miracles.
  - a. Furthermore, Philip could not give them these powers. They had to wait for Apostles (Peter and John) to come and give them these powers (Acts 8:14-17).

IV. But miraculous powers ceased for a very good reason.

- A. When the last person on whom an Apostle had laid hands died, miracles ceased for ever.
- B. Paul told the Ephesians how long these powers would continue. Until knowledge of God was fully revealed (Ephesians 4:8-13).
- C. Paul told the Corinthians the same thing. Chapter 12 deals with the various miraculous gifts these Christians had. Chapter 13:8-10 says plainly when these powers would be done away.

When that which is perfect has come, verse 10. (Paul tells Timothy what "*that which is perfect*" is (2 Timothy 3:16,17). God's written Word. It has come. We have it.

- D. All that pertains to life and godliness has been revealed (2 Peter 1: 3; Jude 1:3).

### **Conclusion:**

1. A miracle is performed when God changes His usual method of performing one of His marvellous deeds (water into wine).
2. Only the Apostles and the household of Cornelius received Holy Spirit baptism.
3. Only the Apostles had the power to pass on these miraculous powers.

4. Speaking in tongues was one of these miraculous gifts. (Real languages, not gibberish!)
5. All miraculous powers ceased when the last person on whom the Apostles laid hands died.
6. The Bible, God's written word, is now complete. It tells us how to become saved and how to stay saved.

# The Fall of Jericho

**Reading: Joshua Chapter 6.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Jericho was a very ancient city. (Name means Place of fragrance.) It was situated about five miles west of Jordan River.
  - A. First mentioned in the Old Testament as the place to which Joshua sent his two spies prior to attacking the city.
2. (Tell the story, Joshua 2.) Then read and emphasize Joshua 6:12-16,20,24,25.

## **Body:**

- I. Jericho was a city ready for destruction
  - A. God has been amazingly patient with sinful man since the days of Adam. (Discuss briefly God's patience with the following: Adam and Eve; The antediluvians and the Nation of Israel.)
  - B. But God does set a limit to His patience. The antediluvians were given 120 years of warning (See Genesis 6:3).
    1. God waited 400 years till the iniquity of the Amorites was full. That included the city of Jericho (Genesis 15:13-16).
    2. And God waited for the Jews till AD 70 for the final destruction of Jerusalem.
  - C. When Christ returns with power (2 Thessalonians 1:4-9 and 2 Peter 3:10-13)—how very important that we all be very aware NOW, that God has set a limit to His patience as He did in the days of Jericho.

II. Now notice that the method used by God to take Jericho must have tested the Israelites faith and it demonstrated the power of God.

A. The method God chose. (Describe it.)

1. Unusual would be a great understatement. No other city, before or since has been captured in this way!
2. What army General would ever consider this plan? (Would be afraid of being made a laughing-stock.)

B. Yet, what a magnificent display of God's power before so many.

1. To the Israelite soldiers. (Would re-reinforce their faith.) Never lose an opportunity to have your faith re-reinforced.
2. To all of Israel. (Must have increased their confidence greatly.)
3. To surrounding Nations. (Were probably asking, "What's in store for us?")
4. To future generations. God can do what He has promised to do today, both for individuals and for the Church.

III. Simple faith (belief and trust) coupled with obedience saved Rahab amidst a scene of utter turmoil and destruction.

A. Rahab's belief in Israel's God was strong.

1. She did have alternatives to using the red rope. She could have:
  - a. Left the city secretly for her own safety, or
  - b. turned in the spies, while pretending to hide them, or
  - c. warned the Authorities, The seige is about to be broken.

2. But her faith was so strong that it is referred to by at least two New Testament writers.
- B. Rahab's faith was a living faith that led to obedience
1. (Hebrews 11:30,31.) Faith led her to shelter spies. (Action.)
  2. (James 2:25.) Faith led her to help spies escape. (Action.)
  3. (Joshua 2:18,19.) Faith led her to use the red rope. (Action.)
  4. What about our faith? Does it produce action? Do we have a living or just a dead faith? Remember, a dead faith is useless (James 2:14,19).
- C. Think of how much was hanging on this piece of red rope.
1. The lives of the spies were already saved.
  2. The lives of Rahab's Father, Mother, brethren and their household servants (Joshua 6:22,23).
  3. And, of course her own life. (Remember too, it is generally believed that Rahab was among the physical ancestry of Jesus, Matthew 1:5).
  4. And think how many people have been influenced by Rahab's action to themselves, Act — Obey the Gospel??
  5. Our Faith should be equally strong and Active. An inactive faith could lead to our being lost eternally!
  6. A piece of red rope still means so much. (Compare — A few pints of red human blood shed by Christ means so very much today! (Matthew 26:28.)

**Conclusion:**

1. Jericho was ready for destruction. (God has set a limit on His patience.)
2. God's power is limitless. (His power to save.)
3. Active faith saved Rahab and others during the fall of Jericho.

Only active faith will save us today and cause us to stay saved.

# Ur of the Chaldees

**Read: Genesis 11:27-32**

**Text: Verse 31**

## **Introduction:**

1. The city of Ur is believed to have been a seaport in the days of Abram, situated at the mouth of the Euphrates, at the head of the Persian Gulf.
2. World events over the past several years have kept our attention focused on this part of the world.
3. It was from this city that Abram set out on his journey to the Promised Land. (Read Genesis 11:27-32.)

## **Body:**

- I. Ur of the Chaldees was inhabited by a civilization given over to idolatry.
  - A. A very ancient civilization. (Possibly 5000 BC.)
    1. Archaeologists tell us that there are signs of ancient industry, some excellent architecture and that there was a canal system serving the city. It is said to have had a city/state form of government.
  - B. But the city was largely given over to idol worship.
    1. The Moon God—sin was prominent in the idol worship (Romans 1:25). Ziggurats were constructed for worshipping this and other gods.
    2. The name Ur is said to mean light or brightness doubtless in some way connected with Moon God worship.
    3. The usual sins that went with idol worship was present, and would include:

- a. Religious harlotry.
  - b. Very low moral standards, and, of course,
  - c. Very savage and brutal punishments.
- C. This was the atmosphere in which Abram was brought up.
- 1. Despite his belief in the one true God, it would seem likely that contamination would have been highly probable.
  - 2. That God wanted him out of that city seems very reasonable.
- II. *"...To go to the land of Canaan."* (Canaan became the Land of Promise.)
- A. God, Himself, promised this land to Abraham (Genesis 12:7; 13:15; 15:13-18; 17:8 Joshua 23:5,15.)
- B. But, what were Abraham's experiences? Certainly not all happy ones!
- 1. His father died in Haran.
  - 2. Long years of waiting for the promised son. (Would we be as faithful?)
  - 3. The troubles he had in Egypt with his wife.
  - 4. The troubles he had with Lot, his nephew.
  - 5. Lot's connection with Sodom and Gomorrah.
  - 6. Isaac finally born! (Followed by God's command to sacrifice him.)
  - 7. The death of his beloved Sarah.
- C. Yet the promise still stood. Abraham remained faithful through it all. Many years later the promise was fulfilled.
- III. Like Abraham, Christians are en route from this world to Heaven itself!
- A. Abraham was called out of Ur of the Chaldees, and



Christians have been called out of the world.

1. To be a separate people, a separate community (2 Corinthians 6:14-18).
  - a. With the God approved Religion.
  - b. With higher morals.
  - c. Better Laws. Citizenship is in Heaven (Philippians 3:20 NEV).
  - d. True Spiritual values.
- B. Why, Paul? Well, like Abraham and the Israelites, who had to avoid contamination, contagion and infection from the world (Ur!), so must Christians (1 Corinthians 15:33 KJV and NEV). (Yet we are still bound by the Great Commission, Matthew 28:19,20).
- C. But, like Abraham, our journey is beset with problems and trials.
  1. We well know that the Christian's pathway is not all roses.
    - a. Our loved ones get sick, suffer and die.
    - b. Our hopes and plans, and ambitions are frequently thwarted.
  2. Yet God does continue to fulfill His promises to us.
    - a. Our trouble is that we often want Him to do for us what He has not promised He will do.
    - b. We must remember He will always work in our ultimate best Spiritual interest.
    - c. That He always Knows Best.
    - d. Has promised that He will allow us to be tempted no greater than we can bear (1 Corinthians 10:13).
    - e. Our sins are forgiven (Acts 2:38; 1 John 1:7).
    - f. God's providential care (1 Peter 5:7). And the promise of Heaven itself (John

14:1-3; 1 Corinthians 2:9).

**Conclusion:**

1. As Abraham was called out of the idolatrous city, Ur of the Chaldees, so are Christians called out of the world, to be a separate people, zealous of good works.
2. As Abraham's journeys were studded with trials and problems, so too will Christians experience trials and problems on their journey to Heaven.
3. But, as God promised His care and Canaan to Abraham, He has promised His daily care, forgiven sins, spiritual help and eternal heaven to Christians.

# Nazareth of Galilee

**Matthew 21:8-11.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Nazareth was almost due west of the southern part of the Sea of Galilee.
2. The town is not mentioned in the Old Testament, and Josephus does not refer to it.
3. Yet Jesus grew up in this town and in the New Testament He is called Jesus of Nazareth twenty-eight times. (Our text is Matthew 21:11.)

## **Body:**

- I. Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth.
  - A. Moses and others foretold the coming of a Great Prophet (Deuteronomy 18:15; John 1:21,25,27).
    1. And Jesus was recognized as that prophet (John 6:13,14; Mark 6:15; Luke 7:11-16).
  - B. And Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet.
    1. A prophet is a proclaimer of God's Word. Jesus Proclaimed:
      - a. The true Godly standard of living (Matthew 5:7).
      - b. The good news of sins forgiven (John 4:10-14; 6:51; Matthew 28:18-20).
    2. A Prophet also foretells events, and Jesus certainly did this:
      - a. He foretold the soon coming of the Kingdom/Church (Matthew 16:15-18; Mark 9:1).
      - b. He foretold His own crucifixion. (Matthew 20:17-19). And His resurrection.

- c. He foretold the destruction of Jerusalem (Matthew 24:1,2).
- d. Yes, this Jesus of Nazareth certainly was a prophet, in fact, The Prophet.

## II. Next, we see Jesus, this Prophet of Nazareth, became The King of Kings.

- A. The angel told Mary about this (Luke 1:31-33).
- B. Jesus said He was born to be King (John 18:33-37).
- C. He was raised from the dead to this exalted position (Acts 2:31-36; Philippians 2:5-11).
- D. As King of Kings, Jesus of Nazareth:
  - 1. Hands down laws for all moral and religious behaviour. (Sermon on the Mount.)
  - 2. Will ultimately dispense absolute justice to everyone (2 Corinthians 5:10; John 12:48).
  - 3. He cares for His subjects (1 Peter 5:7; John 10:11-15).
  - 4. Arms them for war against the arch enemy, Satan (Ephesians 6:11-17).
  - 5. Gives them a task and equipment to win men from Satan's ranks into His Kingdom (Romans 1:16).

## III. Jesus of Nazareth—The Prophet and King, is also our Great High Priest.

- A. Humanity needed a suitable, fully qualified High Priest.
  - 1. We were spiritually bankrupt (Romans 3:23).
  - 2. We needed an advocate/mediator to plead our case (1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 2:1).
  - 3. Human high priests were themselves spiritually bankrupt (Hebrews 9:7).
    - a. Even the animal sacrifices they offered fell far

short of our real need (Hebrews 10:4).

**B. But Jesus of Nazareth became the truly qualified High Priest.**

1. He was man, and knew man's weaknesses at first-hand (Hebrews 2:16-18).
2. He was man, but overcame sin in His life (Hebrews 4:15,16).
3. But He was also God, with Personal access to the Father. And He personally intercedes as our Advocate (Hebrews 4:14-16).
4. Furthermore, He will stand with His own in the final Judgement (Matthew 25:34).

**Conclusion:**

1. Let's listen to Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth.
2. Let's obey Him daily, as our King of Kings.
3. Let's live confidently as we see Him to be our Great High Priest.

# The Antioch Church

**Text: Acts 11:19-24.**

## **Introduction:**

1. The city of Antioch stood some
  - a. Three hundred miles north of Jerusalem,
  - b. Sixteen miles east of the Mediterranean Sea, on the River Orontes.
  - c. It was named during the times of the Grecian Empire, and greatly beautified during the times of the Roman Empire.
  - d. In New Testament times it had a population of around 200,000.

## **Body:**

- I. This was the first Gentile congregation of Christians.
  - A. The Jerusalem church, where Christianity was born, was planted some eight or ten years before the Antioch church.
    1. There was tremendous numerical growth in the infant church.
    2. Persecution began first with the Sadducees, because the church preached the resurrection of Christ.
    3. The Pharisees soon joined in the persecution. (Motivated by jealousy and the guarding of their traditions.)
    4. Stephen was stoned to death, becoming the first Christian martyr.
    5. This resulted in the disciples being scattered abroad. Philip, the Evangelist, went north and planted the church in the city of Samaria.
  - B. Further persecution and scattering of the disciples

ultimately brought the Gospel to this city of Antioch (Acts 11:19).

1. So, naturally, the first converts were Jews. But the conversion of Cornelius changed this, and many of the converts were from the Gentiles (Acts 11:19-21).

II. Now this church gathered a number of well qualified preachers.

- A. Look at some of those mentioned (Acts 13:1):
  1. Note the qualifications of Barnabas, Manaen and Saul.
- B. So, the presence of many preachers seems to indicate a zeal for knowledge.
  1. Possibly the Gentile converts would have more to learn.
  2. Its very newness to them would likely add to their eagerness.
  3. We need to remember that congregations and individuals lose their first love (Revelation 2:4).
  4. Let's always be sure this doesn't happen to us.
    - a. Jesus said that we should hunger and thirst after righteousness (Matthew 5:6).
    - b. We should always be eager to learn more and serve more.

Not, "I'll do it because it will look bad to others if I don't", rather,

"I'm doing it for Christ, and I'm eager and happy to do it."

III. The Antioch Church had a zeal to save lost souls.

- A. This church didn't stagnate in its own learning
  1. True, there was much teaching in progress.
    - a. First there was Barnabas (Acts 13:23,24).

- b. Then both Barnabas and Saul (later known as Paul) (verses 25,26).
  - 2. But it becomes obvious that this teaching was leading the church into greater and greater activity for Christ.
- B. The church became missionary minded
- C. All Christians and congregations should be missionary minded, for, after all, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19,20) is the one great responsibility of the Church.
  - 1. Only a deep interest in the salvation of our fellow man, and a genuine love for Christ will make us that way.
    - a. This interest will begin with our own family, and by natural progression to our brothers and sisters in Christ, then onward to non-members.
    - b. Natural progression will lead us next to those who visit our congregation , then on outward into the community, and beyond.
    - c. And that interest must be deep, sincere and practical—practiced by individuals, and not just left to the preacher.
  - 2. At least three great missionary journeys had their beginning at this congregation.
    - a. With so much activity here, there would be little likelihood of stagnation.
  - 3. And we must truly strive to avoid stagnation.
    - b. We must be constantly reaching out with the Gospel.
    - c. And this will have its beginnings with deep interest in the welfare of each other and an ever increasing interest in our fellow man.



**Conclusion:**

1. Antioch was the first Gentile congregation.
2. It gathered strong qualified preachers.
3. Its missionary zeal stands as a great example for us today.
4. To become missionary minded such as they were, we must develop a deep interest in our fellow man, wherever he stands lost!

# The Church at Ephesus

**Text: Acts 19:20.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia.
2. Temple of Diana, at harbor entrance.
  - a. There had been an earlier temple built on rather swampy ground.  
It was burnt down, it is said, on the night Alexander the Great was born.  
Rebuilt on great substructions by enthusiastic Asian support.
3. The city had a large manufacturing trade. (Diana in particular.)

## **Body:**

- I. The Ephesian Church had a small beginning.
  - A. This in contrast to the Jerusalem Church.
  - B. Paul leaves Corinth and barely touches at Ephesus (Acts 18:19-21).
  - C. The work of Apollos, Aquila and Priscilla (18:24).
  - D. Paul returns to Ephesus.
    1. Finds disciples. (Work of Apollos?)
    2. Improperly taught! (Acts 19:1-7).
    3. Improperly baptized!
    4. Paul teaches and then corrects error.
  - E. This dozen or so converts become the faithful nucleus of a mighty church.
    1. We may be small now, but we too can grow.
      - a. Complete faith in Christ (Philippians 4:13).
      - b. Work with zeal and vigour (James 2:14-17).
      - c. Do so with Harmony and Love

(Ephesians 4:1-3, 30,32).

2. Being careful all the while not to fall into the final error of the Ephesian church of losing their first love (Revelation 2:1-7).

## II. Look at the Ephesian church's mighty growth.

- A. The soil seems to have been good. (A religious community.)
  1. The Jews were well established here. They were willing to listen to the preaching of Paul for three months (19:8).
  2. Most of the remaining population seem to have been worshippers of Diana. True, they were heathen, but not atheistic (19:24-34).
- B. Paul's teaching was positive. His subjects, things concerning the Kingdom of God.
  1. He used both argument and persuasion to make his converts (Vs. 8,9).
- C. Paul continued to preach despite opposition.
  1. He preached to a daily audience (V. 9) So must we!
  2. He preached to a mixed audience (V. 10). So must we, if we are so faced.
  3. He preached to a changing audience (V. 10). So must we, if we are faced with this.
- D. Like Paul, we must find ways to reach people in our area with the Gospel.  
Out of the Synagogue, into a school, the preaching continued!

## III. The Ephesian Church and Riots!

- A. The cause? The wealthy were threatened with loss of business (Vs.24,25)!  
(Later the church was affected (1 Timothy 6:10.)
- B. Note the cunning of Demetrius (Vs. 25-27).

- (The enemies of the church today will be no less cunning.)
- C. Most mobs are ignorant (Vs. 29,32). (The coal miners strike of 1949.)
  - D. Sometimes our emotions (even devotion) can cause us to act rashly!  
(Paul almost did so and was only saved by his brethren (V. 30).
  - E. Paul's work here had an end. (Acts 20:1).
    - 1. But the church continued.
    - 2. Said to have become more active and effective than Antioch!

### **Conclusion:**

- 1. We, learning from this church, must:
  - a. Trust Christ completely,
  - b. Work vigorously,
  - c. Plan carefully,
  - d. Love greatly. Then, like the Ephesian Church, we will grow mightily.
- 2. Then, though preachers come and go (as Apollos, Aquila and Paul) the church must continue,
  - a. To uphold Christ in all things,
  - b. And, though faced even with riots, continue to serve God and spread the Gospel.

# The City of Babylon

**Text: Daniel 6:10-17.**

## **Introduction:**

1. Babylon was a very ancient city (Genesis 10:6-10).
  2. Straddled the Euphrates River. Bridge 3000 yards long (1 3/4 miles) by 30 feet broad, with a Palace at each end!
  3. The Jews were held captive at this time, Daniel among them.
    - a. Our sermon is from Daniel 6. (First, refer to events of Daniel 5.)
- I. Flattery undermined the character of a great King!
- A. There is a vast difference between genuine praise and flattery.
    1. True praise approves and applauds some genuine quality, may even use glowing language. But never has an **ulterior motive**.
  - B. Note how these plotters of evil flatter their King! (Read verses 6,7.)
  - C. The King was ripe for flattery and fell for it!
    1. Darius was flushed with victory (5:25-31; 6:1,2).
    2. Careful thinking was smothered by the flattery. He signs the Decree.
  - D. We should never be flatterers. It's unworthy of Christian character.
    1. But we should be praise-givers. (Very important and is much different to flattery.)
  - E. We must be careful NOT to be fooled by flattery.
    1. Yet, we must learn to accept genuine praise, gracefully, with a degree of humility.

## II. King Darius sin led him to a deep faith in Jehovah!!

### A. First the King repented (V.14).

1. His repentance was genuine. He worked at it (Vs. 14,18).
2. We must remember that just being sorry is not repentance (2 Corinthians 7:9,10).
3. Like the King we must labor at our repentance.

### B. Note the depth of the king's faith (V. 16).

1. He recognized his own impotence, but also saw the power of God to do what he could not do, and, he saw the need to act in a God-fearing way (V. 18).
2. Could this heathen King put us to shame?
3. Remember, he was a Gentile, not a Jew!
4. He was used to worshipping many Heathen gods — not Jehovah!!
5. Suddenly he must put his implicit faith in Jehovah, and he does so completely!!

## III. Daniel's faithfulness was unshaken in the face of terrifying danger (V. 10).

### A. Notice:

1. Daniel knew about this New Law (V. 10).
2. He put God's law above man's law, despite the very real danger!
3. He did not hide behind closed windows.
4. He did not pretend to be doing something else!
5. He worshiped often enough to get caught.

### B. His three times daily worship was not a new thing to him: He prayed as he did aforetime (i.e.) before the King's new law.

1. Christians sometimes say how faithful they would be under persecution!
  - a. The big question is, how faithful are we now?

2. It's great to have Faith. Faithfulness is equally important; a continuing day by day service to Christ.

Conclusion:

1. Don't give or be the receiver of flattery.
2. Do be liberal with genuine praise.
3. King Darius truly repented! Are we living a life of repentance?
4. Let us practice faithfulness.

# Damascus

**Text: “And there was a certain disciple at Damascus...”**  
**(Acts 9:10).**

## **Introduction:**

1. Damascus—about 150 miles north east of Jerusalem.
2. Very ancient city (Genesis 15:2). Abram’s servant’s city.
3. Naaman—rivers of Damascus (2 Kings 5:12).
4. Saul/Paul was baptized in Damascus.  
(Read Acts 9:8-18).

## **Body:**

- I. *“A certain disciple (Ananias) was at Damascus.”*
  - A. Probably a citizen of that city.
    1. Seems unlikely he was a Christian refugee from Jerusalem.
    2. Already well known there.
    3. Already had a good reputation (Acts 22:12).
  - B. There’s no suggestion that Ananias was discontented at not living much closer to the Jerusalem Church where so much of the growth and excitement was in progress.
  - C. Like Ananias, we Christians today, wherever we are, must,
    - 1 Build up a good reputation among members and non-members (Acts 2:47; 1 Timothy 3:7).
    - 2 As individuals and as a congregation, we must set out to do good works in the community simply because we love our fellow man.
    - 3 And we must not be discontent (Philippians 4:11; 1 Timothy 6:6-10).



- II. God had an extremely important work for Ananias to do, right there in Damascus.
  - A. Of course, all of God's work is important.
    - 1. And all the work of His church is important.  
(Whether it be opening the church building, or actually preaching the Gospel.)
  - B. But some of His work stands out in bold relief:
    - 1. His instructions to Noah.
    - 2. His calling of and His promises to Abram.
    - 3. His calling of Moses.
    - 4. The first coming of Christ as well as Christ's crucifixion and His resurrection.
    - 5. And, of course, the birth of the church.
  - C. And, here in Damascus: Ananias with Saul of Tarsus, later to become the Apostle Paul.
    - 1. This event doubtless changed world history.
    - 2. And ultimately enlarged the church greatly (Acts 9:15).
  
- III. Despite what Ananias would see as a dangerous mission, he stood ready to obey God.
  - A. Ananias questions his own hearing, not God's command.
    - 1. He did not say, "No, God, the mission's too dangerous" (Acts 9:13,14).
  - B. God's explanation was no additional assurance against harm for Ananias. (c/f 15,16 with 11,12).
    - 1. Ananias obeyed without further discussion.
    - 2. He went into the house!
    - 3. He laid hands on a man who was noted for his violence!
    - 4. He commanded Saul to obey God in the matter of baptism.
  - C. God sometimes chooses the unknowns to do great

works or for great purposes.

1. Often wonder about the unknown Melchisedec!
2. The woman with the issue of blood (Luke 8:43).  
(Name unknown!)
3. Also the Philippian jailer! His name unknown!
4. Timothy's Mother and Grand-Mother. Names revealed, but apart from the very important training of the boy, Timothy, little or nothing else said concerning them!
5. And of course here, Ananias. Hardly anything else concerning him, yet the following results were little short of amazing!

D. As God's servants we too must stand ready to obey.  
(Not that God approaches us directly as he did to some during the church's infancy.)

1. Yet, every morning and for every task our attitude should be "*Behold, here am I, Lord.*"
2. The humble, seeming unimportant task could well prove important and far-reaching.
  - a. The door-knock at Tilda Niland's home \*.
  - b. The conversation with David Roper in Perth, W.A.
3. Yet neither seemed very important at the time.

Note:

- a. No one but Ananias could do the work God had ready for Ananias to do.
- b. Nobody but Noah!
- c. None, but this congregation can!
- d. No one but you can!

### **Conclusion:**

1. Whoever we are, God has a work for us to do, right where we are.
2. Some of God's very important works have been done

- by obscure people.
3. We must always stand ready to serve God, no matter what the task!

# Goshen — “Lest We Forget”

## Introduction:

1. Egypt and the Nile River.
2. The Nile Delta: (Once had seven mouths, now just three.)
3. Goshen: East of the Delta.
  - A. Rich alluvial soil, lush grass for flocks and herds.
  - B. Read Genesis 47:1, 5-7. *c/f* Exodus 8:20-24.

## Body:

- I. Israel in a haven of security.
  - A. Jacob's (Israel's) desperate plight in Canaan at the time.
    1. News of grain in Egypt heartening (Genesis 42:1,2).
    2. But there was fear in approaching such a great nation.
    3. Joseph's earlier dealings increased that fear.
  - B. Then suddenly the great change! This is our brother!!
    1. Fear he might take revenge turned to joy.
    2. Immediate salvation from hunger.
    3. The final haven of security:
      - a. Now in possession of Egypt's richest land.
      - b. With Joseph, their brother in highest office, their future was assured.
  - C. On the spiritual level, the Christian's experience has been very similar.
    1. Sudden change from helpless hopelessness (Ephesians 2:12), to salvation, with every spiritual need available.
    2. Though still with problems to face, before heaven is reached.

## II. Israel becomes Imprisoned!

### A. Generations roll by (400 years)!

1. What happened during that time?
2. Did the descendants of Jacob remain faithful to God?
3. Remember, many of Joseph's brothers were not good men!
  - a. Were their progeny any better?

### B. What we do know is that after several generations, there arose a king "*who knew not Joseph*" (Exodus 1:8).

1. And, quite likely, the Hebrew people seldom thought of him!
2. This not surprising either. Most of us forget all too readily. (Eg.) The great heroes and famous battles of World War One. (The Somme, Vimy Ridge, etc.).
3. To the Egyptians of that day, and their King, the descendants of Joseph and his brothers were simply seen as a danger and a threat!

### C. Their plan for protection? Don't destroy, but rather enslave.

1. Limit their population growth. Kill off the male children! (No birth control pills.)
2. So what had been a haven of security became a cruel prison. Daily humiliation and great suffering!
3. If these Israelites had actually forgotten God, their suffering certainly brought them back to God.
4. We don't always see the reason for suffering, but we do know that sometimes it does bring the wayward back to God.

## III. A Great man—forgotten!!

- A. By the time of Exodus chapter eight, great rumblings of God's anger with Egypt is being heard.
  - 1. Their nation's great benefactor of several generations past—Joseph and the Jehovah he worshiped were forgotten!
- B. This forgetting of Joseph brought humiliation, tragedy and defeat to a great and proud nation!
  - 2. The Plagues: more than a nuisance value.
    - a. They were costly, humiliating, disease carrying, and doubtless caused many deaths.
    - b. And finally there was the death of every first-born.
    - c. Followed soon after by the complete destruction of their mighty pursuing army!!
- C. And there are many things that we as Christians must never forget.
  - 1. How completely lost we were in sin (Romans 1:18-32; Ephesians 2:1-3).
  - 2. How Jesus saved us! The price He paid (Romans 5:6-9; 1 Peter 1:18,19).
  - 3. How the church is His! What this implies (Matthew 16:16-19; Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 6:19,20; Ephesians 1:22,23).
  - 4. How we can still be lost eternally! (1 Corinthians 10:9-12; 2 Peter 2:20-22).
  - 5. How desperately our world needs to be reminded in our generation about salvation through the shed blood of Christ!!

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Today Christians enjoy the haven of His church and God's certain promise of heaven.
- 2. We must never forget that Jesus made this all possible.

3. To forget Christ as the Egyptians forgot Joseph is to invite a much greater disaster than those ancient Egyptians experienced.

# Mount Pisgah—(Nebo)

**Read: Deuteronomy 32:48-52; 34:1,5,6,10.**

## **Introduction:**

1. One of the world's greatest men ended his life on this mountain (Moses).  
(It is a high point on a chain of mountains, running north and south, and almost directly opposite Jericho.)
2. (It is our purpose now to look at two great things that finally led Moses to the top of Mount Pisgah where he died and God buried him.)

## **Body:**

- I. First let us look at Moses as the Great Law-Giver and Nation-Builder.
  - A. Moses was eminently suited to the task God gave him.
    1. He was a Hebrew, blood relationship (Exodus 2:1-4).
    2. He had the right educational background. (Exodus 2:5-10; Acts 7:22).
      - a. These qualifications were essential to the task set for him.
      - b. And he alone had them at this time.
    3. And he had two other important qualifications:
      - a. He loved his fellow Hebrews and wanted to have them saved from slavery.
      - b. And he loved and feared God.
  - B. These qualifications (with, of course, the much needed help of God) caused him to lead the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where he gave them the LAW.
    1. Moses would know that law was essential to a



- Nation.
- a. Laws are essential to any team effort.
  - b. A nation is a team effort of its citizens.
2. We must remember that the Law given at Mount Sinai was much more than the Ten Commandments. It covered the whole spectrum of national life.
  3. It was one thing for Moses to receive the Law from God on Mount Sinai, but quite another thing to get these people to willingly accept these laws. That he did so, most effectively, points to his greatness.
- C. Then, with this Law, Moses began to weld this rabble of slaves into a Nation.
1. The first generation failed themselves, failed Moses and failed God!
  2. But during forty years of wandering and trials in the wilderness, the second generation became a mighty nation.
  3. And this task brought him finally to Mount Pisgah.
- D. What a wonderful Type he was of Christ!
1. Christ had the right blood relationship to man (Philippians 2:5-8).
    - a. We needed that in our Saviour. (He experienced humanity as we do. Heat, cold, hunger, temptation.)
  2. Christ had the right educational background. As the Creator (John 1:1-4), there was nothing He did not know, plus His own human experience (Hebrews 4:14-16).
  3. And Jesus Christ had love beyond compare.
- E. So, Jesus gave us the "*Perfect Law of Liberty*" (James 1:25).

1. Ushered in the era of grace (Romans 5:20,21).
  2. Laid down standards higher than Moses' Laws (Matthew 5:21,22,27,28,31,32,33-37, 38,39,43,44).
  3. Caused His followers to want to keep those laws.
- F. As Jesus leads us daily through the wilderness of sin, He is like Moses, making of us a mighty nation.
1. This was prophesied long ago (Isaiah 2:1-3).
  2. And His nation is truly at war (Ephesians 6:10-18).
  3. And again, despite some terrible battles, ultimate victory is certain (Romans 8:35-39)!

II. One great mistake (sin) kept Moses out of the Promised Land, Canaan (Numbers 20:7-12; Deuteronomy 32:48-51).

A. Moses sinned through:

1. Lack of obedient belief
2. Uncontrolled temper, even though the people had provoked him.
3. Arrogance! (Look how mighty I am!)
4. Stealing credit and applause that truly belonged to God!

B. This sin kept Moses out of the Promised Land, and sadly brought to an end a great life, on Pisgah's summit.

1. We Christians are not beyond sin—far from it (1 John 1:8).
2. Sin, unrepented of, will keep us out of the Promised Land (heaven).
  - a. How tragic for one to live an otherwise faithful life, then allow unrepented of sin to keep him out of heaven!

3. Yet this can happen!
  - a. We can lose our faith—too many have  
(Hebrews 3:12-19; 4:1-11).
  - b. We must constantly take in spiritual  
nourishment (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).  
Study God's Word constantly.  
Lead a truly prayerful life.  
Lean heavily on God at all times.  
Never take the bit in our teeth as did Moses.

**Conclusion:**

1. Moses was a great law giver and nation builder  
(foreshadowing Christ).  
(The Law of Liberty.) (Nation of Priests.)
2. But a great sin ended his life on Pisgah's Heights. He  
only viewed the Promised Land.
  - a. Let's not repeat this tragedy in our own lives,  
because of unrepented sin.

# The Mountains of Temptation

**Read, Matthew 4:1-11.**

## **Introduction:**

1. We will be looking at the subject of temptation, especially beginning with the temptations of Jesus. But, before doing that, let me make several observations as to the location of this event.
  - a. Scriptures do not say that the event took place on a mountain or mountains, but in the wilderness.
2. However, the country in that area is mountainous. Some might call it wild country. I've heard such country called tiger country!
3. Tradition, though it does not carry the weight of the inspired word, mostly favors mountains here, and often points to the rugged country west of Jericho.

## **Body:**

- I. These three temptations were obviously given to Jesus for a special reason or reasons for the Holy Spirit, Himself, led Christ out there for these temptations.
  - A. First, under Old Testament as every animal to be sacrificed had to be examined first, so did Jesus, the Lamb of God have to be examined (tested, tempted).
  - B. But wouldn't His life experience until the time of His crucifixion be test enough?
    1. To assume this would be to overlook His unlimited miraculous powers, not possessed by mere

mortals!

- a. Could He not use these powers wrongfully?
  - b. This is what this special temptation is about; thus removing the human question?
  - c. Yet, He was still tempted on the human level and still resisted (Hebrews 4:15).
- C. Now, let's look at His actual temptations (Matthew 4:1-11). Noting with this (1 John 2:16) that the first two temptations were heavily and cleverly disguised to hide the appearance of sin.
1. Yet Jesus still triumphed (passed the test) and did so on the human level!

II. But Jesus was tempted in all points like as we (humans) are (Hebrews 4:15).

- A. Many contend that Jesus overcame sin simply because He was and is God—not as a man!
1. This is surely absurd! It would mean that God condemns man to eternal hell for not resisting what it is impossible for him to resist!!
    - a. This would make God grossly unjust.
    - b. Would be like saying to a little child, “Push against the front of this car. If you don't stop it from moving forward when I begin to drive, I'll flog you every day for the rest of your life for refusing to obey me”!!
- B. No, Jesus has been there before you.
1. He has experienced every human feeling and emotion.
    - a. He experienced hunger, thirst, weariness, joy, sadness and pain.
    - b. He knew at first hand what it was to be tempted in all points as humans are tempted.
    - c. Therefore He can be and is touched by our

feelings under pressure of temptation  
(Hebrews 4:15).

- III. As Christians saved from the eternal consequences of sin by Jesus Christ, we must strive to resist and to overcome every temptation to sin.
- A. There is an old saying, "Don't tempt the devil to tempt". If nothing else, this makes good common sense. (Expound further.)
  - B. Now, when we resist sin, we know we are not striving to do the impossible. Someone else has already been there and accomplished the task (Christ, on the human level).
  - C. We know for sure that God expects that we will resist the temptation to sin (James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:8,9). Paul explains it in greater detail in Romans 6:1-18).
  - D. Paul likens our resistance to temptation to fighting in a war (Ephesians 6:12).
    - 1. Then tells us plainly how to equip ourselves to win these battles. (Ephesians 6:13-18).
  - E. So, we must face the facts:
    - 1 We are engaged in an endless war which we must fight.
    - 2 The whole armor of God must be used.
    - 3. We must be in close constant touch with the *Author and finisher of our faith*" (Hebrews 12:2).  
*"The Captain of our salvation"* (Hebrews 2:10).
  - F. Remember that God has promised to limit our temptation, and always leave us a way of escape (1 Corinthians 10:13).

**Conclusion:**

- 1. Jesus has been there! He has suffered every human

- temptation, and some we'll never experience.
- a. Best, we now know we can win each battle, for Jesus did so win.
  2. Let's then take God's armor and fight each battle against every temptation with confident assurance that God is ready to help us win.

# “Unto the Hills” (God, My Helper)

**Text:** Psalm 121:1,2.

## **Introduction:**

1. Note the question mark in our chosen text: *“I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills. From whence cometh my help? My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth.”*
2. It’s not certain who wrote this Psalm. It could have been David. It’s wording suggests a soldier.
3. Soldiers like to hold hilly positions.
  - A. Hilly positions give the troops an advantage.  
Eg. During World War I, when the Australians fought against the Turks at Gallipoli, the Turks had great advantage, holding the high craggy ground looking down on the beach where the Australian troops were landing.
  - B. Then too a soldier may be watching a battle from a distance, and see that renewed help was coming for his army, from the hills.

## **Body:**

- I. This cursed world in which we live causes man to look for help from beyond this world.
  - A. Our media reports are seldom happy ones.
    1. Wickedness and sin are rampant.
      - a. The reports are daily full of murders, kidnappings, robberies, rape, licentious behaviour, riots, wars and threats of war!
      - b. This is not a pretty picture, yet it is no exaggeration!!
    2. None of these reports are likely to improve our



- health, physically, mentally or spiritually.
- a. To dwell on them must ruin appetites and destroy happiness.
  - b. To ponder this sad situation must cause the thinker to see that something is radically wrong with our world.
- B. Some may long for the "good old days."
1. There seems to be little doubt but that over the past thirty to forty years standards have dropped dramatically and the incidence of crime has increased. (The drug scene in our country, Australia is but one example.)
  2. Yet, were those old days really so good?
    - a. Think about the first World War (1914-1918). The shocking carnage of trench warfare!!
    - b. Think of the barbarous floggings meted out to convicts and others, right up and into the 1800s.
    - c. It matters little how far back we go, the imprint of sin and its consequent misery is all too clear.
    - d. The shocking treatment of Jesus Christ, Himself, and of His followers during the church's infancy, is example enough.
- C. So, man searches for help and mostly fails to find it.
- II. For the help man so desperately needs he must of necessity look upward.
- A. Yet, so often when men feel down, depressed their gaze is downward!
1. The Psalmist felt in the depths (Psalm 130:1).
  2. But he cried out to Jehovah. This was

upward.

3. I buried my father in 1941. It was easily the worst thing that had happened to me in my short life. I was down and though a young Christian, was looking down. Then at the grave side someone pointed upward to the sky, drawing our attention to a sky-lark singing. He lifted our thinking to a higher plane.
4. Yes, when we are in the depths of distress and despair—when our spirits are drooping and even sinking—then we must look upward as did those great men of old: Jeremiah from the dungeon; Daniel from the lion's den; Jonah from the whale's belly.

III. The help which the hills (created) cannot give, the great Creator will give freely.

- A. We must be sure we raise our sights enough.
  1. If we stop at the hills we'll not find real help.
  2. The hills or mountains are wonderful. They get us looking upward.
  3. But we must explore beyond to God, Himself (Psalm 121:2).
- B. Learn to see the finger of God in His creation.
  1. Take time out to look at the majestic mountains, to hear the lark singing way high in the sky, to really enjoy the starry dome above us (Psalm 19:1).
  2. Be very intimate with God in prayer. "*Draw nigh unto God and He....*" (James 4:8).
  3. Don't use the Bible for proof texts only. Find God in His Word!  
Learn of His love, His power, His providence, His care for you!

4. Then as we look to the hills and beyond we'll find our help coming from God.
- C. And remember, Jesus said, "*I, if I be lifted up...*" (John 12:22).
  1. For Spiritual help we must look upward to Calvary's cross.
  2. There we see the love of God poured out for us all.
  3. There His great power to save from Satan and hell is to be seen in all its splendor.

**Conclusion:**

1. Are you in the depths of distress or despair? Then look upward beyond the hills to God.
2. Are you in the depths of spiritual loss? Then look upward to the crucified Christ.

# Mount Sinai

**Text: Exodus 19:20.** “And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai.”

## **Introduction:**

1. We are often surprised by the reactions we get to what we do or say.
  - a. This is often due to our incomplete knowledge.  
Eg. A young man buys his new girl friend an expensive box of chocolates. But she does not respond with the excitement he expect!  
Why? What he doesn't know is that chocolates brings her out in hives! Incomplete knowledge!
2. But God is never taken by surprise.
  - a. The behaviour of our first parents (Adam and Eve), was no surprise to God.
  - b. God's plan to create man included God's plan to save man.  
*Jesus was “slain, before the foundation of the world”.* (Read 1 Peter 1:18-20.)
3. Our purpose at this time is to view the unfolding of that great plan.

## **Body:**

- I. The Law that was given on Mount Sinai at this time (which became known as the Mosaic Law) was both perfect and imperfect.
  - A. The Law came from a perfect God.
    1. Therefore His law must be perfect.
    2. With God things are either right or wrong.  
Eg, to steal is wrong. Big amount or small

amount doesn't alter this fact.

To covet is wrong. Something very valuable or small does not alter the fact.

To lie is wrong. In God's sight there is no such thing as a white lie.

3. Man had to learn two important facts:
    - a. A perfect God could set no less than perfect standards.
    - b. No man ever perfectly keeps those standards.
  4. The Law from Sinai demonstrated those two facts.
    - a. It was perfect.
    - b. Man, with his privilege of free will, always fails to measure up to God's standards (Romans 7:7,12; 3:23).
- B. To show man these facts, it had to be a law that was imperfectly suited to man's needs.
1. Man is proved to be sinful, therefore man must be provided with a way to obtain God's forgiveness. Salvation from hell.
  2. But the law from Sinai did not include this. (Thus it is found to be imperfect.) It was just not designed to this end.

Eg Before the days of tractors, farmers used large muscular horses (often Clydesdales) to pull their big ploughs. Horses used for racing were of quite a different build and strength. Both were perfect as horses, yet both were imperfect if used for the other purpose.
  3. So Paul could say in truth, The Law is holy, just and good while the writer of Hebrews could say with equal truth, The Law is faulty (Hebrews 8:7).

- II. The Law given on Mount Sinai (the Mosaic Law) demanded that it be replaced, at a suitable time, with a law that provided a way of salvation.
- A. Again, this was no surprise, no shock to God. He not only knew about it, He foretold it as part of His Master Plan (Jeremiah 31:31-34).
  - B. It's important to remember that the New Law replaced the old Mosaic Law. It was not added to the old law! (Read and make appropriate comments on the following scriptures: 2 Corinthians 3:7-15, KJV and NEV; Romans 7:1-7; Galatians 4:21-31; and Hebrews 8:6-13.)
  - C. Under Christ the new law (Law of Christ, Galatians 6:2) has the all-important matter of forgiveness built into it (Hebrews 9:16-28; 10:1-10).
    - 1. So, in effect, God has replaced the perfect yet imperfect law of Sinai with a new law which, while demanding perfection of Christ's subjects (citizens) can, with justice, extend forgiveness and declare them perfect!

III. The Law given on Mount Sinai leads us to Christ and to the New Law.

- A. God has now revealed His Plan:
  - 1. Beginning with Abraham, we see him chosen by God.
  - 2. Then Israel becomes the chosen nation.
  - 3. Then the Law is given to Israel on Mount Sinai and that Law reveals that
    - a. God, of necessity, requires perfection.
    - b. That man never gives that perfection. And then,
- B. That same Law leads the world to Christ. How does it

do this?

1. The book of Romans shows that both Jew and Gentile are lost.
2. Ephesians 2:12 declares the hopelessly lost condition of the Gentiles.
3. Galatians 3:24-29 explains clearly how man is led to the foot of the cross and on to salvation by the Mosaic Law, given on Mount Sinai.

**Conclusion:**

1. The Lord came down on Mount Sinai.
2. There He delivered a perfect yet imperfect law.
3. That law He has replaced by a new law, with a built-in plan of forgiveness.
4. That Mosaic Law leads those who will to the cross, to salvation, and to live under the new law.

# The Mount of Transfiguration

**Text: Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36.**

## **Introduction:**

1. By old tradition this was Mount Tabor. However, it now seems this was unlikely as Mount Tabor was inhabited.
2. Today's scholars seem to favor Mount Hermon as being the Mount of Transfiguration, but the Bible does not actually tell us, so we cannot be at all certain.
3. Wherever it was the event left a lasting impression, and we find Peter some thirty years later referring to it as an important event in the undergirding of his faith (2 Peter 1:16-18).

## **Body:**

- I. First let's notice the startling transfiguration. The event was truly amazing.
  - A. The face of Jesus "*shone like the sun*" (Matthew 17:2). Brilliant yet hard for us to truly imagine.
  - B. His clothes were bright as light (shining from His body?).
  - C. Paul, many years later, tells us that Christ veiled Himself in flesh, though those are not the actual words he used (Philippians 2:7).

During the transfiguration, was that veil briefly lifted, thus giving His Apostles just a glimpse of His glory?
1. It causes us to ask what amazing things await us when we reach that heavenly glory.

(As the humble caterpillar that becomes the



beautiful butterfly.)

- D. The great truth is that God is light (1 John 1:5).
  - 1. Jesus is truly called the Light (John 1:6-9). He thus takes the darkness of sin away from men.
  - 2. The Christian experience is that the more we allow Jesus to penetrate our lives, the more the darkness of sin and ignorance is rolled back.

## II. Now let's hear the Emphatic Proclamation.

- A. Let's now view this spectacular scene and hear the voice from the cloud. (Read Matthew 17:3-7 and expound.)
- B. Yes indeed, "*The Word became flesh*" (John 1:14), and what an amazing thing this was. (Read Philippians 2:5-11 and comment.)
  - 1. God, the Word, clothed himself in human flesh and,
    - a. Became the captain of our salvation, leading His followers on to victory over the forces of evil (Hebrews 2:10).
    - b. Piloting men through treacherous reefs during life's journey;
    - c. Issuing commands that are sure and steadfast.
    - d. Setting aside fallible human reasoning on matters eternal once and for all (Romans 1:18-32).
- C. Could they come to believe all of this? Yes! Because it was underlined and emphasized by witnessing this amazing event and hearing the voice from the cloud.

## III. Then finally we are exposed to the Enlightening Revelation.

- A. Look at verse 8. "*...they saw no man, save Jesus only*".

1. Their minds are now crowded with the events they had both seen and heard.
    - a. They were now certain of Jesus' real identity.
    - b. But did authority for men still come from Moses and the prophets?
  2. Truly, these men did lack higher schooling, but, they were by no means fools.  
(Peter showed years later he could take a hint from God. — Acts 10:11-20,34,35.)
  3. And here on the mount, God gave them the hint of all time.  
*"No man, save Jesus only."*
    - a. Moses and Elijah had vanished without even one word to them.  
Jesus stood alone in all His Majesty.
    - b. Their minds were now prepared to accept Christ's final and vitally important message to them, *"All authority has been given unto me, in Heaven and in earth"* (Matthew 28:18-20).
- B. Today we see Jesus Christ reigns supreme.

### Conclusion:

1. The startling transfiguration—the veil of His humanity briefly drawn aside.
2. The emphatic proclamation—*"This is my beloved Son..."*
3. The enlightening revelation—*"They saw no man, save Jesus only."*
4. For a victorious life, leading to the eternal mansions, men must acknowledge daily the supremacy of Christ, and daily obey Him.