

STACY'S SERMONS

(Full Content Outlines)

**in
series**

by

John Stacy

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Dedication

This volume is dedicated to one of the most dedicated men that I know, Don Starks. It has been my privilege to work under his leadership in several evangelistic efforts in the Caribbean. He is dedicated to evangelizing The Caribbean during his lifetime. Along with his lovely and most helpful wife Marion, he works tirelessly to make this dream come true. Don Starks is in love with the souls of the Caribbean peoples. He has inspired many of us to work with him in fulfilling the great commission and his life-long dream.

When the history of the work in the Caribbean is written, the name of Don Starks will stand out as one of the major reasons for its success. Don Starks will be remembered as the missionary who believed that GOD STILL LIVES AND ALL IS WELL!

Acknowledgements

This writer does not claim total originality for the sermons contained in this volume. I am indebted to great books and minds of the past and present. A bibliography has been submitted in an effort to give credit for many of the thoughts used in the book.

Introduction

Within the last few months I have had a number of opportunities to be associated with Bro. John Stacy. First, we worked together on his new book, **SERMONS ON THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**. Next, he arranged to accompany me to Singapore, Colombo, Sri Lanka, and to Bangalore and New Delhi, India for a month of gospel meetings and classes. Now we are working on this new book of sermon outlines. I am delighted with all of this and I look forward to other occasions of fellowship in the future.

Bro. Stacy was born in Ohio, but received his higher education from various Christian Colleges and Schools in the South. His wife comes from a community near Cherokee, Alabama, and they have one boy, John Troy. Presently, Bro. Stacy serves the church of Christ in Rutherford, Tennessee as its preacher.

There are many commendable things that could be said about Bro. Stacy. Not only is he a faithful gospel preacher, but during the past few years he has involved himself in a number of mission efforts in several countries around the world. He is likewise rapidly becoming known as an author, with this being his sixth book to come from the press.

This book, I am confident, will become his most popular book. I am glad that I have been chosen to be the publisher and I anticipate a long association with Bro. Stacy in the field of Christian literature. I believe in this type of work, and I pray as with other such efforts, that it will all be to the glory of God.

February 5, 1981

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Preface

For several years I have been fond of series preaching. Series preaching focuses the attention of an audience for several weeks on a particular subject. This in my judgment helps to firmly plant the Biblical truths in the minds of the hearers. I would rather my audience learned a few things well during the year, than to learn a little about many things.

Series preaching certainly helps the preacher in the arduous process known as sermon planning. Most ministers will agree that the most difficult part of their work is in topic selection.

This writer is aware of the limitations to series preaching. There is a tendency to run some subjects in the ground. The author has been guilty of this.

Yet, there is something about taking a topic or text and breaking it down into its component parts that fascinates me. Though I am cognizant of the need for variety and to preach the whole counsel of God, I must confess that I shall be addicted to series preaching as long as I am alive.

This book has been written because of what I perceive to be a lack of this kind of sermon material in print. Brethren, there is a famine in our brotherhood. The bookshelves in our brotherhood bookstores are filled with the same books year after year. There are many of us who want some new material from time to time. We need it to spiritually recharge ourselves and our congregations. I want to plead with the gospel preachers, who may read and use this volume, to think about publishing some of your sermon material.

This volume has also been written because of the writer's growing awareness of the need to extend his ministry, now and after he has passed from this life. Far more good for the cause of Christ has been done through the power of the pen, than this old world has ever dreamed of.

If the preachers and brethren, who read this book find fresh insights, that will help them in the preaching of the gospel and in their own spiritual lives, then this volume will have achieved its purpose.

John Stacy
January 3, 1981

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THE APOSTLES

Simon Peter

Introduction:

1. The name "Simon" is a Hebrew name. (Jno 1:41)
2. Two of the Apostles were named Simon. There was Simon the Cananean or Zealot. There are nine Simons mentioned in the New Testament.
3. Simon was also called "Peter." (Jno 1:41) Peter is a Greek name, that means, "a Stone or Pebble."
4. Simon Peter was also called "Cephas" by Jesus in Jno 1:42. This is an Aramaic name.
5. Other Apostles had more than one name. Saul was called Paul and Thomas was called Didymus.
6. Peter was a fisherman by trade. (Mt 4:18)
7. Tradition, history, or legend tell us, that he was tall and slender. His skin was white and his beard thick and short. His eyes were dark and always red. This redness, we are told, came from frequent weeping.
8. His mother was Joanna. His father was named Jona. Andrew was his brother. Peter was also married. (I Cor 9:5)
9. Peter was from Bethsaida in Galilee. Later he lived in Capernaum.
10. He had no formal education. (Acts 4:13)
11. In the lists of the twelve Apostles, his name is always at the top. He was in Jesus' inner circle.
12. Peter wrote two books of the New Testament, I & II Peter. Many think Peter was also behind the gospel of Mark.
13. Simon Peter is one Apostle that we can all identify with because he was so human.

I Peter Was An Apostle That The Master Molded

- A. Mt 4:19
- B. Note the word "make."
- C. As the divine potter, Jesus had to mold the Apostles into what he knew they had the capacity to become. Peter had to learn some hard lessons.
 - 1. He learned to restrain himself.
 - a. Mt 16:22
 - b. Mt 26:52
 - 2. He learned to be humble. (Mt 26:33-34)
 - 3. He was taught how to forgive. (Mt 18:21-22)
 - 4. He learned that God loved all men. (Acts 10:34-35)
 - 5. He learned the meaning of true love for Jesus. (Jno 21:15-17)

II Peter Was The Apostle Who Received The Keys To The Kingdom

- A. Mt 16:16-19
 - 1. The "rock-petras" was the foundation fact that Jesus was the Son of God. Peter-petros the stone, was not the bed-rock that the church was built upon. He was not the first pope.
 - 2. All of the Apostles received the keys to the kingdom. (Mt 18:18)
- B. Peter used the keys to open the door of the church-kingdom on Pentecost to the Jews and to the Gentiles at the household of Cornelius. (Acts 2, 10)
- C. Acts 15:7

III Peter Was The Leader of The Apostles

- A. In Mt 10:2 Peter is called the first. The word "first" means, "chief." Peter's name heads all the listings of the Apostles in the Bible.
- B. The angel at the tomb of Jesus on the resurrection morning told the women to tell Peter, that Jesus had

been risen from the dead and had gone into Galilee.
(Mk 16:7)

- C. Lk 24:34 tells us that after the resurrection, Jesus appeared to Simon.
- D. Paul tells us that Jesus was seen of Cephas. (I Cor 15:5)
- E. The first twelve chapters of Acts are really the story of Peter. The rest of Acts of course tells Paul's story.

IV Peter Was The Apostle That Denied The Lord

- A. Mt 26:33, 35, 70, 72, 74.
- B. Three times Peter confessed the deity of Jesus. Three times he boasted. Three times he was warned. Three times he denied Christ.
- C. Though Peter sinned with his lips, he sinned less with his lips than Judas, who placed the kiss of betrayal on the cheek of Jesus.
- D. When Peter denied Jesus, he was like a sow that was wallowing in the mire.
- E. Two things brought him to his senses.
 - 1. The crowing of the cock
 - 2. Jesus turned and looked at Peter. (Lk 22:61)
 - 3. Peter repented in tears. (Mt 26:76)
- F. At this point Peter is on the bottom rung of the ladder. Yet, after the resurrection and his threefold confession of love, he arose to great heights on Pentecost and thereafter.

V Peter's Ministry

- A. We last hear of Peter in Acts fifteen.
- B. Clement of Rome says he worked in Corinth and Rome.
- C. Ignatius says he was in Antioch of Syria.
- D. Eusebius says he went into Bithynia, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Galatia.

- E. I Pet 5:13 says he was in Babylon.
- F. Others say, he had even gone to Britain and France.

VI Peter Was Crucified

- A. Peter often said to Jesus, that whatever Jesus suffered, he would be willing to suffer.
- B. Jesus may well have alluded to Peter's death in two passages of scripture.
 - 1. Mt 20:22-23
 - 2. Jno 21:18-19
- C. Historical sources tell us that, he was crucified head downward. He said that he was not worthy to die like Jesus. He was embalmed according to Jewish custom, by an Elder in The Church. He was buried on the Appian way, but then his remains were moved to where the Vatican is today. How reliable is this information? I don't know.

Conclusion:

- 1. The life of Peter offers hope for all. His life was full of ups and downs, valleys and mountaintops. Finally though, he had more ups than downs.
- 2. From Peter, we learn that men are not born disciples, they are made. God can make us into profitable servants.
- 3. We too have the keys of the kingdom, the gospel. What are we doing with them?
- 4. Have we like Peter denied Jesus? What have we done about it? We too must repent.
- 5. How will men sum up our ministry for Jesus when we are gone?
- 6. We may never be crucified physically but what about spiritually? (Gal 2:20)

Andrew

Introduction:

1. We need to study the lives of the Apostles.
2. Christ no doubt saw in these men certain qualities, that he knew all men had to have to become Christians and to carry out God's will on earth.
3. The name "Andrew" means, "manliness." Tradition tells us that he was tall, thin, and slightly stooped.
4. He was from Bethsaida in Galilee and was a fisherman by trade.
5. His mother was Joanna and his father Jona. His famous brother was Simon Peter.
6. Andrew was a disciple of John the Baptist. Jno 1:40.
7. John the Baptist introduced Andrew to Jesus. Jno 1:29.
8. Andrew will always be remembered as the missionary disciple.

I Andrew Was A Missionary To His Own Family

A. Jno 1:41.

B. We often hear that our families won't listen.

1. Andrew never heard that. If he did he did not believe it. The truth of the matter is that some members of our families will hear and some will not. (Jno 5:40) Andrew did not allow this to keep him from trying to introduce his family to Jesus.
2. We must be the best possible missionaries to our families. To do this we must show them that we love Jesus more than anything or anyone else. Jesus and the church must come first. (Mk 12:30, II Cor 8:3, Mt 6:33, Mt 10:37, Ecc 12:13)
3. Unless Christ means everything to us, he will mean nothing to our families.
4. What if Andrew had never tried to bring Simon

Peter to Jesus? Think of the loss to the church! Peter took the keys of the kingdom and opened the door of the church to Jew and Gentile. (Acts 2, 10)

- C. Andrew never wrote a New Testament book. He probably never preached a great sermon. But Peter did and in a very real sense then, Andrew did!
- D. From Andrew, we learn that the great commission begins at home. (Acts 1:8)

II Andrew Was A Missionary To Young People

- A. Jno 6:8-9
- B. Andrew according to this text brought a young boy to Jesus.
- C. He no doubt used his friendship to bring him to Christ.
- D. He helped this boy to see how he could know and serve Christ.
- E. We must impress our youth with the need to serve Jesus while they are young. (Ecc 11:9, 12:1, I Jno 2:14)
- F. We do not know what kind of an effect this encounter Christ had on this young man. We would like to think that he became a disciple.
- G. One of the great needs in the church today is for more Andrews, who will use their friendship and influence to bring young people to Christ. It is such a shame that adults often see young people as a nuisance. Andrew saw them as souls who needed to be won to Jesus. One of the greatest mission fields in the world lies at our feet in our own children. Thirty-eight million children do not attend Sunday school each week in America alone!
- H. We need Andrews to encourage our youth to become elders, deacons, preachers, Bible school teachers, per-

sonal workers, song-leaders, and missionaries. Our girls need to be encouraged to become Christian homemakers, Bible school teachers, and personal workers.

- I. I am sorry to say, that the way we treat some of these workers for the Lord, has discouraged, rather than encouraged our youth to follow in their footsteps. Note Mt 18:6.
- J. When it comes to our youth, will we be a Judas and betray them? Let us be Andrew!

III Andrew Was A Missionary To The Despised

- A. Jno 12:21-22
- B. The Greeks were despised by the Jews
- C. Andrew knew that Christ loved them also and did not hesitate to go to Philip and work up a meeting with Jesus.
- D. We too must evangelize the despised.
 - 1. Mt 9:10-12
 - 2. Mt 25:35-36
 - 3. Lk 14:12-14
 - 4. Heb 13:2
- E. Many who are hated, despised, unlovely, and lonely want to see Jesus. Andrew did not hesitate to take them to our Lord and neither should we! Mt 28:19, Mk 15-16

IV Andrew's Ministry and Death

- A. The last mention of Andrew in the Bible is in Acts 1:13
- B. Eusebius says he went into Southern Russia.
- C. Other sources say he worked among the Parthians and in Ephesus.

- D. A mixture of history and legend tells us that he was tied to a cross on which he was also crucified. The cross was X shaped and later became known as the Andrew cross. He hung on that cross for two or three days and died in November of A.D. 69.
- E. His bones have supposedly become relics. His skull is in Patras, Greece and other bones are in St. Andrews, Scotland.
- F. Andrew is the patron saint of Greece, Scotland, and Russia. Scotland and England have the Andrew's cross on their flags.

Conclusion:

- 1. We need more Andrews. He was a man of humility. He was content with second place. He was always known as Simon Peter's brother. He was not prominent. He was not in the inner circle. Yet as leaven he worked quietly and effectively. Many today don't want to play in the band unless they can play the bass drum or be the leader.
- 2. We need more Andrews who know the value of personal contact. Christianity grew because one man told another about Christ. Andrew somehow knew that the Christ you do not share, you cannot keep!
- 3. Andrew is a good example of the fact that God can take a two talent man and do much with him. Andrew's life takes away all the excuses men offer for not doing anything for the Lord.

James The Son of Zebedee

Introduction:

- 1. There is little information about this James in the Bible.
- 2. The Bible is silent about a large part of his life.

3. James passes before us like a silhouette rather than a photograph.
4. The name "James" means, "a supplanter." Its Hebrew form is Jacob.
5. He was from Bethsaida.
6. His father was Zebedee. His mother was Salome, the sister of Mary the mother of Jesus. He then was the cousin of Jesus.
7. He was younger than John. He is always mentioned with John.
8. He had a temper. He was one of the Boagerenes or sons of thunder. Lk 9:51-56, Mk 3:17
9. He was one of the more prominent of the Apostles. His name always appears in the first three listings in the gospels and Acts.
10. James was in Jesus' inner circle of Peter, James, and John. He was with Jesus when:

1. He raised Jarius' daughter from the dead — Mk 5
2. He was transfigured — Mt 17
3. He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane — Mt 26

I Let Us Note The Parental Influence On James

A. Zebedee his father

1. He was a prosperous fisherman — Mk 1:20.
2. He is never mentioned as a disciple.

B. Salome his mother

1. Worshipped Christ — Mt 20:20
2. She was concerned about her son's relationship with Christ — Mt 20:21
3. She ministered to Jesus — Mk 15:40-41
4. She stood by Christ to the end — Mk 15:40
5. She came to minister to Jesus' dead body early on the first day of the week — Mk 16:1

- C. The influence of parents is no doubt far greater than we know.

II The Call To Discipleship

A. Mt 4:21-22

- 1. He left his boat and thus his job – Mt 6:33
- 2. He left his father – Mt 10:37, Lk 9:57-62

B. The Apostles were men of vision and value

- 1. They knew the next world was more important than this one – I Tim 6:7
- 2. Mt 16:26

III James Was The First Apostle To Die

A. He was the first martyr

- 1. Peter and John were imprisoned – Acts 5
- 2. Stephen was stoned – Acts 7
- 3. Saul persecuted the church – Acts 9

B. Acts 12:1-2

- 1. Herod Agrippa I had James killed
 - 2. James had been an apostle for about seventeen years.
 - 3. Why was James killed? He was a leader who was on the firing line.
 - 4. We have already noted that his name was on the top three in the listings of the apostles. He was in Jesus' inner circle.
 - 5. Jesus may have foretold his death in Mt 20:22-23.
 - 6. Jesus made it plain that men would often die for him. (Mt 10:39)
 - 7. Consider Rev 2:13 also.
- C. We should learn from James that at best life is uncertain and brief. Therefore, we must do all that we can do now and we must do it well. Surely then it is the quality and not the quantity of a man's life that counts in the end.

1. Ecc 9:10
2. Jas 4:14

IV The Ministry Of James

- A. Tradition says that Peter and James went to India.
- B. James also went to Spain. He is the patron saint of Spain.
- C. His body reportedly lies buried in Spain today.

Conclusion:

1. What can we learn from James?
2. James was what he was because of the influence of a godly mother like Salome.
3. Again let us point out that even for an Apostle, life can be and often is uncertain and brief.

John

Introduction:

1. The name "John" means, "Jehovah hath been gracious."
2. He was from Bethsaida in Galilee.
3. His father was Zebedee and his Mother was Salome. His brother was James.
4. John was a partner with Simon Peter in a fishing operation. Lk 5:10. They were close friends. He was often in Simon's home. Mk 1:29
5. John was sent with Peter by Jesus to prepare the upper room. Lk 22:8
6. He was in Jesus' inner circle.
7. John is called, "the disciple whom Jesus loved" five times. Jno 13:23, 19:26, 20:1, 21:7, 20
8. He authored five New Testament books. John, I, II, and III John, and Revelation came from his pen.

I John's Early Discipleship

- A. John was introduced to Jesus by John the Baptist. Jno 1:29
- B. John then spent the day with Christ. He followed him to Cana, Capernaum, and Jerusalem where Jesus cleansed the temple. In all he spent some seven months in Judea. He was also with Jesus when he spoke to Nicodemus and the woman at the well. Jno 2-4
- C. When John began his discipleship he was like a diamond in the rough.
 - 1. He was intolerant. Mk 9:38-39
 - 2. He was rebuked by Jesus. Mk 9:38-39
 - 3. He was ambitious. Mt 20
 - a. He was well off.
 - b. He was related to Jesus.
 - 4. He had a temper. Mk 3:17
 - 5. He forsook Jesus in the garden. Mt 26:56

II John's Later Discipleship

- A. John was willing to suffer.
 - 1. Acts 5:40-41
 - 2. Rev 1:9
- B. He loved God more than men.
 - 1. Acts 4:19-20
 - 2. Acts 5:29
- C. He was bold. Acts 4:13
- D. John was a man of great courage. Jno 19:26
- E. He was considered by Jesus to be trustworthy. Jno 19:27
- F. He was a leader. Gal 2:10
- G. The Apostle of love was John. I Jno 4:8
- H. He was the first to the tomb. Jno 20:4
- I. He was the first to believe in the resurrection. Jno 20:8

- J. John was exiled on Patmos
 - 1. This was during the reign of Domitian
 - 2. He stayed about eighteen months working in a quarry.
 - 3. John was released under the reign of Nerva.
- K. John returned to Ephesus.
- L. Like Moses, he did some of his best work at an advanced age. He lived well into his nineties. He worked among those in Parthia, Turkey, Iran, and some say Russia.
- M. John died a natural death. He outlived all the Apostles. He lived sixty-eight years after the death of Jesus. The grave of John like that of Moses is known only to God.

Conclusion:

- 1. The life of John teaches us that man's nature can be changed. John with the help of Jesus got rid of his temper and replaced it with a loving disposition.
- 2. Through the new birth that John wrote of (Jno 3:3-5), we too can make the much needed changes in our lives.

Matthew The Publican

Introduction:

- 1. The name "Matthew" means, "gift of God."
- 2. Matthew is also called Levi which probably was his first name. Lk 5:27
- 3. His father was named Alphaeus. Mk 2:14
- 4. His father must have been a godly man to name him Levi.
- 5. His mother was one of the Marys. Many believe that James the Less may have been his half brother.
- 6. He was a publican or tax collector by profession.
- 7. He was probably the best educated among the twelve. A

knowledge of Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic and Latin was needed for his work.

8. The gospel of Matthew is the most Jewish. He quotes the Old Testament sixty-five times. He calls Jesus the son of David eight times.
9. Many scholars argue that he wrote the gospel of Matthew originally in Hebrew.

I His Call To Discipleship

- A. He was not a disciple of John the Baptist.
- B. Lk 5:27-28
- C. A publican was a tax collector. He got this job by paying the right person the highest fee. He was given a quota of taxes to collect for Rome. All above this was his to keep. We would rank him in the same category as a bootlegger, dope pusher, gambler, prostitute, and gangster. The Jews would not let him testify in court. He was unwanted in the synagogue. He was considered a renegade and a traitor. He was hated by the Romans and the Jews.
- D. Matthew in his own gospel ranked the publicans with the harlot and sinner. Mt 18:17, 21:31-33
- E. He was named Levi. The tribe of Levi provided Israel her priests. This was his first name. It was common for men to wear two names. Paul was Saul. Peter was Simon.
- F. The place of toll where Matthew sat was in Capernaum. Mk 2:1
- G. Jesus told Matthew to follow him. There is good reason to follow Jesus. Jno 14:6
- H. Matthew forsook all! He was rich. He had his own house which was large enough to hold a banquet in honor of Jesus.
- I. From Matthew we learn that true discipleship includes:

1. Following Jesus — I Pet 2:21
 2. Forsaking all — Mt 19:20-22, 27
 3. Lk 13:33
 4. Phil 3:8
- J. Matthew laid his treasure down on earth, that he might lay it up in heaven. Mt 6:19-21

II Matthew's Love For Jesus

- A. Lk 5:29
- B. Why did Matthew have this feast?
 1. It was a celebration. He had a new relationship with Jesus and it was an occasion for great joy! Early Christians rejoiced in their new found association with Jesus.
 - a. Three thousand new Christians rejoiced. Acts 2:38, 41, 46-47
 - b. The Ethiopian Eunuch and the Phillipian Jailer rejoiced after their conversions. Acts 8:39, 16:34
 - c. Paul said that we are to rejoice evermore. I Thess 5:16
 2. The feast was Matthew's farewell to his friends and his old way of life. This was his way of telling his friends that he was going to follow and serve Jesus. He was making then a clean break from the world. All those who become Christians are to make a clean break with the world. II Cor. 18, Mt 3:8
- C. This was Matthew's way of introducing Christ to his friends. Like Andrew and Philip , he desired to share the Christ, he had just found. Jno 1:41-47

III Matthew's Call Reveals Jesus As The Great Physician

- A. Lk 5:30-32
- B. It is interesting to notice that Matthew's call is in the

midst of Jesus' healing miracles. Perhaps Matthew and Luke are suggesting that in a way, Matthew's conversion was a miracle. In a sense it was, when you think of what he was and what he became.

IV Matthew's Ministry and Death

- A. Clement of Alexandria says that Matthew spent fifteen years preaching to the Jews in Palestine and abroad.
- B. We are also told that he spent time in Ethiopia, Macedonia, Syria, and Persia.
- C. Tradition, legend, or history tells us, that he was slain with a sword in Ethiopia or Egypt.
- D. His bodily remains now supposedly lie in Salerno, Italy.

Conclusion:

- 1. We too like Matthew must heed the call to discipleship.
- 2. Jesus the great physician can heal our sin sick souls.
- 3. Matthew's discipleship offers help for all men.
- 4. We too must show our lives for Jesus by introducing others to him.

Philip

Introduction:

- 1. Philip is a Greek name that means, "a lover of horses."
- 2. Some think he was named after Philip of Macedon or Philip the Tetrarch.
- 3. Bethsaida was his hometown. Five disciples came from this city.
- 4. This is even more remarkable when you consider Jesus' rebuke in Mt 11:21-22.
- 5. Some think Nathanael was Philip's brother.

6. Tradition says he worked as a coach repairman.
7. He is mentioned in Matthew, Mark, and Acts by name only.
8. He should not be confused with Philip the evangelist.
9. Only John furnishes details about Philip.

I Philip Was A Seeker Found By Jesus

- A. Jesus is the shepherd seeking lost sheep
 1. Isa 53:6
 2. Lk 19:10
- B. Jesus is the physician looking for the sick. Mt 9:12-13
- C. Philip was seeking Jesus. We learn this by implication in Jno 1:45.
- D. When Philip found Jesus, he sought out Nathanael. Jno 1:45-46
- E. Philip helped some Greeks to see Jesus. (Jno 12:21-22)
- F. From John one and John twelve we learn that Philip:
 1. Knew his Bible
 2. Did not argue with Nathanael, who was perhaps his brother.
 3. Was interested in the souls of all men
- G. Perhaps Philip was influenced by Andrew, who found Christ and immediately brought Peter to Jesus. Jno 1:41
- H. From Philip we learn that men are won to Jesus on a person to person basis. II Tim 2:2

II Philip Was A Man Put To The Test By Jesus

- A. Jno 6:5-7
- B. Many scholars think he was in charge of providing food for the twelve.
- C. We learn though that Philip failed the test. He failed to take Jesus into consideration. He saw the problem of feeding the multitudes from a human standpoint.
- D. There are a lot of Philips around today. A need arises

and since we don't have from a human standpoint what we need, we conclude that we cannot do it. So much of the time, we leave God out!

- E. We too will have our faith tested. God tests our faith to make it stronger and not weaker.
 - 1. I Pet 4:12
 - 2. Jas 1:2-3

III Philip Desired To See The Father

- A. Jno 14: 1-3, 6, 8-9
- B. The Father and the Son are not the same person like the United Pentecostal church teaches. They are two distinct beings.
- C. From Philip's conversation with Jesus, we learn that the best evidence for the existence of God is Christ.
- D. What about us? Do we want to see the Father? We should because:
 - 1. He is a God of comfort – II Cor 1:3
 - 2. He is able to do all that we ask or think – Eph 20-21
 - 3. He can supply each need – Phil 4:19-20
 - 4. He is the Father of our spirits – Heb 12:9
 - 5. He is the giver of all good gifts – Jas 1:17
- E. Christians shall see the Father
 - 1. I Jno 3:2
 - 2. Rev 22:4

IV The Ministry and Death of Philip

- A. Tradition and history say that he preached in:
 - 1. Scythia or Southern Russia for twenty years
 - 2. Gaul or France
 - 3. Hierapolis in Turkey
- B. Tradition and history tell us that:
 - 1. He was beaten, imprisoned, and crucified head downward.

2. He supposedly said that he was not worthy to die in an upright position like Jesus.
3. He also asked that his body be wrapped in papyrus and not linen like Jesus.
4. He was buried in Hierapolis. His body was taken to Rome.

Conclusion:

1. Let us learn that those who seek can find.
 - a. Mt 7:7
 - b. Jno 7:17
2. Our faith will be tested. If we fail the test, God is patient. Philip learned this from Jesus.
3. We too should desire to see God. Going to heaven is the bottom line in Christianity.

Nathanael Bartholomew

Introduction:

1. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and Acts mention a Bartholomew but do not mention Nathanael.
2. The name "Bartholomew" means, "son of Tholomai." It is not a proper name but a surname. It is also a patronymic. This is a name that has a prefix or a suffix added to it to indicate one's relationship to his father. In Matthew sixteen Peter is called Simon Bar-Jona, that is son of Jona. We are familiar with the name Johnson or the son of John. Jerome thinks that Nathanael was of noble birth. He tries to link him to the Ptolemies, the royal family of Egypt.
3. John is the only Apostle to talk about Nathanael. He does not mention Bartholomew.
4. Jno 21:2 tells us that Nathanael was from Cana. Tradition has it that he was at the wedding feast in Cana of Galilee. Some even say that he was the groom at the wedding!
5. Other legends or traditions link him with the unnamed disciple who walked with Jesus and Clopas on the road to Emmaus.

I Nathanael Was a Searcher of the Scriptures and A Seeker of Truth

A. Jno 1:45

B. By implication we assume that Philip and Nathanael were searching for the Messiah.

II Nathanael was Led To Christ Because Someone Cared

A. The word "gospel" means, "good news." Good news is something to share.

B. Philip had good news about Jesus, that He shared with Nathanael. Jno 1:45

C. Perhaps he was influenced by Andrew. Jno 1:41

D. There are those who think that Philip and Nathanael

were brothers. If so, we have two brothers leading their brothers to Jesus in John one.

- E. Both Andrew and Philip show us the importance of one to one contact. This is the way the world was taught in Biblical times. II Tim 2:2

III Nathanael Was Skeptical

- A. Jno 1:46
- B. Nathanael was the only one of the twelve to hesitate, when given the call to come and follow Jesus.
- C. Nathanael's skepticism was based on his knowledge of the Bible. He knew that Jesus was to be from Bethlehem. Micah 5:2
- D. He also knew that the people from Nazareth were rough and crude. They had a different dialect. They lacked culture and proper morals. What he didn't know was that Jesus had made his home in Nazareth, after he and his family returned from Egypt.
- E. Philip didn't argue with Nathanael. He simply said, come and see. Christianity has nothing to hide. Men need to be encouraged to examine the evidence.

IV Nathanael Was A Man Without Guile

- A. Jno 1:47
- B. The words "without guile" means, "without deceit, pure, and sincere."
 - 1. He did not deceive himself. Gal 6:7-8
 - 2. He did not deceive others. I Pet 3:10
 - 3. He did not deceive God. Heb 4:13

V Nathanael Was A Religious Man

- A. Jno 1:48
- B. Most houses were very small. People often built them around a fig tree. The branches of these trees often spread out from twenty-five to forty feet. People

often sat underneath them to read the scriptures and pray. This is probably what Nathanael was doing.

VI Nathanael Was The First Man To Make The Good Confession

- A. Paul spoke of the good confession to Timothy in I Tim 6:12
- B. Nathanael made the good confession, when he said that Jesus was the son of God and the King of Israel. He made this confession long before Simon Peter made it in Mt 16:16
- C. The Ethiopian eunuch made it. Acts 8:37.
- D. Paul linked it with salvation. Rom 10 :9-10

VII Nathanael's Ministry and death

- A. We are told that he went to Armenia, Persia, Arabia, Ethiopia, & India.
- B. The Armenian church claims him as its founder.
- C. He was flayed alive and then crucified head downward in Armenia.
- D. His remains supposedly rest in Rome.

Conclusion:

- 1. Nathanael teaches us that seekers of the truth shall find it. We can know the Christ.
- 2. The lost need the help of others to bring them to Jesus.
- 3. Skepticism can be overcome.
- 4. We must be without guile.
- 5. We too must make the good confession.

Simon The Zealot

Introduction:

- 1. Simon is one of the obscure three.
- 2. He is mentioned only four times in the New Testament

and then only by name.

3. In Mt 10:4 and Mk 3:18 he is called Simon the Canaanite. Some think that the word "Canaanite" refers to the fact that he was from Canaan and thus had some Gentile blood in him. Others think that this means he was from the city of Cana. Language scholars think the word "Canaanite" comes from a root word meaning "ardent or zealous."
4. In Lk 6:15 and Acts 1:13, he is called Simon the Zealot. The Zealots were a political party that was extremely nationalistic.
5. There are those who try to make this Simon the brother of Jesus, but there is no evidence for this.

I Simon Teaches Us That God Can and Will Save All Kinds of Men

A. God saved and used men like:

1. Andrew and Peter who were humble fishermen—Mt 4:18
2. Matthew, who was publican or tax collector and thus a natural enemy for a man like Simon Zealot. Lk 5
3. Paul, who was a persecutor, ablasphemer, injurious, and the chief of sinners. I Tim 1:13, 15

B. Simon the Zealot

1. The Zealots were a political party begun by Judas of Galilee Acts 5:37
2. Judas led a revolt in A.D. 7. This was during the time that Quirinius was governor of Syria. Judas opposed the ten percent tax on grain and the twenty percent tax on fruits and wines. The Jews saw this as a drain on the much needed temple tax.
3. The Zealots were nationalistic and patriotic. They wanted to break with Rome and re-establish the

divine monarchy.

4. We would liken the Zealots to the John Birch Society, the Klu Klux Klan, the Palestine Liberation, or the Irish Republican Army.
- C. The twelve Apostles were men who differed radically. Jesus performed a miracle in human relations by bringing them together into one harmonious unit!

II Christ Used The Zeal of Simon

- A. Jesus saw in the twelve certain qualities, that were necessary to carry out his will. He saw Nathanael as a man without guile. Jno 1:47
- B. Surely, he saw in Simon, zeal. Here was a man, who would fight and die for what he believed in.
- C. Jesus took this zeal and rechanneled it in the proper direction.
- D. Millions of people have zeal.
 1. Political zeal abounds among Democrats and Republicans.
 2. Social programs like Vista and Peace Corps show zeal.
 3. Baseball, basketball, and football teams have millions of zealous fans.
 4. We see much zeal in the world of religion. The tragic thing is that so many have zeal without knowledge. The Jews were like this. Rom 10:1-3
- E. Jesus added knowledge to Simon's zeal.
- F. In our case we need to add zeal to our knowledge. Rom 12:11, Titus 2:14

III Simon Learned The Value of the Kingdom of God Over The Kingdoms of This World

- A. Mt 6:33, 13:44-45
- B. Simon saw in Jesus the power to truly change not only this world but the world to come. Mt 19:29-30

- C. Simon learned who his real enemies were. They were not the Romans. They were Satan and his angels. Eph 6:12
- D. He learned that the way to bring about change was not through force. Mt 26:52, Mt 5:44

IV Simon's Ministry and Death

- A. History says he went into Africa, Armenia, Mesopotamia, Spain, and Britian.
- B. We are told that he was killed in Persia. His body was sawn in half. Some of his bones are supposed to be in Italy, France, and Germany.

Conclusion:

- 1. Simon is a good example of the fact that God would have all men to be saved. I Tim 2:4
- 2. Simon teaches us that the Lord can use whatever a man has to offer.
- 3. Surely, we too like Simon must learn, that this world is of little importance when compared with the next.

James The Less and Judas of James

Introduction:

- 1. In this sermon we will look at two of the obscure three.
- 2. The three obscure Apostles are Nathanael, James the Less, and Judas of James. There are three recorded statements from Nathanael, one from Judas of James, and none from James the Less. There are also no recorded deeds of the obscure three.
- 3. Let us now take a look at James the Less and then Judas of James.

I The Family of James The Less

- A. There are four James in the New Testament.
 - 1. James the son of Zebedee was an Apostle.
 - 2. Jesus had a brother named James. He authored the book of James. Gal 1:19, Jas 1:1
 - 3. There was also James the father of Judas.
 - 4. Finally, there was James the Less. This description of him was no doubt given to him to distinguish him from James of Zebedee and the James who was the brother of Jesus.
 - 5. Some think the word "less" means "shorter." The Revised Standard Version renders it, "younger."
- B. James' father was Alphaeus. This was a Greek name. He is also thought to be Clopas, who walked with the Lord on the road to Emmaus. (Lk 24:13-18) Clopas is an Aramaic name.
- C. His mother was one of the Marys, who followed Jesus and ministered to him while in Galilee. She also stood afar off and watched the events of the cross and she came to the tomb early on the first day of the week. (Mk 15:40-41, 16:1-7)
- D. Some speculate that since Matthew's father was named Alphaeus (Mk 2:14), that he and James were half brothers or stepbrothers.
- E. If our assessment of James' family is correct, we have a father who walked with Jesus and a mother who ministered to our Lord. Then also, there would be two brothers, who were Apostles!

II The Ministry and Death of James the Less

- A. Some say he went to England, Ireland, Spain, and Persia.
- B. He was supposedly sawn in half in Jerusalem, after he had been stoned. Other sources say he was killed by a blow to the head from a fuller's club.

III Judas Of James Was A Man With Three Names

- A. The name "Judas" means, "Jehovah leads or Jehovah be confessed."
- B. Judas was also known as "Labbaeus" which means, "courageous, hearty, and bold." Mt 10:3 KJV
- C. He is also called "Thaddeus" which means, "lively or vivacious."
- D. Did Jesus give him these names? He nicknamed three other Apostles. He called James and John the "sons of thunder" or "Boanerges." Mk 3:17 Simon Peter was called "Cephas." Jno 1:42
- E. In Jno 14:22, he is known as Judas not Iscariot.
- F. This Judas is called Judas of James. Does this mean his brother was James or his father? I personally think it was his father. This is the way it was translated in Lk 6:16. (KJV)

IV Judas And The Last Supper

- A. Jesus and his disciples were partaking of the Passover meal in the upper room.
- B. He told them not to be troubled in heart. He was going away to prepare mansions for them. He told them they knew where he was going. Thomas spoke up and said, we know not where you are going. Jesus said that he was the way to the Father. Philip spoke up and said, show us the Father and it sufficeth us. Then Judas of James spoke up in Jno 14:22 and said, "... Lord, what is come to pass, that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Judas clearly had a misconception of the kingdom of God. He thought of it as earthly and not spiritual. Acts 1:6
- C. Jesus answer in verse 23 was, that he would manifest himself spiritually by abiding in those, who loved him and kept his word.

V Judas' Ministry and Death

- A. He went into Syria and Persia preaching the gospel.
- B. One tradition says he was shot with an arrow in Ararat.
- C. Another says he was killed with a heavy club.

VI What Can We Learn From These Two Obscure Apostles?

- A. We can learn that God can and will use one and two talent men.
- B. So often, we hear people say, let the five talent men do the job. There aren't very many. If the church is to evangelize the world, one and two talent people are going to have to do it. Acts 8:4 says, "they therefore, that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word." The Apostles are not described in this verse. They remained in Jerusalem. Ordinary, everyday, average people evangelized the world of their day! We are no different. We must use our opportunities and abilities to the maximum!

Conclusion:

- 1. Though these men were obscure to us, Jesus saw in them what he needed to get the job done.
- 2. They will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Mt 19:28
- 3. Their names will be on the twelve foundations of the heavenly city. Rev 21:14
- 4. Some of God's greatest servants today are obscure. They are not household names in the brotherhood and in the world. God knows who they are and what they are doing and he will reward them. Heb 11:6

Thomas

Introduction:

1. The name "Thomas" is a Hebrew name meaning, "twin."
2. Thomas is also called "Didymus" a name meaning, "twin." This is a Greek name. Who was the other twin? We do not know.
3. Eusebius says that Thomas' real name was Judah and that Thomas or Didymus were nicknames given to distinguish him from the other two men called Judas among the twelve.
4. Thomas was from Galilee.
5. Tradition says he was a fisherman or carpenter.
6. It is interesting to note that he is always paired with Matthew in the Apostolic listings.
7. He is mentioned only by name in the first three gospels. Only John reveals some additional information.

I Thomas Was Ready To Die With The Lord

- A. Jno 16:7-8
- B. Jno 11:16
- C. Thomas knew that the only way to keep your life was to lose it. Mt 10:39
- D. Thomas' attitude was a great compliment to Jesus and to himself. Jno 15:13
- E. Would we die with or for the Lord? We must be prepared to do so. Rev 2:10

II Thomas Wanted To Know The Way To Heaven

- A. Jno 14:1-6
 1. Way — (Acts 22:14) Without Jesus there is no going.
 2. Truth — (Jno 16:13) Without Jesus there is no knowing.
 3. Life — (Jno 10:10) Without Christ there is no

living.

4. Father — (Jno 14:2)

B. Others wanted to know the way to heaven.

1. Heb 11:10

2. Heb 11:16

C. What about us? Do we want to know the way? If we find the way, will we follow it?

III Thomas Was A Practical Man

A. Jno 20:25

B. We often call him doubting Thomas because of his reaction.

C. All of the great men and women such as Moses, Abraham, Sarah, Gideon, and Elijah had their moments of doubt.

D. Thomas doubted no more than the other Apostles.

1. Mk 16:14

2. Mt 28:17

E. It is not wrong to ask for evidence. The Bible expects it.

1. Mt 7:15, 24:4-5

2. I Jno 4:1

3. I Thess 5:21

F. Doubt does not mean a lack of loyalty. Thomas was so loyal that he was ready to die for Jesus. Jno 11:16

G. Thomas missed seeing Jesus because he was absent from a Sunday night assembly. Why was he absent? Could it be that he was saddened by Calvary and thus despondent? Or was he afraid of the Jews like the others? We do not know why Thomas was not present that Sunday night. We do know that it was to his detriment to miss it. Many Christians forsake the Sunday night assembly to their own hurt.

IV Thomas Made The Good Confession

A. Jno 20:28

1. Lord is a word that means, "master, king, owner, and one worthy of reverence."
 - a. Jesus is Lord of Lords. (Rev 17:14) We must do more than call him Lord. We must show by our actions that he is Lord. Lk 6:46
 - b. Jesus is God. All the fullness of the Godhead bodily dwelleth in him. (Col 2:9) Jesus then is diety, divinity and possesses an eternal nature that never changes, because he is self-sustaining.

V Thomas' Ministry and Death

- A. Acts 1:13 is the last time Thomas is mentioned in the Bible.
- B. In the apocryphal book called the Acts of Thomas (third century), we are told that Thomas worked with Judas of James and Thaddaeus.
- C. Tradition, legend, and history tell us that he worked in Parthia, Persia, and Babylon. We are also told that Thomas sold himself as a slave to an Indian merchant and went to India.
- D. The Saint Thomas church in India claims Thomas as its founder. Two other churches, The Holy Apostolic Church and the Catholic Church of the East claim Thomas as their founders. They also say that Thaddaeus and Mari of the seventy helped to found these churches.
- E. Thomas died by having a lance thrust through him while he was praying, by a pagan priest in India.

Conclusion:

1. Would we die for Jesus? We may not have to die physically, but we will have to die to the things of this world.

2. Do we want to know the way to heaven?
3. Are we concerned with evidence to back up our faith?
4. We too must make the good confession.
5. How many of us would sell ourselves as slaves to be carried away into a foreign land to preach the gospel?

Judas Iscariot

Introduction:

1. Judas is the most tragic and dispicable character to walk across the stage of Bible history.
2. The name "Judas" means, "Praise of The Lord."
3. Judas was then an honorable name. It comes from the word Judah. Perhaps Judas was named after Judas Mac-cabeus, a famous Jewish patriot, who fought for Israel's freedom in the inter testamental period.
4. Matthew and Mark call Judas a betrayer.
5. Luke and John call him a traitor.
6. The name Judas is a synonym for evil. The goat that is used to lure the sheep to the slaughterhouse is called a Judas goat. There is a tree that bears what looks like delicious fruit. Yet, the fruit is bitter. It is called a Judas tree.
7. The word "Iscariot" means, "man of Kerioth." Judas' father Simon was called Iscariot. (Jno 13:26) Kerioth is a city South of Hebron in Judaea.
8. Judas Iscariot was the only one of the twelve, not of Galilee.
9. The Judeans looked down their noses at the uncultured Galileans.
10. We do not know when Judas was called to discipleship. Some say he was a disciple of John the Baptist. Most likely, he was called when Jesus travelled through Judea.
11. To say the least, Judas is one of the most enigmatic

characters of the Bible. When we think about him, a lot of questions arise in our mind.

I Why Did Jesus Choose Judas As An Apostle?

- A. Did Judas have any good in him? Yes. He left his family and business like all the other Apostles. He also taught the lost sheep of the house of Israel. Mt 10:6
- B. He apparently was skilled in business and finance, because he was made treasurer of the twelve. Jno 12:6
- C. When Jesus revealed that one of the twelve would betray him, Judas asked, is it I? None of the other Apostles had any reason to expect that he was the one.
- D. Some say Jesus chose Judas to fulfill Old Testament prophecies.
 - 1. Psm 41:9, 49:25, 59:8, 109:8
 - 2. Zech 11:12
 - 3. Acts 1:20
- E. Others suggest that he chose Judas to show that a man could associate with the godly and never be spiritually reborn.
- F. Many Biblical scholars conjecture that Jesus chose Judas to show that money was the root of all kinds of evil. I Tim 6:10
- G. Perhaps Jesus chose Judas to show the forbearance and long-suffering of God. I Pet 3:15
- H. An excellent suggestion is that Jesus chose Judas, so that he could be tempted in all points like as we, yet without sin. Heb 4:15

II Why Did Judas Choose To Become An Apostle?

- A. Some say he was sincere. He truly wanted to be an Apostle.

- B. Others suggest that Judas became a disciple so that Old Testament prophecies could be fulfilled. This view portrays Judas as a robot, unable to control his destiny. Judas was not foreordained to betray Jesus and be damned. He chose to do so freely. It was a decision of the will. All men can come to Christ and be saved. Mt 11:28, I Tim 2:4
- C. Could Judas have chosen to become a disciple because he meant to betray Jesus? In other words, he saw Jesus as an enemy to Israel. A few sources think he was a zealot.
- D. There are those who think that Judas had the wrong idea concerning the nature of Jesus and his kingdom. Many then believe that Judas was looking for a physical kingdom and Jesus as king on an earthly throne. Acts 1:6

III Why Did Judas Betray Christ?

- A. Could he have been disillusioned about the kingdom?
I think this is possible.
- B. Was Judas moved by vindictiveness after his rebuke by Jesus in John twelve? Jno 12:7-8
- C. I suspect that he allowed greed or covetousness to change his character little by little over a three year period. Judas then was not the same man in the end that he was in the beginning.
- D. Perhaps we might put it this way, Judas allowed the Devil to take over his life.
 - 1. Jno 6:70
 - 2. Lk 22:3
 - 3. Jno 13:2, 13, 26-27
- E. Let us take a look at the Passover supper. The Lord and his disciples were reclining on couches. They leaned on their left elbow and ate with their right hand. John was on the right, Jesus in the middle, and

Judas on the left of the Lord, in the place of honor! Jesus said one of you shall betray me. Then he said that he to whom I give the sop is the betrayer. He then gave the sop to Judas. To be given the sop by the host was a great honor. The food of the Passover consisted of the charosheth. This was a paste made of apples, dates, pomegranates, and nuts. This reminded the Jew of the bricks of clay. Then there were the bitter herbs. These reminded the Jews of slavery. The unleavened bread symbolized their hasty flight out of Egypt. The herbs were put between two slices of unleavened bread and dipped in the paste or sop.

IV The Betrayal

- A. Mt 26:14-15, 30
- B. Lk 22:6
- C. Mt 26:47
- D. If you will listen to the word kiss you can hear the Devil's kiss. When Judas kissed Jesus, heaven and hell met. The son of perdition and the Son of God came together in one of the most treacherous moments in all of human history.

V Judas' Bitter End

- A. Mt 27:3-5
 - 1. Judas repented. Unlike Peter it was not motivated by Godly sorrow. (II Cor 7:10)
 - 2. Judas was conscience stricken.
 - 3. He returned the thirty pieces of silver.
 - 4. Then he committed suicide by hanging himself.
 - 5. Acts 1:18 says he fell headlong and burst asunder in the midst with his bowels gushing out. Papias says that he developed a severe case of elephantiasis before he hung himself. This may account for the language of Acts 1:18.

6. Judas went to his own place. Acts 1:25
7. The blood money of Judas was used to buy a plot in the potter's field for his grave. This was a fulfillment of a prophecy in Zech 11:13.

Conclusion :

1. From Judas we learn that any man can fall. I Cor 10:12
2. We should never even think of sin. Thoughts are turned into action. Action becomes habit. Habit becomes character. Character determines eternal destiny. Judas is a good example of this.
3. Judas teaches us that one can be religious and yet lost.
4. Finally, let us learn that is often too late to genuinely repent. Heb 6:4-6

CHRIST

The Pre-Existent Christ

Introduction:

1. By pre-existent, I mean, existing prior to or in a former state.
2. The implication is that Jesus existed before he came from the womb of Mary.
3. In his pre-existent state, Jesus was wholly divine. This stands in contrast to his incarnate state, when he was both wholly human and divine.

I The Old Testament On The Pre-Existence of Christ

- A. Gen 1:1 — God is “Elohim” which is plural and refers to the Godhead. Jesus was active in creation.
- B. Gen 1:26. Note the words “us and our.” Here is another reference to the Godhead of which Jesus was a part. Jesus was active in man’s creation.
- C. I believe that he was active in Old Testament history as the Angel of Jehovah. Hagar calls him God in Gen 16:13. His appearance in the form of an angel is called a “theophany.”
- D. In Psm 2:2 we have Jehovah and his annointed (Messiah or Christ). Psm 2:7 gives us a conversion between the Father and the Son.
- E. Isa 9:6-7 calls Jesus “mighty God.” He is also described as the “father of eternity.”
- F. In Isa 44:6 we read of Jehovah the King of Israel and his redeemer, Jehovah of Hosts. Here is another reference to the pre-existence of Jesus.
- G. Micah 5:2 tells us that Jesus will be born in Bethlehem and his goings forth are from of old and from everlasting.

II The New Testament On The Pre-existence of Christ

A. John the Baptist

1. Jno 1:15
2. Jno 1:30

B. What did John mean, when he said that Jesus was before him? John was older than his cousin Jesus. He referred to his pre-existence.

C. Jesus had a great deal to say that teaches his pre-existent state.

1. Jno 6:38, 62
2. Jno 8: 14, 23, 58
3. Jno 17:5, 24

D. John the Apostle

1. Jno 1:1-3, 14
2. This text teaches:
 - a. When Jesus was, in the beginning. (Gen 1:1, Jno 1:1, Rev 3:14)
 - b. Where Jesus was, with God.
 - c. Who Jesus was, the word or God.
3. This text teaches the pre-existence of Christ. Like the Father there has never been a time when he was not.

E. The Apostle Paul

1. II Cor 8:9
2. When was Jesus rich? It certainly was not while he was on earth. Paul had to be referring to his pre-existence. (Mt. 8:20)
3. Phil 2:5-11
 1. Here we see quite clearly the pre-existence of Jesus. He existed in the form of God and was equal to God.
 2. Here we see his incarnation. He emptied himself taking the form of a servant and being made in the likeness of a man.
 3. Here we see the coronation and the exalta-

tion of Jesus. He has a name above every name and every knee shall bow before him.

4. Col 1:15-18

1. The word "image" means, a visible expression or an exact likeness of God. Col 2:9
2. The word "firstborn" means, prior to and preeminence over.
3. This text tells us that Jesus is the creator of all things. Thus, he existed before them.
4. He is also called the "beginning." This means that he was the source or the origin of all things.

5. Heb 1:2-3

- a. The word "worlds" means, "ages or universe." Isa 9:7
- b. The phrase, "effulgence of his glory" means, the reflection of his glory.
- c. Jesus is the "image of his substance" which means, the exact representation. Jesus is God. Therefore, he is eternal.
- d. He upholds all thing by the word of his power. Only the pre-existent, all powerful Christ could do this.

F. Simon Peter – I Pet 1:18-20

6. Rev 13:8

III What Was Jesus Doing In His Pre-Existent State?

A. Jesus was being worshipped and glorified.

1. Isa 6:3, 44:6
2. Jno 17:5

B. He was active in creation. Col 1:15-18

C. He was active in Old Testament Israel's history.

1. He was before Abraham. (Jno 8:58) I think he was the I AM of Ex 3:14.
2. He was the spiritual rock that followed Israel. I

Cor 10:4

D. He worked with and in the prophets of the Old Testament. I Pet 1:11

Conclusion:

1. The Bible definitely teaches that Jesus existed before the world began and before he took upon himself the robe of human flesh.
2. Jesus was with the Father from the beginning. He came from the Father and returned to the Father.
3. He was involved in our salvation before the world began.

The Virgin Birth

Introduction:

1. It is interesting to read about the births of famous men. We enjoy travelling to their places of birth. We gain a great deal of inspiration and strength, when we study their lives from birth to death.
2. We should also feel this way about the birth of Christ. It was the amazing grace of God flowing down out of heaven to earth.
3. The virgin birth of Christ is one of the cardinal doctrines of the Bible. It is tragic to hear of so many in the denominational world who deny it!
4. How long will it be until some in the Lord's church deny it?

I The Old Testament and The Virgin Birth

A. Gen 3:15

1. Note the word "woman". He did not say man. Consider also the words "her seed."

2. The woman was not Eve but Mary! Gal 4:4
 3. Her seed did not refer to Cain or Abel but to Jesus. Gal 3:16
 4. Only Christ could bruise the head of the Devil. (I Jno 3:8, Heb 2:14, Rev 1:17-18, II Tim 1:10)
- B. Gen 12:3 states, in thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed. What did God mean when he made this promise to Abraham?
1. I think Gen 49:10 has the answer. Jacob is on his death bed and makes this promise to Judah. Even though he is not the firstborn, he was to be the one through whom Shiloh or Jesus came. His descendents would provide the kings. Paul wrote that Jesus sprang out of the tribe of Judah. (Heb 7:14) About six hundred years after this promise, one of his descendents, David, sat on the throne as king of Israel. Finally, around 590 B.C. Zedekiah was removed by God from the throne. God promised that no one should sit upon the throne until, he comes, whose right it is, and I will give it unto him. (Ezk 21:25-27) This one was Shiloh or Jesus.
 2. Psm 132:11. This verse speaks of Jesus.
 3. Isa 11:1-2. These verses are also Messianic.
 4. Peter on Pentecost points out that Jesus is now sitting on David's throne. Acts 2:30-35
- C. Isa 7:13-17
1. Syria and the Northern Kingdom were in a confederation against Judah. God sent Isaiah to comfort Ahaz. He asked Ahaz to ask God for a sign that would show that he was going to protect Judah and destroy Judah's enemies. Ahaz refused to ask God for a sign.
 2. God gave the house of David, not Ahaz, a sign anyway! Isa 7:14. In verses 16-17, God promised

that before the boy was old enough to distinguish between good and evil, Judah's enemies would be no more. God then would raise up Assyria as Judah's enemy!

3. There has been a lot of conjecture as to whether this prophecy has a dual fulfillment. Some say the virgin was the wife of Ahaz, yet, he had a son named Hezekiah. Others think Isaiah's wife is referred to but Isaiah's wife was not a virgin. He even brought his son with him, when he came to Ahaz. His name was Shearjashub. Others think that there would be a virgin somewhere, who would have a child and before he was old enough to know good and evil, Judah's enemies would be destroyed. We have no record of this. Thus, I am led to believe that the prophecy was only to be fulfilled in the birth of Jesus. The child of verses 15-16 was in my opinion Shearjashub.
4. Though we may not understand everything about this prophecy, we do know that Matthew used in Mt 1:23 to describe the birth of Jesus as a virgin birth!

D. Isa 9:6-7

1. This text mentions the physical birth of a man child.
2. Yet, he would be "mighty God."
3. How could this be? The only explanation is that he had a human mother and a divine Father! He was virgin born.

E. Jer 31:22

1. There was to be something new on the earth.
2. There is nothing new about a woman holding a man child.
3. There is nothing new about a woman giving birth to a man child.

4. But if the prophet means that a woman will bear a male child without a father, then that is new! Why? Because it is a virgin birth.
- F. Micah 5:2 predicts that the Saviour would be born in Bethlehem.

II The New Testament and The Virgin Birth

- A. Let us look at the miraculous and providential events that surround the virgin birth of Christ. We shall consider them in chronological order.
- B. Angelic appearances
 1. Appearance to Zacharias – Lk 1:11, 17
 2. Appearance to Mary – Lk 1:26-27, 34-35
 3. Appearance to Joseph – Mkt 1:20-21
- C. The decree of Augustus Caesar was for the purpose of taxation and some say for military draft. Lk 2:1
- D. This enrollment took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria. He served as governor twice from 4 B.C. to 6 A.D. Lk 2:2
- E. Each person was to go to his own city. Joseph was of the house of David and went to Bethlehem. Lk 2:3
- F. Jesus' birth— Lk 2:6-7
 1. He was the firstborn. There were other brothers and sisters. Mt 13:55
 2. Swaddling clothes were strips of cloth that had never been made into clothing.
 3. A manger was nothing more than a food trough. Jesus was placed in this because there was no more room in the inn.
- G. Angelic appearance to the shepherds – Lk 2:8-12
 1. The good tidings announced by the angel were for the whole world and yet, for the shepherds personally. We do not know what day, "this day" was, that was spoken of by the angel. Many say December 25th, while others believe it to be

January 6th or even sometime in the Spring. Nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to celebrate the birth of Christ as a holy day. Those who do so, follow tradition only.

2. The heavenly host then praise God. Lk 2:13-14
3. The shepherds then go to find the Christ child.
4. They share what they heard from the angels with Joseph and Mary. Lk 2:17
5. Then the shepherds leave glorifying and praising God. Lk 2:20
6. Eight days after his birth Jesus is circumcised and named. Lk 2:20
7. He was brought to the temple during the days of Mary's purification. This was from forty to eighty days according to Jewish law. While at the temple he was presented to the Lord. (Num 18:16) Mary offered pigeons and turtledoves for her own purification. Lk 2:22
8. While at the temple, they met a man named Simeon. He was a righteous and devout man. He had the Holy Spirit and was looking for the consolation of Israel. God promised him he would not die, until he had seen Jesus. When he saw Jesus, he said, now let thy servant depart for mine eyes have seen thy salvation. He blessed Joseph and Mary. He predicted that Jesus would cause many to rise and fall in Israel. He told Mary that a sword would pierce her soul. He was referring to Jesus' death. Lk 2:25-35
9. Then there was Anna, a prophetess. She was very old. She had been widowed for eighty-four years. She spent her time worshipping, fasting, and praying in the temple. No doubt she did all this in the court of the women. While Jesus was in the temple, she spoke of him to whom all looked for

the redemption of Jerusalem. Lk 2:36-38

J. The wise Men — Mt 2:1-12

1. Who were these wise men? They were from Babylon or Persia. They probably were astronomers, men of medicine, philosophers, interpreters of dreams, priests, or maybe even kings.
2. How many were there? The idea of three wise men originated in the middle ages. Some believe there were twelve. We simply do not know.
3. How did they know to find the Christ child? Some say they saw the star. Well how did they know what the star meant? Some speculate that Daniel while in captivity taught the people about the hopes of Israel that were wrapped up in Old Testament prophecies. Zoroaster was a contemporary of Abraham. And perhaps Abraham made some of this information known. Did Balaam speak of the star in Numbers 24:17? I don't think so. I believe that God led the wise men to Jesus through a dream. After all, he used a dream to warn them not to go back to Herod after they found the Christ child.
4. When did the wise men come to the baby Jesus? They did not come when the shepherds did. The shepherds came to the stable. The wise men came to Jesus' house. (Mt 2:11) They arrived on the scene after Mary's purification so it was from forty to eighty days after his birth.
5. When the wise men did not return to Herod, he issued a decree to slay all male children two years of age and under. By so doing, he sought to kill Jesus. This fulfilled the prophecy of Jeremiah 31:15

III New Testament Specifics On The Virgin Birth

- A. In the first sixteen verses of Matthew one the word "begat" is used. But verse sixteen says, "And Jacob begat Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called the Christ." Notice that Joseph did not begat Jesus.
- B. Jesus was supposed to be of Joseph.(Lk 3:23) Take note of the word "supposed."
- C. The angel assured Joseph that, that which was conceived in her was of the Holy Ghost. Mt 1:20
- D. Matthew quotes Isaiah 7:14 to describe the virgin birth of Jesus. Mt 1:23
- E. Mt 1:25 says that Joseph knew her not until she brought forth her son. The word "knew" is used to denote sexual relations.
- F. Luke says that Mary was a virgin. Lk 1:27
- G. Mary asks how she could have a child, seeing she knew not a man. Lk 1:34
- H. Paul said that Jesus was born of a woman. Notice the fact that he left out the man. Gal 4:4

IV The Consequences of Denying the Virgin Birth

- A. Most liberals or modernists deny this great doctrine.
- B. To deny the virgin birth is to deny the inspiration of the Bible. If the Bible is wrong about this, it is not of God! II Tim 3:16-17, II Pet 1:20-21
- C. To deny the virgin birth is to deny the deity or divinity of Christ. If he had a human mother and father, then he is simply a human being. If he had a human mother and a divine Father, then he is the Son of God. Jno 3:16
- D. To deny the virgin birth is to deny the incarnation. If Jesus was born to a human mother and father, then he was not God in the robe of human flesh. Jno 1:14
- E. To deny the virgin birth is to deny the redeeming power of Christ. Again, if he was born to a human

mother and father, he is just a man and his death will have no more power to take away your sins than mine! Jno 1:29

- F. If you deny the virgin birth, then you deny that there is one mediator between God and man, himself man, Christ Jesus. (I Tim 2:4) If he is not the God-man, then he cannot function as our mediator.

V Why Should We Believe In The Virgin Birth?

- A. We should believe in the virgin birth because of the fulfillment of other Biblical prophecies.
- B. We believe in the virgin birth because of Christ's sinless character. Jno 8:46
- C. We believe in the virgin birth because of Christ's resurrection. I Cor 15
- D. We believe in the virgin birth because if there had been any evidence that he had not been born of a virgin the enemies of Christianity would have used it to stop Christianity dead in its tracks a long time ago!

VI What Should The Virgin Birth Mean To Us?

- A. It means that the incarnation is true. Rom 8:3
- B. It means that we can defeat death and the Devil. Heb 2:14
- C. It means that we have a high priest. Heb 4:15
- D. It means that we have an intercessor. Heb 7:15
- E. It means that we will be like God and see him as he is. I Jno 3:1-2

Conclusion:

- 1. The prophecies relating to the birth of Jesus prove the inspiration of the Bible. They were all fulfilled,.
- 2. We should thrill to the miraculous and providential events that surround the virgin birth.
- 3. The birth of Jesus should help us appreciate the power

- and the wisdom of God.
4. The virgin birth should fill our lives with joy, peace, and hope.
 5. His birth speaks loud and clear about God's concern for the average man.
 6. Truly we tread on holy ground, when we study the virgin birth.

The Baptism of Jesus

Introduction:

1. The baptism of Jesus is recorded in three of the four divine biographies.
2. We shall be quoting from all three in an attempt to get the complete story of Jesus' baptism.

I Then Cometh Jesus (Mt 3:13)

- A. Jesus came voluntarily.
- B. He was not an infant or an irresponsible person brought by another.
- C. He was not driven to the Jordan by public opinion or by family pressure.
- D. He came of his own free will to do the Father's will.

II He Came From Galilee To The Jordan (Mt 3:13)

- A. This was a journey of eighty miles, that took three to four days to make. Surely this shows its importance!
- B. The Philippian jailer was baptized with his family after midnight. (Acts 16:30-34) Why? It is simple, baptism is essential to salvation. Mk 16:16
- C. In Ghana, West Africa, we drove eighteen miles to find enough water to baptize a man. Why? Jesus showed us by example and by his teaching its

essentiality. Mt 28:19

III Jesus Came To Be Baptized of Him (Mt 3:13)

A. John tried to hinder Jesus, saying that he needed to be baptized of him. Mt 3:14

B. Why then did Jesus come to be baptized?

1. To fulfill all righteousness— Mt 3:15

a. Psm 119:172 tells us that all God's commands are righteousness. Jesus was baptized to fulfill or obey the Father's command or will in this matter.

b. In Mt 21:25, Jesus asked if the baptism of John were from heaven or men. Lk 7:30 tells us that the Pharisees and lawyers rejected for themselves the counsel of God, not being baptized of him. Thus, John's baptism was ordained by God for men to submit to and this included Jesus the God-man.

c. Jesus came to do the will of God. Heb 10:7.

2. To be made manifest to Israel — Jno 1:31

3. To be acknowledged as God's son

a. Mt 3:17

b. Jno 1:33-34

c. We too are acknowledged as sons of God after baptism. Gal 3:26-27

4. To receive the Holy Spirit

a. Mt 3:16

b. Isa 11:2, 61:1

c. We too receive the Holy Spirit after our baptism.

1. Acts 2:38, 5:32

2. This is not the miraculous measure of the Spirit.

3. There are no Apostles to lay their hands on people today. Acts 8:16-17

4. We receive the non-miraculous or ordinary measure

of the Spirit. It is not what the Spirit does to us but what he does for us that matters. He leads, bears witness, and aids our prayer life. (Rom 8:14, 16, 26)

5. To set an example
 - a. I Pet 2:21
 - b. I Thess 1:6
 - c. I Cor 11:1

IV The Baptism of John

- A. It was by immersion.
 1. Mt 3:16, Mk 1:9
 2. Acts 8:35-39, Rom 6:3-6, Col 2:12
- B. It required belief in Jesus. (Acts 19:4) New Testament baptism also demands faith. Acts 8:37
- C. It demanded repentance. (Mt 3:8) New Testament baptism also demands repentance. Acts 2:38
- D. John's baptism required a confession of sins. (Mt 3:6) New Testament baptism differs at this point, requiring a confession of faith in the deity of Jesus. (Acts 8:37, Rom 10:9-10)
- E. The baptism of John was for or unto the remission of sins. (Mk 1:4) New Testament baptism is for the remission of sins. (Mk 1:4) New Testament baptism is for the remission or washing away of sins. Acts 2:38, 22:16
- F. Let us point out the differences in John's baptism and New Testament baptism.
 1. John baptized in no name. Today men are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Mt 28:19
 2. John's baptism promised no Holy Ghost. New Testament baptism promises the gift of the Holy Ghost. Acts 2:38
 3. John's baptism points to the cross. New Testament

- baptism points back to the cross. Rom 6:3-6
4. John's baptism prepared men to enter the kingdom. Jno 3:3-5

V Jesus' Baptism and Prayer

- A. Jesus came up out of the waters of baptism praying. Lk 3:21
- B. The new Christians after Pentecost prayed after their baptism on a regular basis. Acts 2:41-42
- C. We should too. Lk 18:1

VI Jesus Began His Personal Ministry After His Baptism

- A. Lk 3:23
- B. He began his ministry and was immediately tempted! Lk 4:1-13
- C. We too arise out of the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:3-6) Our new life is one of service. We too will meet with temptation. We are promised help. I Cor 10:13, II Pet 2:9
- D. Paul was baptized. (Acts 9:18) Then he began to serve. He went into the synagogue and preached the deity of Jesus. Acts 9:20

VII Jesus Soon Entered Into The Synagogue After His Baptism

- A. Lk 4:16
- B. Jesus never went to church. The church did not exist. He was not the first Christian. In the fulness of time, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law. (Gal 4:4) This is why Jesus went to the synagogue to worship.
- C. Jesus had a habit (custom) of worshipping God. He read from the Bible and thus was an active participant in worship.
- D. We too must worship God on the day he designates

in the Bible and in the way which he designates. We too must be whole hearted participants. Col 2:23, Jno 4:24

Conclusion:

1. Jesus came of his own free will to be baptized and so must we.
2. His example and teaching show its essentiality.
3. It is essential for our salvation.
4. We too must enter into a life of service and worship after baptism.

The Temptation of Jesus

Introduction:

1. The temptation account in Matthew begins with the word "then." Mark's account begins with the word "straight-way." (Mt 4:1, Mk 1:12) These words refer to the fact that the temptation began right after the baptism of Christ.
2. Mt 4:1 tells us that Jesus was led of the Spirit. Mk 1:12 says that he was driven. The verb tenses indicate a continuous leading. Let us note the fact that Jesus was not tempted by the Holy Spirit. (Jas 1:13) Lk 4:1 says that Jesus was full of the Spirit. He had the Spirit without measure. This fulfilled many prophecies in Isaiah.
3. Jesus was led of the Spirit into the wilderness. It is thought that it was between Jerusalem and Jericho. This was about four miles from his baptism and twenty miles from Jerusalem. The wilderness was called "The Devastation." It consisted of hills that were dust heaps. There were many rocks made of limestone. The mountain peaks were jagged and straight down the twelve hundred

feet drop was the Dead Sea. Mk 1:13 says that the Lord was in the wilderness with the beasts. (Mk 1:13) It has also been calculated that Jesus went into the wilderness in the month of February. This was a cold and rainy month.

4. Jesus was "tempted." This word means, "to stretch out, tried to the limit, or tested." This verb tense is one that denotes continuous temptation.
5. Jesus was tempted by the Devil or Satan, who is the archenemy of our souls. (II Cor 4:4, I Pet 5:8)
6. He fasted forty days. So also did Moses and Elijah. (Lk 4:1)

I In The Wilderness Jesus Was Tempted To Turn Stones Into Bread

- A. "If" you are the Son of God. The word "if" should be understood as "since." Since you are the Son of God, then turn these stones into bread.
- B. Perhaps the Devil said, didn't God cause a fountain to spring out of the desert for Hagar? Did he not feed Elijah and the widow in a famine? Surely, he would not mind if you fed yourself. If you were his Son, would he allow you to hunger?
- C. I suspect that the Devil also reasoned that if Jesus would turn stones into bread he could have all the followers he wanted. After all, God fed the Israelites with manna in the wilderness!
- D. Satan was appealing to a basic human legitimate desire, hunger.
- E. He used this approach successfully with Eve. Gen 3:6
- F. If Jesus would have succumbed to this temptation, he would have committed two basic sins.
 1. First he would have rejected his manhood. His incarnation was at stake! If he were to use the miraculous to feed himself, then he would have

never known what it was like to be human! Because he did not yield, we can say that the Word became flesh and we now have a high priest that CAN BE TOUCHED WITH THE FEELINGS OF OUR INFIRMITIES! (Jno 1:14, Heb 4:15)

2. If Jesus would have fed himself, he would have showed the same distrust of God that Israel showed in the wilderness. Ex 16:3
- G. Jesus answered this temptation by quoting Old Testament scriptures. (Mt 4:4, Deut 8:3) Thus, Jesus said in effect:
1. There is more to life than bread. Jno 6:34
 2. God will provide. Psm 37:25, Mt 6:33, Phil 4:19
 3. It is never right to do wrong, even for a legitimate purpose.

II In The Holy City Jesus Was Tempted To Cast Himself Off The Pinnacle Of The Temple

- A. The "holy city" is of course Jerusalem.
- B. The "pinnacle" of the temple is the "corner or wing." The Devil said, if or since you are the Son of God cast yourself down. There was a six hundred foot drop down into the Kidron Valley.
- C. The Devil appealed in this temptation to pride. Again he used this approach successfully with Eve. Gen 3:6
- D. This temptation offered Jesus instant fame through the use of the spectacular or sensational. This was an option to the Jesus' earthly ministry and death. Here was a short cut whereby Jesus could by-pass God's plan. The only problem with this line of reasoning is that Jesus would have to rely on miracles to attract and keep the multitudes. Consider too the idea that the miracles would have to be more and more spectacular to keep the interest up. The results from a situation like this would never be lasting. We walk by

- faith and not by sight. Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God. (II Cor 5:7; Rom 10:17)
- E. The Devil even quoted scripture (Psm 91:11-12) to get Jesus to jump. He left out the phrase, "to keep thee in all thy ways." God did not promise to keep Jesus in the Devil's ways. He has a long history of perverting God's will. He twisted God's will for Adam and Eve around in Gen 3:1-6.
 - F. Jesus answered the Devil's temptation with a "thus saith the Lord." He said that men are not to try God. (Mt 4:7, Deut 6:6) Certainly, people are not to try to see what they can get away with in their dealings with God.

III On The High Mountain, Jesus Was Offered The Kingdoms of The World

- A. In this temptation the Devil is appealing to the lust of the eye. He used this successfully with Eve in Gen 3:6.
- B. The Devil then offered Jesus the kingdoms of this world and the glory thereof. Both Satan and Jesus knew that the Jews expected an earthly kingdom. Jesus could have fulfilled their expectation. The Devil urged him then to seize the opportunity and the world would follow him. Satan was trying to change the nature of the kingdom from spiritual to physical.
- C. Could Satan have given these things to Jesus? Some say the Devil lied. (Jno 8:44) If he could give them, I think he could do so because God permitted him to do so. The Bible seems to indicate that he could. See Jno 14:30, II Cor 4:4, I Jno 5:19.
- D. All Jesus had to do was to worship Satan! Here Jesus was asked to give his allegiance to the Devil. Just wink at a little evil. Compromise a little here and there and I'll lay the world at your feet.

- E. Jesus replied by saying, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and him only shalt thou serve. (Mt 4:10, Deut 6:13)
- F. In other words Jesus was saying, God is God, right is right, and wrong is wrong, I will not compromise!
- G. Lk 4:13 says that when the Devil had completed every temptation, he departed from him for a season. The Devil used every weapon in his arsenal against Jesus. The Devil left him only a season. See Lk 22:28.
- H. We are also told that angels came and ministered to him after the temptations. (Mt 4:11, Mk 1:13)

IV Why Was Jesus Tempted?

- A. We of course do not know all the reasons for the temptation. Here are some that we would like to suggest.
- B. Jesus was tempted, that he might develop that moral vigor and firmness, that he could only get through self discipline under fire. Heb 5:8-9
- C. He was tempted, that he might learn what it was like to be a man. Heb 4:15, I Tim 2:5
- D. He was tempted to show us that the power of Satan is not greater than the power of God. I Jno 4:4
- E. His temptations show us how to overcome Satan. He used prayer (Lk 22:40) and a "thus saith the Lord."
- F. We learn from his testing, that we are not to travel the path of least resistance or compromise.
- G. Finally, we learn that the Devil works through the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life. (I Jno 2:15-17)

Conclusion:

- 1. Jas 4:7
- 2. I Pet 5:8-9
- 3. Eph 6:10-18

The Transfiguration

Introduction:

1. Three important events in the life of Christ took place on a mountain or hill. The Sermon on the Mount, the death of Jesus on the hill of Golgotha, and his transfiguration.
2. The transfiguration marked the beginning of the end for Jesus. It took place in the last year of his ministry. It is believed that it took place at the end of Summer and close to the Feast of Tabernacles.
3. Our text will be Mt 17:1-9.
4. Mt 17:1 mentions six days and Lk 9:28 begins the story with eight days. Why the difference? Matthew was considering six whole days, while Luke was considering six whole days and part of two other days. Well what does the six days have reference to? It refers to the confession made by Peter in Mt 16:16. Peter confessed his belief in the deity of Jesus.
5. After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John. These three formed the inner circle. They were the pillars of the church. (Gal 2:9) It is interesting to note that Moses took three men, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu with him as he went up on Mount Sinai. Three men may also have been taken because of the Jewish belief, that two or three witnesses were needed to establish various matters.
6. They went up on a high mountain. We believe it to be Mount Hermon which was over nine thousand feet high. They ascended the mountain after the Sabbath in the evening.
7. Why did they go up on the mountain? Lk 9:28 says, they went up to pray.

I Jesus In Prayer Mt 17:2

A. Jesus was "transfigured" while praying. This word

means, "transformed."

1. His face did shine as the sun.
 2. His garments were white as light. They were exceeding white. (Mk 9:3) They were dazzling. (Lk 9:29) Luke's account sums it up by saying that the fashion of his appearance was altered.
- B. In this incident, we see the glory of Jesus revealed. His diety shone through his humanity. Both Peter and John wrote about it. II Pet 1:16 says that Peter saw the majesty of Jesus. Jno 1:14 states that John saw the glory of Christ.
- C. Others have been transfigured. Moses' face shone by reason of being with God on Mount Sinai. (Ex 34:29)
- D. We too can be transfigured or transformed. Rom 12:2 tells us to be transformed by the renewing of our minds. This can be done in part by prayer. I am not advocating a transformation in physical appearance.

II Moses And Elijah Appeared With Jesus Mt 17:3

- A. Moses was the great lawgiver. He stood before the Pharaoh. He led Israel through the Red Sea and into the wilderness. He was a type of Christ.
- B. Elijah was the greatest of the Old Testament prophets.
- C. Both had strange departures from the earth. Moses died on Mount Nebo and God buried him. Elijah was taken to heaven alive. Both fasted for forty days and had mountaintop experiences like Jesus. Now both appear and demonstrate that there is life after death and that men after death retain their identity.
- D. Why did Moses and Elijah appear with Jesus? Lk 9:31 says, they were talking to Jesus about his "exodus or decease." These terms refer to his death in Jerusalem. It is interesting to note that Peter uses these terms to describe his own death in II Pet 1:15.

- E. We must realize that after Peter's confession, Jesus told them of his death. This was discouraging to the Apostles. Jesus no doubt brought the three leaders with him to show them that his death was part of a divine plan. These three men had their spirits lifted as a result of this experience.
- F. Peter said, it is good for us to be here. We ought to commend him for this. He also said, if thou wilt, I will build three tabernacles, one for thee, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. Mk 9:6 says that Peter really did not know what to say. In this case it was better for him to say nothing. He made the grave mistake of placing Moses and Elijah on the same level as Jesus!
- G. God the Father showed his displeasure by sending a bright cloud to overshadow them. He said, "this is my beloved son in whom I am well pleased." This was the second such expression. (Mt 3:17)
- H. The only difference is that God the Father also said, "hear ye him." We must hear him because God speaks through him in the last days. (Heb 1:2) We must listen to Jesus because he has all authority, and is head of the church. (Mt 28:18, Col 1:18) See also Jno 12:48, Rev 17:14, Heb 5:9, Mt 7:24-27.
- I. When the Apostles got up and looked around, they saw Jesus only. This taught them the superiority of Jesus over Moses and Elijah. The law of Christ was to supersede the law of Moses
 - 1. Mt 5:17
 - 2. Jno 1:17, 14:6
 - 3. Acts 4:12
 - 4. Heb 8:6
- J. When they came down from the mountain, Jesus charged the three that they tell no man, not even the

other Apostles, about that which they had seen and heard, until after his resurrection.

Conclusion:

1. Jesus teaches us the great need for the power of prayer.
2. We also learn that the law and the prophets have been replaced by the gospel of Christ.
3. We must learn to listen to Jesus.

The Triumphal Entry

Introduction:

1. In Jno 11:56-57 the Jews wonder if Jesus will come to Jerusalem. Why? Because the Pharisees and other religious leaders would seek to take him and kill him.
2. Jesus boldly declared, "Behold we go to Jerusalem." Mt 20:18
3. On a Spring day, a Sunday, that the world calls Palm Sunday Jesus began his journey. This was one week before the resurrection.
4. Jesus was to enter Jerusalem as King of the Jews, an heir of the throne of David and as the long awaited Messiah.
5. Jesus' entry was not like the Jews had believed.
6. Why did Jesus enter Jerusalem? He knew how dangerous it was. What can we learn from this incident?
7. Mt 21:1-11

I The Preparation For The Triumphal Entry (Mt 21:1-3)

- A. Bethphage was half way up the Mount of Olives.
- B. He sent two disciples, probably Peter and John to get the ass and its foal. They were told that if anyone questioned them, they were to say the Lord hath need of them.
 1. Here many see the sovereignty of Jesus. Here is Jesus the creator and owner of all things. (Jno 1:1-3, Psm 24:1)

2. It is interesting to note the unnamed people who help Jesus during the last of his ministry. There was someone who let him use the upper room and the garden of Gethsemane in addition to the one who let him use the animals. Many think these were unnamed disciples.

II Jesus Entered Jerusalem To Fulfill The Prophecies That Showed Him To Be The Messiah-King. (Mt 21:4-5)

- A. The prophecy
 1. Isa 62:11
 2. Zech 9:9
- B. The ass was an animal that symbolized peace.
- C. Jesus was to be noted for his meekness. (Mt 11:28-30, Phil 2:7-8)

III Jesus Entered Jerusalem To Answer The Cry For a Saviour (Mt 21:6-11)

- A. The disciples prepared the animals by putting their garments on them.
- B. The multitudes spread their garments in the way along with palm branches. Mt 21:8
- C. There have been many triumphal entries. David received one after defeating the Philistines. Zerxes came into Hellespont and had branches of myrtle strewn on the streets while the air was filled with perfume. Alexander the Great came into Babylon and travelled down flower strewn streets.
- D. There has never been a triumphal entry like that of Jesus!
 1. Mk 11:10
 2. Lk 19:37-38
 3. Jno 12:12-14
 - a. "Hosanna" is a word that means, "save now." The Jews were looking for a saviour. Jesus

- was the saviour. (Lk 19:10, Mt 1:21, Jno 42)
- b. Jesus was called the "Son of David." He was a descendent of David. They were both from the kingly tribe of Judah.
 - c. "Hosanna to the highest" asks for heaven to participate in praising Jesus.
 - d. "The kingdom of David our father" is a phrase that refers to the kingdom of God. The Jews were looking for a kingdom. Their kingdom though was to be physical instead of spiritual. Jesus said the kingdom of God is within you. (Lk 17:21)
 - e. "The King of Israel" is a phrase that refers to Jesus the Messiah. The Jews were looking for an earthly king to sit on David's throne. Jesus is the King of Kings. (Rev 17:14)
- E. The real attracting power of Jesus in this event was connected with his raising of Lazarus from the dead. Jno 12:17-18
- F. Reactions to Jesus were many and varied.
1. Mt 21:10 says the whole city was stirred up.
 2. Lk 19:37-38 says that the multitude of disciples rejoiced.
 3. Lk 19:41 states that if the disciples held their peace, the stones would cry out!
 4. The whole world has gone after him says Jno 19. There were two and half to three million Jews in Jerusalem at the Passover.
 5. When Jesus got to the top of the Mount of Olives, he wept over Jerusalem. (Lk 19:41) He then foretold its destruction. (42-44)
- G. Jesus then cleansed the temple.
1. He cast out the buyers and sellers. He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and them that sold doves. (Mt 21:12-16)

2. He declared that the house of God had been turned into a den of thieves. Then he healed the sick and received the praise of children in the temple.
- H. In his weeping and cleansing, we see the sorrow and righteous indignation of Jesus.
- I. Jesus ended the day by returning to Bethany with the twelve.

Conclusion:

1. In this lesson we have seen the courage, humility, royalty, compassion, and righteous indignation of the King.
2. Truly this Jesus can answer man's greatest need the cry for salvation.

The Last Supper

Introduction:

1. Many of you have been to the Upper Room in Nashville and have seen the Last Supper by Leonardo Da Vinci carved out of wood. It is a masterpiece!
2. We would do even better to examine the Last Supper from a Biblical standpoint.

I The Preparation

- A. Mt 26:17 tells us that the day of unleavened bread has come and the disciples want to know where Jesus wants them to eat the Passover Supper. The "day of unleavened bread" was March 25th and was the day of preparation for the feast of Passover which lasted seven days.
- B. Mt 26:18 tells that Jesus said, go into the city. The city was Jerusalem. Lk 22:8 tells us that he sent Peter and John to secure a room and the necessary

ingredients for the supper.

- C. Mt 26:19 says that they were to find a man and ask for a "guest chamber." The guestchamber was a room where men and animals unloaded their burdens. Our Lord was born in a stable and wanted to partake of the supper in an area not on par with an upper room. Mk 14:13, 14 tells us, that the disciples were to see a man bearing a pitcher of water and were to follow him, entering into the house. They were to say, the teacher saith, where is my guestchamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my disciples? Many have speculated that the man who offered his house was the father of John Mark. (See Acts 12:13)
- D. Mk 14:15 tells us that a large upper room was furnished and made ready. The upper rooms were about fifteen feet by fifteen feet in size. This room was furnished with a couch and a table at least. It was also made ready. This may mean that all the ingredients needed to observe the supper were provided. Peter and John had to get the paschal lamb. The ingredients consisted of four cups of wine. This wine was red and diluted with water. It was to remind them of the fourfold promise of deliverance, that God made to Israel while they were in Egypt. (Ex 6:6-7) There was also unleavened (without yeast) bread which served to remind them of their hasty flight out of Egypt. Next, there were bitter herbs, that reminded them of slavery. The salt water stood for the tears shed and the Red Sea that was crossed. The other ingredients were the soup which was a paste made of fruit and nuts and of course the paschal lamb mentioned earlier.
- E. We need to understand the observance of the Passover because Paul said, "... for our passover hath been sacrificed, even Christ." Just as the blood of a lamb saved the Israelites from death in Egypt, so the

blood of Christ will save us from spiritual death.

II The Last Supper

- A. Lk 22:14-17 expresses his desire to eat the Lord's Supper with the Apostles.
- B. The betrayal is discussed.
 - 1. Jno 13:2 tells of the Devil's work on the heart of Judas.
 - 2. Mt 26:21-22 states that one of the twelve would betray Jesus.
 - 3. Jno 13:23-25 reveals that Peter and John want to know who it is.
 - 4. Mt 26:23-24 are verses that reveal that Jesus knows who it is and that a curse shall rest upon him.
 - 5. From Judas, we learn that though we can hide our sins from men, we cannot hide them from Jesus. Judas' betrayal shows us just how deceitful and terrible sin is. The ultimate end of sin and death, is graphically illustrated in the story of Judas' betrayal.
- C. The Lord's Supper is instituted.
 - 1. In Mt 26:26 Jesus took bread, blessed it, and brake it, and told the Apostles to eat of it, because it represented his body.
 - 2. The "bread" can also be translated "loaf." It is called the "bread of the communion." (I Cor 10:16)
 - 3. Jesus "blessed" the bread. That is, he gave thanks for it.
 - 4. Jesus "broke" the bread. I know that some versions like the KJV translate I Cor 11:24, "... this is my body which is broken for you." It is true that his flesh was broken when he was crucified. But it is also true that not a bone of him

was broken. (Psm 34:20)

5. Jesus said that we are to “eat” the bread because it represents his body. It is not his literal flesh (transubstantiation) as the Catholics teach. In John 6:48 Jesus is the bread of life and in Jno 10:9 he is the door. He is not a literal door, any more than the bread is the literal body of Jesus.
6. In Lk 22:19 Jesus said that were to partake of the bread in “remembrance of him.”
7. In Mt 26:27-28 Jesus took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to the Apostles. He then told them, drink ye all of it. Why? It was the blood of the covenant which was to be poured out for many for remission of sins. Jesus then promised that he would not drink of the fruit of the vine with the disciples until, he drank it anew with them in the Kingdom of the Father.
8. The “cup” can and does refer to the contents and not the container. It is called the “cup of blessing” in I Cor 10:16.
9. After giving thanks Jesus told all of the Apostles to drink of it. He was not telling them to drink all of the contents. Notice also that all men are to partake of both the fruit of the vine and the bread! How unlike so many denominational churches!
10. Jesus’ blood brought into being a “new covenant or testament” that was foretold in Jer 31:31-34. The first covenant was not dedicated without blood. See Heb 9:18-20. The shedding of Jesus blood nailed the Old Testament law to the cross. (Col 2:14, 16-17)
11. Jesus’ blood was “poured out for many.” This means he died for the salvation of the whole world. (Jno 3:16, 4:42)

12. His blood was poured out for many "for the remission of sins." Paul said, "Without the shedding of blood there can be no remission. It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins. (Heb 9:22, 10:4) If "For" in Acts 2:38 means because of as some say, then Jesus shed his blood because sins were already forgiven. How utterly ridiculous!
13. Our Lord will not "drink" of the fruit of the vine, until he communes with his disciples in the Kingdom of God which is the church. (Mt 16:18-19, Col 1:13, Rev 1:9, Lk 22:16) This may be why that in Mk 15:23, Jesus refused to drink wine mingled with gall.
14. The Lord's Supper (I Cor 11:20) is called "the breaking of bread." (Acts 2:42, 20:7) It is called "the table of the Lord." (I Cor 10:21) It is never called the Holy Eucharist.
15. The Lord's Supper is a "memorial." We are to partake of it in memory of Jesus. (I Cor 11:24-25) It is a "proclamation." We proclaim the Lord's death until he comes, when we partake of communion. (I Cor 11:26) The Lord's Supper offers a time for self-examination. We must not eat of the supper in an unworthy manner. We can do this when we fail to discern the Lord's body and blood. Some argue that you should not eat of it, if we are unworthy. We are all unworthy. Our righteousness is as filthy rags in the sight of God. (Isa 64:6)
16. Surely, when we forsake the assembly (Heb 10:25), we count the blood of the covenant wherewith we were sanctified, an unholy thing. (Heb 10:29)
17. It may well be, that at this point in the Last

Supper, that the contention of Lk 22:24-30 arose. The disciples were arguing over who would be greatest in the kingdom. Jesus told them that the greatest are those who serve. He then got up and girded himself with a towel and washed the disciples feet. He gave them his example to follow. (Jno 13:1-20) Jesus came not to be ministered to but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. (Mt 20:28)

18. In John chapters fourteen through seventeen, Jesus delivered his farewell address, offered the Holy Spirit as comforter, and prayed. They then sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. (Mt 26:30) The early Christians also sang hymns (Eph 5:19, Col 3:16)

Conclusion:

1. The Passover feast was to remind Israel of her deliverance out of the slavery of Egypt. The tragedy of this situation was, that though Israel regained her freedom after over four hundred years in bondage, she became enslaved in sin while in the wilderness and never entered into the promised land.
2. Christ our passover hath been sacrificed. Like Israel of old, we can escape sin and death, if the blood of the Lamb has cleansed our past sins. Many Christians like Israel are freed from the slavery of their past sins, only to fall away and miss heaven. It doesn't have to be that way. We can repent and turn back to God. (Acts 8:21-24)

Gethsemane

Introduction:

1. Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, gave his farewell discourse, promised to send the Comforter (Holy Spirit), offered his famous prayer for unity, sang a hymn with the Apostles and went out to the Mount of Olives. Perhaps while on the way, Jesus told the Apostles that they would be offended this very night. He referred to an Old Testament prophecy which said that when the shepherd had been smitten, the sheep would be scattered abroad. (Zech 13:7)
2. Finally, they crossed over the brook Kidron and came to a garden at the foot of the Mount of Olives. This garden was called Gethsemane, which means, "olive press." It was full of fruit trees, flowers, and shrubs. Jesus often went to this garden with his disciples. Gethsemane was a private garden. A nameless friend or disciple allowed him to use it. This nameless individual joined the ranks of the men who allowed Jesus to use the ass and its foal, as well as the upper room.
3. The events of Gethsemane should be considered in three divisions.

I Christ In Prayer

- A. Mt 26:36-37 tells us that Christ left eight of the Apostles at the entrance of the garden and took Peter, James, and John with him into the interior of the garden, while he prayed. These three men were with him when he raised Jarius' daughter from the dead and when he was transfigured. Why did he bring them? Perhaps he wanted some sympathy, strength, or just someone to bear witness to the awesome events that were to take place. In the Jewish mind two or three witnesses were needed to verify something.

- B. Mk 14:34 says that Jesus told them to abide and watch. He did not ask them to pray with or for him.
- C. Jesus was "sorrowful and sore troubled." Mk 14:33 says that he was "greatly amazed." This phrase has been rendered by some as, "terrified suspense."
- D. In Mt 26:38 Jesus said that his soul was "exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death." We must remember that this event is taking place after midnight. The events of the past week were extremely hectic. Jesus had just been through the observance of the Last Supper and the institution of the Lord's Supper. Judas was in the process of bringing the mob that would soon take him away to his mock trial and subsequent crucifixion! Jesus was then physically and spiritually exhausted. Paul referred to this incident in Heb 5:7, when he said that Jesus offered up strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death. Truly, Jesus in this incident was indeed the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. (Isa 53:3)
- E. Jesus in Mt 26:39 went forward a little and fell on his face. This position in prayer says a lot about Jesus' intensity.
- F. Let us look at the prayer itself.
 - 1. Note its beginning. Jesus said, "my Father." (Mt 26:39) He taught us to pray "our Father," in Mt 6:9. In Mk 14:36 Jesus says, "Abba Father." The word "Abba" is a more personal form of Father. It is akin to our word "Daddy." I am not advocating using that term with our Father in prayer.
 - 2. In Mk 14:36 Jesus also says, "all things are possible with thee." Jesus taught us that we must pray believing. (Mt 21:22) So did James in Jas 1:5-8.
 - 3. The first and only real petition in the prayer

was, "if it be possible let this cup pass away from me." Notice Jesus' attitude towards this petition. He said, "not as I will but as thou wilt." (Mt 26:29) Our Lord then went to the three disciples and found them asleep.

4. Then our Lord went back and prayed the second time. His petition in Mt 26:42 was, "if it cannot pass except I drink it, thy will be done." Jesus then again went back to his disciples and found them asleep. The fact that they could not watch one hour no doubt added to the sorrow and loneliness of Jesus.
5. Jesus then went back a third time and prayed the same prayer. Undoubtedly each time our Lord offered this petition, he came progressively closer to submitting to the Father's will. Here we see the human nature of Jesus causing him to hesitate a little. Finally, Jesus came back to the Apostles and found them unaware of what had been going on. Lk 22:45 tells us that they were weighed down by sorrow. They too like Jesus had been under a lot of strain.
6. Lk 22:43 tells us that after the first petition of Jesus, an angel appeared strengthening him.
7. Lk 22:44 tells us, "And being in an agony, he prayed the more earnestly, and his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." The word "agony" means, "to wrestle, anguish of mind, or to struggle." Let us not forget that the breath of death was on Jesus and that from a human standpoint Jesus did not want to die on the cross at age thirty-three. Here we see Jesus in **THE SUPREME STRUGGLE! THE SALVATION OF THE WORLD HUNG IN THE BALANCE!** Jesus "prayed the more earnest-

ly". His "sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground." Doctors tell us that under abnormal circumstances, people can actually sweat blood! Note also that death immediately follows! That brings me to this point. Many believe that the "cup" that Jesus prayed about was not primarily the cross. After all Jesus did not have an angel sent to strengthen him while he hung on the cross. Think about it.

II Admonitions Given By Jesus To Peter, James, and John

- A. Mt 26:41 says, "watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation, for the spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak."
1. "Watch" means, "to be on guard, alert, vigilant, or awake." Why watch? I Pet 5:8 says that the Devil our adversary is walking about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. Jesus wanted the Apostles to watch because Judas and the mob were at hand.
 2. "Pray" means, "to offer a petition to God." Lk 18:1 says, "men ought always to pray and not to faint."
 3. Why watch and pray? That ye enter not into "temptation." This word can mean, "an inward inducement to sin." But in the context it refers to "outward trials such as the coming of Judas and the mob to take Jesus." Our Lord taught us to pray that we will not be led into temptation in Mt 6:13
 4. Why do we not want to be tempted? "Because the spirit is willing and the flesh is weak." In Rom 7:25 Paul said, "I myself with the mind serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."
 5. Soon the Apostles were to be tried in body and soul.

III The Betrayal of Judas

- A. Judas knew where Christ would be.
- B. He came with the multitude which was made up of chief priests, scribes, temple police, and maybe even some of the Roman soldiers stationed at the fortress known as Antonia, which was not far away. They came with weapons and lights. In Jno 18:4-6 Jesus said, who do you seek? He asked this to declare his own identity, to make them aware of his innocence, and to keep the Apostles from getting arrested. They said, Jesus of Nazareth. "When therefore, Jesus unto them, I am he, they went backwards and fell to the ground." This is one of the most amazing passages of scripture in the Bible. Jesus could have walked out of the garden at this point but he did not. (Jno 18:6)
- C. Judas said, "hail." This word means, "may joy find you." (Mt 26:49)
- D. Judas then "kissed" Jesus. The word used here denotes, "repeated and earnest kissing." Only Satan could have devised such a sign of identification and betrayal! (Mt 26:49)
- E. Jesus said, "friend do that for which thou art come." The word "friend" means, "companion." Jesus used a word here to show Judas and everyone else, that he was a betrayer and not a disciple.
- F. Peter then took out his sword and cut off the ear of Malchus. (Jno 18:10) Jesus of course healed the man's ear and told Peter to put up the sword, because they that take the sword shall perish by the sword. (Mt 26:52) Why did Jesus tell Peter to put up the sword?
 - 1. For one thing, he could get killed.
 - 2. In Mt 26:53 Jesus said that he could call twelve legions of angels (36,000) to his rescue.
 - 3. Furthermore, the scriptures had to be fulfilled. (Mt 26:54)

4. Let us not forget that Jesus later told Pilate, my kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight. (Jno 18:36)
- G. Jesus asked the multitude why they were treating him as a robber. After all, he sat in the temple daily teaching them. They knew what he was and what he taught. (Lk 22:52–53)
- H. Then in harmony with Zech 13:7, the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. (Mt 26:56)
 1. Peter followed afar off and so did another disciple. (Mt 26:58, Jno 18:15)
 2. A certain young man believed to be Mark, also followed him. (Mk 15:51)

Conclusion:

1. We all have our Gethsemanes. We all have periods of sorrow and anguish. We all have had our souls deeply troubled.
2. Do we go to God in prayer? If so, what is our attitude? Do we pray believing like Jesus?
3. Jesus truly teaches us the value and the necessity of prayer in our text.

The Trial of Jesus Christ

Introduction:

1. It is hard to imagine mortal man trying the Son of God, who shall judge the quick and the dead.
2. The trial of Jesus in the Hebrew and Roman courts is the biggest miscarriage of justice in history!
3. Let us notice the seven trials of Jesus.

I Jesus Before Annas

- A. Jno 18:12-14, 19-24
- B. Annas was sixty years old at this time. He was the father-in-law to Caiaphas, who was high priest. His four sons were also appointed high priest. He was deformed in body and mind. He was guilty of murder. Tiberius kicked him out of office in A. D. 14. His family turned the temple into a den of thieves. Jesus' cleansing of the temple two times made him an enemy.
- C. Caiaphas predicted that a man might have to die for the people, that the whole nation not perish. He was speaking the will of the Sanhedrin, who made up their minds to kill Jesus after he raised Lazarus from the dead. (Jno 11:50)
- D. Annas questions Jesus about his teachings. Jesus replies by saying that he taught openly. He did nothing in secret. Then an officer struck Jesus for what he considered abusive speech to Caiaphas.
- E. Annas then sent Jesus bound to Pilate.
- F. Note these illegalities.
 - 1. It was illegal to have a private hearing.
 - 2. It was against Jewish law to strike a defendant. The officer should have preferred charges. Then if proven guilty, punishment can be rendered.
 - 3. Trial at night was against Jewish law.

II Jesus Before Caiaphas

- A. Jesus was taken to the home of Caiaphas and not to the place of trial known as the house of the hewn stones.
- B. The first name of Caiaphas was Joseph. He being the high priest was the president of the Sanhedrin which was the Jewish supreme court. The Sanhedrin was made up of seventy-one members. The members were chief priests, scribes, and elders. Twenty-three were

needed for a quorum. They sat in a semi-circle with the high priest in the middle and a scribe at each end to record statements made for the innocence or guilt of the accused.

- C. The members of the Sanhedrin were to serve as judges and defense attorneys. In this case there was no effort to find the defendant innocent. (Mk 26:59) They sought false witnesses to condemn him to death.
 - 1. Many false witnesses came. They accused him of saying he would destroy the temple and raise it in three days. Mk 14:56 tells us that the witnesses did not agree. This was a must. (Deut 17:16)
- D. Then the high priest tried to get Jesus to swear under oath that he was the Christ, the Son of God. (Mt 26:63) This was illegal. A defendant could not be forced to testify against himself. Jesus replied that someday Caiaphas would see him (Jesus) on the judgment seat. (Mt 26:64)
- E. The high priest rent his garment which was another illegal act! He accused Jesus of blasphemy and sentenced Jesus to death. (Mt 26:65–66) Mk 14:64 says they all condemned him to death. Yet, a trial that carried with it a possible death sentence could not end in one day. When all condemned someone to death, he was to be acquitted because this would be evidence of collusion. Jewish law also forbade arrests on the eve of the Sabbath and trials on the Sabbath or during a feast such as the Passover. Thus, you can clearly see that the law meant nothing to the blood-thirsty Sanhedrin.
- F. From Mt 26: 67 and Lk 22:64 we learn that they spat upon Jesus and did buffet him. He was also smitten and blindfolded.

III Jesus Before The Sanhedrin

- A. Lk 22:66 tells us that the Sanhedrin met at daybreak. This was illegal. They were not to meet until after the morning sacrifice.
- B. Jesus was asked if he were the Christ, the Son of God. (Mt 26:67–68)
- C. Jesus answered by saying in effect, that he would be judging them one day. He admitted that he was the Christ and the Son of God, when he said, ye say that I am. (Mt 26:69–70)
- D. Caiaphas said what need have we of further witnesses? We have heard from his own mouth. Again according to Jewish law, no defendant could be condemned by the words that came out of his mouth.
- E. Jesus was then taken to Pilate.

IV Jesus Before Pilate

- A. Pilate was from Seville, Spain. His wife was the daughter of the granddaughter of Augustus Caesar. Pilate was the sixth governor of Judea. He was wicked and immoral. Lk 13:1 speaks of Pilate mingling the blood of the Galileans with their sacrifices. He lived in Casearea and went to Jerusalem during the feasts. He stayed at the palace of Herod the Great.
- B. Jno 18:28–30 tells us that the Jews would not enter into the praetorium lest they be defiled and not able to eat of the Passover. They had no qualms about all the illegalities that they engaged in, yet hypocritically they would defile themselves for the Passover! Pilate asked them what accusation there was against him.
- C. Lk 23:2 gives us three charges.
 - 1. He perverts the nation. This is vague.
 - 2. He forbids tribute to Caesar. Jesus simply said, render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars and the things that are God's unto God. (Mt 22:15–22)

3. Jesus was also accused of calling himself a King. He was a King but over a spiritual kingdom. He had no political aspirations!
- D. In Jno 18:31–32 Pilate told the Jews to take him and judge him yourselves. The Jews said it is not lawful for us to put him to death. This was said, that the words of Jesus might be fulfilled, signifying by what manner of death he should die. If the Jews killed him, he would die by stoning. If the Romans killed him, he would be crucified.
- E. In Jno 18:33–35 Pilate questions Jesus about his Kingship.
- F. Jesus in Jno 18:36 said, “my kingdom is not of this world, if my kingdom were of this world then my servants would fight . . . ” In verse 37 Pilate asks Jesus if he is a King. Jesus said, thou sayest I am King and to this end was I born. Jesus also pointed out that he came into the world to bear witness to the truth and that everyone who is of the truth will hear his voice.
- G. Pilate then declares that he finds no crime in Jesus. (Jno 18:38) Pilate then asks Jesus, what is truth? How tragic that a man of his importance did not know the answer to this all important question. Truth is the word of God. (Jno 17:17)
- H. In Lk 23:5 the fourth charge is offered against Jesus. He was accused of stirring up the people from Judea to Galilee. In verse seven Pilate learning that Jesus had stirred up Galilee sent him to Herod Antipas, who had jurisdiction over that region.

V Jesus Before Herod Antipas

- A. Herod was glad to see Jesus. He hoped to see Christ perform a miracle. Herod questioned Jesus. Jesus did not answer. (Lk 23:8–9)

- B. Then the religious leaders vehemently accused him. (Lk 23:10)
- C. Herod and the soldiers mocked Jesus. Then they sent him back to Pilate. (Lk 23:11)

VI Jesus Before Pilate Again

- A. Jno 18:39 tells us that Pilate had a custom of releasing a prisoner during the feasts. He asked them who they wanted released. Verse 40 says they wanted the robber Barabbas.
- B. Lk 23:14–15 tells us that Pilate told the rulers of the Jews that he found no crime in Jesus and neither did Herod. Pilate was then going to release Jesus. He had done nothing worthy of death. Pilate knew also that the Jews had delivered Jesus because of envy. (Mt 27:18)
- C. At this point Pilate's wife comes in and says, have thou nothing to do with this righteous man, for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him. There is a piece of interesting information or some would say speculation about the wife of Pilate. Several sources say that she may have been a disciple of Christ! Christ may have healed her lame son. She is reputed to be a friend of the wife of Jairus' wife whose daughter Jesus raised from the dead. The Greek Orthodox and Coptic churches have made her a saint!
- D. After this the leaders of the Jews stirred up the crowds. They cried give us Barabbas and crucify Jesus.
- E. Pilate then scourged Jesus. That is he allowed Jesus to be beaten with a leather whip that had entwined in it pieces of metal or bone. Many died while being scourged. Some bit their tongues in half. Others had their internal organs exposed as a result of the beating. Jesus was then given a crown of thorns and arrayed in a purple robe. Then he was mocked and struck with

the hands of the soldiers. (Jno 19:1–3)

- F. Again Pilate said, I find no crime in him. (Jno 19:4)
Behold the man! (Jno 19:5)
- G. Then the leaders of the Jews again cried out, crucify him! Pilate again said, I find no crime in him. The Jews then said, we have a law that says he should die because he claims to be the Son of God. (Jno 19:6–7)
Pilate was then afraid. (Jno 19:8)
- H. Pilate then questioned Jesus. Jesus gave no answer. Pilate reminded Jesus that he had the power to crucify or release him. Jesus said that he would have no power, unless God gave it to him. Pilate then sought to release Jesus. The Jews cried out, if you do, you are not Caesar's friend. Pilate said, behold your King. The Jews said, we have no king but Caesar.
- I. Then Pilate took water and washed his hands before the multitudes, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this righteous man, see ye to it. Then he released Barabbas and crucified Jesus. (Mat 27:24, 26)

VII Jesus Before The Multitudes

- A. Pilate wished to content the multitudes, so he gave in to their demands. (Mk 15:15)
- B. The people said, his blood be on us and on our children! (Mt 27:25)
- C. Little did they realize that in less than forty years, thirty thousand male Jews would be crucified in Jerusalem when the city was overturn by the Roman armies in A. D. 70.

Conclusion:

- 1. We have just studied the judgment of Jesus, meted out by mortal man.
- 2. Someday soon, Jesus will return again to judge mortal man. (Acts 17:30–31, II Cor 5:10, Rev 22:12)

The Crucifixion of Christ

Introduction:

1. When I was in the Caribbean nation of Grenada, I saw a volcanic lake that had no bottom.
2. The death of Christ is a deep subject and there is no way that we will ever really get to the bottom of it.
3. Jesus came into the world to seek and save the lost. (Lk 19:10) His name was "Jesus" which means, "Saviour." (Mt 1:21) He is called the Saviour of the whole world in Jno 4:42. Referring to his death Jesus said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me. This he said, signifying what death he should die." (Jno 12:32-33)
4. With these thoughts in mind let us consider five major points.

I The Way of Sorrows

- A. Mt 27:26-30 tells us that Jesus was scourged, stripped, clothed with a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns. A reed was placed in his hand and he was mocked as king of the Jews. He was covered with spittle and smitten on the head.
- B. Then Mt 27:31 says that they put his blood-stained garments on him and led him away to be crucified. The procession started at 8:00 A. M. Friday morning. It was lead by a centurion. Following him was a soldier carrying a white board which had the victim's crime on it. Jesus endured bearing his cross. (Jno 19:17) Next, came four soldiers with mallets and spikes. Then followed the two thieves. The procession took the long road so that more people could view it.
- C. Jesus followed the first two soldiers. He fell beneath the weight of the cross. Simon of Cyrene, the father of Alexander and Rufus was compelled to carry the

cross. Jesus was not able to bear it because of the physical and spiritual agony that he endured in the garden of Gethsemane. He was also sent back and forth between Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and Pilate all night long. Then he was beaten unmercifully. No wonder, he could no longer bear the cross.

1. Simon was the father of two well known disciples, Alexander and Rufus, as noted above. (Mk 15:21)
 2. Cyrene was in Northern Africa. There was a large colony of Jews in Cyrene. Lucius of Cyrene helped to spread the gospel as a member of the church in Antioch. (Acts 13:1)
- D. Lk 23:27 tells us that a great multitude followed the procession. Some of the women were wailing and lamenting. Jesus said that they should weep for themselves, as he predicted the destruction of Jerusalem. (Lk 23:28–31)
- E. Finally, the procession came to Golgotha which is called the place of the skull. Some use the Latin word Calvary for Golgotha.
- F. Our Lord was then offered wine mingled with gall. When he tasted it, he would not drink. (Mt 27:34)
This was offered to ease the pain of crucifixion.

II The First Three Hours On The Cross

- A. Mt 27:35 says that Jesus was then crucified. The Jews would normally execute people by stoning. The Romans beheaded their citizens. Aliens in the Roman world were crucified. This was not originally a Roman form of execution. The Romans borrowed it from the Phoenicians.
- B. The beams of the cross were ten inches square. Thus the cross weighed between one to two hundred pounds. Most victims hung on the cross for eight or

nine days. The nails were driven between the radial and ulna bones of the forearm. Nails were also driven into the feet of Jesus. Then the cross was dropped into a two to three foot hole with a thud. The jarring of the body no doubt tore more of the skin and many capillaries. Try to imagine the strain on the tendons and ligaments as a result of sagging and swaying body of Jesus. I am told that the nerves around the shoulder blades are affected by crucifixion and that this affects the breathing. Thus, in order to breathe, victims of crucifixion must push their rib cage up and down by pumping the feet and legs, which are nailed to the cross! It is extremely difficult to breathe when your arms are stretched out and nailed to a cross. No food and water soon affects the electrolyte balance. That is the balance between the acids, salts, and other basic body substances. Acidosis which is a decline in the alkaline content of the body soon occurs. Vinegar was given to hasten this process. Headache, dehydration, unconsciousness, loss of blood, suffocation, nausea, convulsions, tetanus, and exposure to the elements characterize crucifixion victims. Flesh is often pecked off by birds while the victims are still alive. Flies are also known to cover the bloody bodies of these victims. Volumes could be written about the pain and shame of the cross.

- C. Mt 27:38 says that there were crucified with him, two robbers, one on the right hand and one on the left.
- D. Then Jesus speaks for the first time and says, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34, Acts 3:17)
- E. Then the soldiers cast lots for Jesus' garments. Each soldier got a part of them. (sandals, headgear, girdle, and outer garment) When it came to his seamless

robe, they decided not to rend it. They cast lots or gambled for it. (Jno 19:23-24) This fulfilled Psalms 22:18.

- F. Next an accusation was placed over the cross. It read, This is the King of the Jews. (Mt 27:37) Jno 19: 20-22 says that it was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek. The Jewish leaders went to Pilate and asked him to change it. Pilate said, what I have written, I have written. The accusation was written in Hebrew, the language of religion, Latin, the language of law, and in Greek, the language of philosophy!
- G. In Mt 27:39 the passers-by wagged their heads and said, thou that destroyest the temple and buildest it in three days, save thyself, if thou art the Son of God, come down from the cross. This fulfilled Psalms 22:7-8.
- H. Then the Jewish leaders mocked him, saying basically the same thing as the passers-by. (Mt 27:41-43.)
- I. Next we have the thieves joining in the mockery. How incredible! (Mt 27:44)
- J. Luke's account of the two thieves is worth noting. "And one of the malefactors which were hanged rail- ed on him saying, if thou be the Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, doest thou not fear God, seeing that thou art in the same condemnation? And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And Jesus said unto him, verily I say unto thee, today thou shalt be with me in paradise." (Lk 23:39-43)
- K. Then Jesus spoke for the second and third times. "When Jesus therefore saw his mother, and the disciple standing by whom he loved, he saith unto his mother, behold thy son! Then saith he unto the

disciple, behold thy mother! . . .”(Jno 19:26–27)

III The Last Three Hours On The Cross

- A. Darkness then covered the land from the sixth to the ninth hour. (Mt 27:45)
- B. Jesus' fourth utterance from the cross was, “. . . my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”
- C. His fifth statement was simply, “I thirst.” (Jno 19:28)
- D. Jesus then cried out, “It is finished.” (Jno 19:30)
- E. His final words were, “. . . Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. . .” (Lk 23:46)
- F. Then we are told that the veil of the temple was rent from top to bottom. The earth quaked and rocks were rent. (Mt 27: 51) The veil separated the holy place from the most holy place in the temple. Actually there were two veils. They were thirty feet high and so heavy that it took three hundred priests to manipulate each one! Thus, the rending of the veil was no small thing. It of course symbolized the destruction of the old law.
- G. Mt 27:52, 53 tells us that many graves were opened; and that many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of their graves AFTER HIS RESURRECTION, and went into the holy city, and appeared to many.
- H. Then the centurion cried out, truly this man was the Son of God. (Mt 27:54)
- I. Because it was the preparation or the day before the Sabbath, the Jews asked that the legs of the victims be broken to hasten their deaths, so that they could be quickly buried. It was against Jewish law to bury on the Sabbath. Jesus was found to be dead already. A soldier pierced his side and blood and water came forth. (Jno 19:31-34) Some think that Jesus died of a ruptured heart brought on by bearing the sins of the

world. See Psalms 69:20.

- J. Jesus' legs were not broken because the scriptures foretold, a bone of him should not be broken. (Jno 19:36, Psm 22:18) Jesus was pierced so that another scripture (Zech 12:10) might be fulfilled. (Jno 19:37)

IV What Crucified Jesus?

- A. Envy killed Jesus. (Mt 27:18)
- B. Greed nailed him to the cross. (Mt 26:16)
- C. Ignorance slew him. (Acts 3:17)
- D. But most important of all, Jesus was sent to the cross for the sins of a lost and dying world. He died for our sins according to the scriptures. (I Cor 15:3) Statements like those in Isa 43:25, Psm 103:12, and Mic 7:19 were made in view of the death of Jesus for man's sins.

V Some Final Observations

- A. Jesus' death was a natural death. That is he had a fleshly body that actually died. (Phil 2:8)
- B. Jesus' death was unnatural. The wages of sin is death. (Rom 6:23) See also Ezk 18:20, Rom 8:6. Yet, Jesus was without sin! (Jno 8:46, I Pet 2:22, I Jno 3:5)
- C. Jesus' death was preternatural. That is, it was pre-determined. Peter declared, "Him being delivered up by the determinate council and foreknowledge of God, ye by the hands of flawless men did crucify and slay." (Acts 2:23) In Rev 13:8 Jesus is described as the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.
- D. Finally Jesus' death is supernatural in the sense that it was able to do for man, what man could not do for himself, that is free himself from the guilt of his sins.

Conclusion:

- 1. Isa 53:1-12

The Burial of Christ

Introduction:

1. As a preacher I must not only proclaim the gospel, I also marry the young and help bury the dead.
2. Robert Louis Stevenson writing of the anguish of burial said, "In taking away our friends, death does not take them away utterly, but it leaves behind a mocking, tragic, and and soon intolerable residue, which must be hurriedly concealed."

I The Burial of Christ (Jno 19:31-41)

- A. "The Preparation" was the Sabbath eve. In this case it was also the eve of the Passover.
- B. The Jews did not want the bodies hanging on the cross on the Sabbath day. (Deut 21:23) Paul referred to this passage in Gal 3:13 when he said, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, as it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree." The tree here is the cross.
- C. The Jews then wanted the legs of Jesus and the thieves broken to hasten their deaths. This is called the "crucifragium." Jesus was already dead. They pierced his side and blood and water came out.
- D. John tells us that all this was done to fulfill the Old Testament scriptures or prophecies. (Psm 34:20, Zech 12:10) These prophecies predicted that no bones of Jesus would be broken and that they would look on him whom they have pierced.
- E. Joseph of Arimathaea comes on the scene in Jno 19:38

Arimathaea was about fifteen miles East of Joppa. Joseph was a secret disciple. He feared the Jews. He was a rich man. (Mt 27:57) He was a member of the Sanhedrin. Luke describes him as a good and righteous man, who would not consent with the council and its deeds, which nailed Jesus to the cross. He looked for the kingdom of God. (Lk 23:50-51) Mk 15:43 tells us that he was a man of honorable estate and that with great boldness, he asked for the body of Jesus. Where did he get his boldness? Perhaps he was filled with righteous indignation. Pilate marvelled that he was already dead. He asked a centurion if this were so. Then he granted Joseph Jesus' body. (Mk 15:44-45) In Lk 23:53 we are told that Joseph took the body down. They lowered the cross to the ground and withdrew the nails from his hands and feet.

- F. Nicodemus now appears. (Jno 19:39) He was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night. He was another one of the secret disciples. He admitted that no one could do the signs that Jesus did, unless God was with him. Jesus then instructed him concerning the new birth. It was not physical but spiritual in nature. Men must be born of water and the Kingdom of God. (Jno 3:1-5) Nicodemus defended Jesus in Jno 7:50-51. He came bringing myrrh and aloes for the embalming of the body of Jesus.
- G. In Jno 19:40 they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with spices, as the custom of the Jews is to bury. They tore the linen in swathes. They wrapped each limb individually, so that flesh did not touch flesh. Then they put his body on a litter and carried it to the tomb. Jno 19:41 says, "Now in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden, a new tomb, where in was never a man laid." Mark 15:46 says that the tomb was hewn

out of rock. Tombs in Jesus' day had a vestibule. They were generally nine feet square. The doors were two feet wide and four feet high. His body came to the tomb without the customary hired mourners and flutists. No tears would be collected in bottles and placed in his grave. The two secret disciples and a few women were all the people present at his burial. The Apostles were conspicuously absent. Let us not forget that his body while in this tomb did not decay. (Acts 2:27)

- H. Why did Joseph and Nicodemus bury Jesus? His body would have been left on the ground to the dogs or buried in a common grave for criminals. Either of these two alternatives would have been dishonorable. They wanted Jesus to have an honorable burial. Whether they realized it or not, they fulfilled Isa 53:9 which foretold that his grave would be with the rich in his death.

II The Watch Of The Women At The Tomb

- A. Mk 15:47 says that Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Jesus beheld where he was laid.
- B. Mt 27:61 says that Mary Magdalene was there and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre.
- C. Lk 23:55-56 states that the women who followed Jesus out of Galilee, beheld the tomb and how his body was laid. They no doubt saw his burial.
- D. In the meantime, we learn from Mt 27:62-66 that the Jewish leaders went to Pilate. They said that while the deceiver was alive, he claimed that he would rise again after three days. They asked Pilate to secure the tomb, lest the disciples steal the body and the last error be worst than the first. Guards were sent to secure the tomb and the Roman seal was placed on the door.

III The Angelic Announcement Of The Resurrection

- A. The two Marys and Salome brought spices after the Sabbath to complete the job of enbalming the body of Jesus. (Mk 16:1)**
- B. There was then while they were on their way an earthquake. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven and rolled away the stone from the tomb. His appearance was as lightning and his clothing was as snow. The guards were so afraid, that they quaked and became as dead men. (Mt 28:2-4)**
- C. While the women were still on their way to the tomb, they wondered how they would remove the tomb. Suddenly, they saw the stone which was exceeding great, roll back. A young man or angel was sitting on the right side in a white robe and they were amazed. (Mk 16:3-5)**
- D. Mt 28:5 says that the angel declared, fear not. But they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth. The angel said, why seek ye the living among the dead? (Lk 24:5) He is risen. He is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. (Mk 16:6) Go tell the disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee, and there ye shall see him, as he said. They fled trembling and astonished. (Mk 16:7-8)**
- E. Luke's account (Lk 24:6-11) has the angel telling the women that Jesus told them in Galilee, that the Son of man would be delivered into the hands of sinful men to be crucified. In three days, he would rise again. The women told these things to the eleven and the eleven received their report as idle talk. They disbelieved.**
- F. Jno 20:2-10 offers additional comment on these events. The women went to Simon Peter and the other disciple whom Jesus loved (John) and said, they have taken away my Lord. We know not where they**

have laid him. Peter and John began to run to the tomb. John outran Peter. John looked into the tomb and saw the linen cloth but would not enter. Peter entered the tomb and saw the linen cloth and the napkin rolled up. John then entered the tomb and believed.

- G. In Jno 20:11-12 we see Mary Magdalene weeping without the tomb. She looked into the tomb and saw two angels. One sitting at the foot and another at the head of the place where Jesus' body had laid.

IV The Significance Of The Burial of Christ

- A. The burial of Christ proved his death. Earlier we learned that Pilate asked the centurion if Jesus were dead. They did not want to bury a half dead Christ, who could be revived by his disciples.
- B. It had a great effect on two of his secret disciples. Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus were never the same again. They found a new sense of boldness. Their fear of the Jews was gone. Perhaps there were other secret disciples who found courage also.
- C. The burial of Christ showed his true humanity. He died and was buried like every other human being. It also showed his true divinity, when he arose out of that grave.. No mortal men ever rose from the dead, never to die again.
- D. Paul wrote that he had preached the gospel to the Corinthians. He said in I Cor 15:3-4, For I delivered unto you first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures." Christ's death for our sins is made more realistic by his burial.
- E. In Rom 6:3-5 and Col 2:12 we taught that Christians

have been buried with their Lord in the waters of baptism that they might arise to walk in newness of life. Just as Christ died and was buried and rose from the grave, we who die to sin are buried in the watery grave of baptism. We are new people when we are resurrected from that grave. Jesus will never die again. Christians will not die spiritually, if they remain faithful to God. We can and will escape the death of the soul in an eternal hell.

V Finally, We Must Consider Some Critical Arguments Made By Unbelievers

- A. Some argue that Jesus' body was just left on the ground for the dogs. He did not receive a burial. Paul said, Jesus was buried in I Cor 15:4. This statement was made to a generation, who could have shown it to be false, for there were some still living, who knew the truth about this matter.
- B. Others say Jesus was placed in a common grave for criminals with the two thieves. Christians later invented the story of his burial by Joseph of Arimathaea to give Jesus some final dignity in death.
- C. Some contend that the early Christians argued for the soul resurrection of Jesus. Later we are told, the Christians changed their minds and invented a story for the bodily resurrection of Jesus.
- D. Critics for centuries have declared that there were two graves. They say that Jesus was buried in a common grave first. Then Joseph and Nicodemus dug up his body and moved it to another more honorable grave. The women we are told saw Jesus' body put into the first grave. They came back to complete the embalming process and found his body gone. They were not aware that Joseph and Nicodemus had removed it to another grave. This theory has been

fueled by the usage of two Greek words for grave in the burial story of Jesus in the Bible.

- E. In reply to all the critics of the burial and resurrection of Jesus, we should say that if the enemies had access to Jesus' body, they should have presented it and they could have stopped Christianity dead in its tracks. If the Christians stole his body, how do we explain their sudden change of attitude? They were mourning, weeping, and characterized by unbelief. Yet, suddenly they became bold and so aggressive that they preached the gospel to the world of their day in one generation! (Col 1:23, Acts 17:16, Acts 28:22)

Conclusion:

Let us close this lesson by taking a closer look at this Jesus, who was buried in Joseph's tomb. From his lips came the cries of a new born babe, as well as the moans of a dying man. He had a death as well as a birth. He had a grave as well as a cradle, a shroud as well as swaddling clothes. His grave was not on some lonely windswept moor but in a lovely garden arrayed with the bright flowers of Spring. If we will obey the gospel and make him our Lord, he will change our graves of sin in the wilderness of despair into a lovely garden full of hope. Yes, Jesus can transform a grave into a garden. We cannot visit the grave too often, delight in it too abundantly, receive it too solemnly, or declare it too loyalty. The burial of Christ is one of the three basic facts of the gospel. (I Cor 15:1-4) In my judgment it is one of the most neglected in our preaching.

Resurrection Appearances

Part I

Introduction:

1. The resurrection is not to be preached as a ceremonial theme once a year on the so called religious holy day known as Easter.
2. The resurrection of Christ was the primary theme of the gospel. Paul preached the gospel in Corinth. In I Cor 15:3-4 Paul said, "For I delivered unto you that which I first of all received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures and that he was buried and that he was raised from the dead the third day according to the scriptures."
3. From Acts 1:3 we learn that Jesus rose from the dead and remained on earth for forty days. During that time, he made ten appearances that we know of. Five were made on the actual day of his resurrection. Five more appearances were made during the other thirty-nine days.
4. We shall look at the first five appearances of Christ in this sermon.

I Jesus Appeared To Mary Magdalene (Mk 16:9-11, Jno 20:11-18)

- A. We believe this appearance to have been on April 9, early in the morning and near the tomb.
- B. Mary Magdalene was the woman from whom Jesus had cast seven devils or demons. She told the mourning and weeping disciples that she had seen him and they disbelieved.
- C. We turn now to John's account which gives us more information.
- D. Mary is weeping outside the tomb. She looks into the tomb and saw two angels, one sitting the foot and

one at the head of where Jesus' body had been placed. The angels ask, why she was weeping. She said someone has taken away her Lord and she did not know where they had put him. She then turned around and saw Jesus. She did not recognize him. She thought he was the gardener. Why didn't she know it was Jesus? Perhaps the light was still dim. Some say her eyes were filled with tears and she was emotionally drained and thus did not recognize Jesus. Jesus asked the same question as the angel. She said to him, if you have borne him away, tell me where you have laid him and I will take him away.

- E. Then Jesus said "Mary." No one in all the world could say Mary like Jesus! Her name with Jesus' unique sound shot through her like a bolt of lightning. She quickly said, "Rabboni!" This word means, "great teacher or master." It was a term used to describe only seven other men in Jewish history!
- F. Jesus told Mary not to touch him because he had not yet ascended to the Father. Why did Jesus tell her this? Others touched Jesus after the resurrection. Perhaps he was saying, look Mary don't slow me down, I have much to do. Or maybe Jesus was trying to teach Mary not to hold on to the old fleshly relationships.

II Jesus Appeared To Other Women (Mt 28:9-11)

- A. This appearance was on April 9, somewhere near Jerusalem.
- B. This group of women consisted of Mary Magdalene, the other Mary, who was the mother of James, and Salome. Some think that Joanna may also have been with them.
- C. These women found the tomb empty and returned to tell the eleven and perhaps other disciples. While on

the way Jesus appeared and said, "All hail." These words mean, "rejoice!" Certainly the resurrection of Christ is the greatest cause for joy that any man could possibly have! Without the resurrection of Christ, the whole world would be plunged into despair. Man's life would be without meaning. The resurrection fills our hearts with hope!

- D. Jesus told them to fear not and to tell the "brethren" to meet him in Galilee. Remember, Jesus is the elder brother over the Father's house. (Heb 3:6)

III Jesus Appears To Two Disciples (Lk 24:13-32)

- A. This took place Sunday afternoon, somewhere between Jerusalem and Emmaus.
- B. The two disciples were talking about what had happened. Jesus appeared and joined them. They did not know him. He asked about their conversation. They stopped and looked sad. One of the disciples named Cleopas said, are you a stranger? Do you not know what has happened in Jerusalem lately? Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet mighty in word and deed was condemned and crucified. We had hoped that he would redeem Israel. This is now the third day since these things happened. Certain women of our company went to the tomb and found it empty. They said that an angel said, he is risen.
- C. Then Jesus said, O foolish men and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Ought not Jesus to have suffered and entered into glory? Beginning from Moses and the prophets, he interpreted the scriptures concerning himself.
- D. The two disciples asked Jesus to stay with them. When they sat down to eat Jesus took bread and blessed it and break it. He gave it to them to eat and their eyes were opened. They knew who he was. Then he vanished out of their sight! (Lk 24:30-31) Then

the two disciples, Cleopas and perhaps Luke, said, was not our heart burning within us, as he spake unto us in the way and while he opened unto us the scriptures?

IV Jesus Made An Appearance To Simon Peter (Lk 24:34, I Cor 15:5)

- A. This appearance was on resurrection Sunday evening and was near Jerusalem.
- B. Lk 24:34 has the two disciples returning to tell the others that they saw Jesus. In the course of their conversation, they relate that Peter also had seen Jesus.
- C. Paul later wrote that Jesus appeared to Cephas, who is Peter. (Jno 1:42)
- D. Why did Jesus appear to Peter? Was it because he was to be the first Pope? No! Peter needed to be converted. Satan asked for him that he might sift Simon Peter as wheat. Jesus prayed that his faith would not fail. Jesus told Peter that when he was converted, he was to strengthen his brethren. Peter soon showed the need of conversion by denying Jesus three times in one night. I think Peter needed an extra amount of encouragement to turn him around. Don't forget that God also had big plans for Peter. He opened the door of the kingdom of God to Jew and Gentile alike. (Acts 2, 10)

V Jesus Appeared To The Ten Apostles, Thomas Being Absent

- A. We believe that this appearance was on Sunday evening in Jerusalem.
- B. Luke's account is found in Lk 23:37-41. In these verses Jesus appears and the disciples are terrified. They believe he is a spirit. Jesus questions their

doubts and questions that arise in their hearts. He gives them an opportunity to handle him to show them he is not a spirit. A spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have, said Jesus.

- C. In Mk 16:14 Jesus manifested himself to the eleven as they sat at meat. He upbraided them for their unbelief and their hardness of heart, because they believed not them that had seen him.
- D. John's account is more complete. Consider these observations from Jno 20:19-25.
 - 1. Jesus appeared on "that" day, the first day of the week. This was the special resurrection day. On this day Christians partake of the Lord's Supper and give of their means. (Acts 20:7, I Cor 16:1-2) It is called the Lord's day in Rev 1:10.
 - 2. Jesus showed them his hands and his side and they were glad when they saw the Lord. No other religion has been so insistent that its claims be verified. No other religion has offered as much indisputable evidence.
 - 3. Jesus then commissioned his disciples by saying that as the Father hath sent me, so send I you. He breathed on them and said, receive ye the Holy Ghost. They did not receive it then but on Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)
 - 4. He also told them that whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained. The verbs remit and retain are in the perfect tense in the original language. That means that whose soever sins they remit or retain have already been remitted or retained. This verse does not teach the Catholic doctrine of absolution. The priest does not have the power to forgive or retain sins. Peter illustrates this in Acts 8:21-24. He told Simon to repent and pray God that perhaps the thoughts of his heart might be forgiven him, for

I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity. That stands in stark contrast to Catholic doctrine!

Conclusion:

1. Blaise Pascal said, "What reason do atheists have for saying, that we cannot rise again? Which is the more difficult, to be born or to rise again? That what has never been should be, or what has been should be again? It is more difficult to come into being, than to return to it."
2. Martin Luther wrote that the promise of the resurrection has not been written in books alone but on every leaf of Springtime.

Resurrection Appearances Part II

Introduction:

1. What power changed the cross from a bloody instrument of torture to the most revered and loved symbol? Thousands of people were crucified before and after Calvary. If Jesus had not been risen, no person in his right mind would glorify anything as hideous and repulsive as the cross. A dead Saviour could never be our Lord. An unopened grave could never open the way to heaven. When Jesus burst forth from the chains of death, he became the Lord of Lords and the King of Kings! He conquered sin, death, and the Devil. The resurrection of Christ is then, the most important fact in all of human history.
2. In our last lesson, we examined the first five post-resurrection appearances of Jesus.
3. Now let us examine five more appearances which took place in the remaining thirty-nine days.

- I Jesus Appeared To The Eleven Apostles (Jno 20:26-31)**
- A. Jesus appeared "after eight days again." (Jno 20:26)
Thus, he appeared on Sunday again. This was on April 16th.
 - B. This time Thomas was with them. He is often called the doubter. He was no more of a doubter than the rest. He just wanted some evidence. After all the others had already seen Jesus.
 - C. Jesus appeared and asked Thomas to take his fingers and examine the nail prints. He asked Thomas to thrust his hand into the side of Jesus. Again let us observe that no other religion in history has ever asked for a closer investigation of the facts. No other religion has offered such conclusive proof of its claims as Christianity.
 - D. Thomas then cried out, "my Lord and my God." (Jno 20:28)
 - 1. The word "Lord" means, "a King, an owner, a master, or one worthy of reverence." Jesus is Lord of Lords. (Rev 17:14)
 - 2. The word "God" of course stands for "diety." Jesus was more than human, he was divine.
 - 3. No doubt John referred to this event in I Jno 1:1 when he wrote, "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life."
 - E. In verse 29 Jesus said, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed." Jesus is talking about us.
 - F. John sums up this account by saying, that Jesus did many other signs which are not written in this book, but these are written, that you may believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name. (Jno 20:30-31)

II Jesus Appeared To The Seven Apostles At The Sea Of Galilee (Jno 21:1)

- A. The Sea of Tiberius is the Sea of Galilee.
- B. Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, John, and two other disciples were there. This was around the last of April or first of May.
- C. Peter said he was going fishing. The others followed but had no success. At dawn Jesus stood on the shore. They did not recognize him. Jesus wanted to know if they had anything to eat. Jesus told them to cast their nets on the right side of the boat. They could not draw up the net because of the multitude of fishes. John told Peter that it was Jesus and Peter jumped in the sea and swam to shore. The others came in the boat. On shore Jesus had a fire, fish, and bread. The net was then pulled ashore and one hundred and fifty-three fish were in it.
- D. In John 21:14 we are told that this is the third time that Jesus had appeared to the disciples.
- E. Jesus then asked Peter if he loved Jesus more than the other disciples or than the fishing profession. Peter had denied our Lord three times on the night of his betrayal. Peter of course was also to preach the first recorded gospel sermon opening the door of the kingdom of God to the Jews on Pentecost. Later he opened the doors of the church to the Gentiles when he preached the gospel to the house of Cornelius. (Acts 10)
- F. In verses eighteen and nineteen, Jesus talks of Peter's death, which was to be crucifixion. He was crucified head downward.
- G. John concludes the book of John by suggesting that the world could not hold the books that could be written about Jesus.

III Jesus Appeared Next To The Eleven Apostles On A Mountain In Galilee (Mt 28:16–20)

- A. This meeting was scheduled in advance. It was arranged as far as the place was concerned. It was mentioned two times by Jesus after his resurrection and once by the angel after the resurrection. (Mt 28:10) This was the last of April or first of May.
- B. Verse seventeen says that some worshipped him and some doubted. Were these who doubted the Apostles?
- C. Many scholars believe that this was his greatest appearance. They believe that this is where he appeared to five hundred brethren at once. Paul said, "After that he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto the present, but some are fallen asleep." (I Cor 15:6)
- D. Most agree, but not all, that at this appearance the great commission was given. Jesus said, "All authority hath been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." (Mt 28:18–20)

IV Jesus Appeared To James And Paul. (I Cor 15:7–8)

- A. We believe that this appearance to James was in May and in Jerusalem.
- B. I Cor 15:7 says that Jesus was seen of James. We know that this was not James the son of Zebedee for he was killed by Herod. Nor was it James the son of Alphaeus. He was unknown in the Bible and in recorded history. This had to have been James the brother of the Lord. (Gal 1:19) He was one of the pillars of the church. (Gal 2:9)

- C. Why did Jesus appear to James? Well don't forget that Jesus' own brothers did not believe on him. (Jno 7:5)
- D. Jesus then appeared to Paul. He wrote, "And last of all he was seen of me also, as one born out of due season." (See Acts nine)

V The Final Appearance Was To The Apostles On The Mount Of Ascension (Lk 25:50–52, Acts 1:1–11)

- A. We believe this appearance to have taken place on May 18, on the Mount of Olives, near Bethany.
- B. In Lk 24:50–52 we are told that Jesus led them out as far as Bethany. He lifted up his hands and blessed them. He was then parted from them and carried into heaven. The disciples worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with joy. They spent their time in the temple praising God.
- C. From Acts 1:1–11 we are told that Jesus' teaching and deeds were described in another book written by Luke. (The gospel of Luke) Jesus also showed himself alive with many infallible proofs, for the space of forty days. During this time, he spoke about the kingdom of God. He then assembled with the disciples. He told them to wait in Jerusalem for the promise of the Father, which was the baptism of the Holy Ghost, they were to be his witnesses throughout the world. Then in verses nine through eleven Luke says, "And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they steadfastly looked toward heaven as he went up, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

Conclusion:

For Christians, the greatest resurrection appearance of them all, will be when he comes at the end of the world, to claim his own. (II Tim 4:8)

Resurrection Theories Part I

Introduction:

1. Charles Hodge wrote, "The resurrection of Jesus is the center of the ages. All that went before longed for it and pointed to it. All since has been molded by it. Whether men deny it or confess it, it has transformed the world. To prove the resurrection is to prove Christianity. Christianity stands or falls by it. If the church lives and prospers, it must stand upon the brink of an open, not a closed grave." These observations point out just how important the resurrection is.
2. Thus, there have been many theories raised by its enemies to explain it away. It shall be the purpose of this lesson to examine some of these theories in light of common sense and the Bible.

I The Disciples Stole The Body

A. Mt 28:11-15

1. The guards told the religious leaders, who immediately took counsel among themselves.
2. Notice that they did not question the guards. They knew the tomb was empty.
3. They gave the guards money and asked them to say that the disciples stole the body while they were sleeping. Once again, as with the bribery of Judas, money plays a role in bringing down Christ. No wonder Paul later wrote, that the love

of money is the root of all kinds of evil. (I Tim 6:10)

4. The argument made by the soldiers was also made by Celsus, a second century infidel.
- B. If the soldiers' claim was true, why did they have to be bribed to tell it?
- C. If the disciples stole Jesus' body, how did the soldiers know it? After all, they were asleep! Why did the Romans not execute the soldiers? Under Roman law, those soldiers who fell asleep on duty were to be put to death.
- D. It would have been physically impossible for the disciples to have stolen the body. There were anywhere from fifteen to sixty guards involved in guarding the tomb. The guard was changed every six hours. The disciples would have been killed. Don't forget that Peter was afraid of a maid, who identified him as one of Jesus' followers. There is no way that the disciples could have removed the stone, that was sealed with a wax or clay seal. This seal had the Roman impress in it. How could they remove the stone, the seal, and the body without waking up the guards? Did they have time to take off the burial shroud and remove the napkin from his head, by folding it up and laying it in the corner? Not hardly.
- E. It would have been morally wrong for the disciples to have stolen the body. Jesus taught them the highest standard of morality that the world has ever known.
- F. There was no motive for stealing the body. They would not gain any wealth nor fame. It would have been a risk of all that they had to have tried to steal the body.
- G. If the disciples had stolen the body, why didn't the Jews and Romans make them give it back? They had

the power to do so. They didn't do it because they knew the disciples did not have it.

- H. Finally, let us point out that there was no interest in the body by the Apostles. Jesus was buried by two secret disciples, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. They were aided by a few women, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of Jesus, Salome, and Joanna. The women came early on the first day of the week to finish the embalming procedures interrupted by the Sabbath. The Apostles were characterized by unbelief and hardness of heart. (Mk 16:14)

II The Enemies Of Christ Stole The Body

- A. They had no motive. There was nothing to gain. They wanted to keep the body right where it was!
- B. The enemies of Christ saw to it that the tomb was guarded, lest the disciples steal the body and the last error be worst than the first. (Mt 27:64)
- C. Christ's enemies never claimed that they stole it. They said the disciples took it.
- D. The disciples never claimed that the enemies took Jesus' body.
- E. If the enemies of Christ had his body, they could have produced it and Christianity as we now know it would be dead.

III Jesus Appeared In A Vision

- A. There are those who say that Jesus did not rise again from the grave. He appeared in a vision in a glorified state. Paul saw Christ in a vision and counted that a resurrection appearance. Thus, the critics argue that Jesus was not raised from the tomb. They forget that Paul taught the bodily resurrection of Jesus and all men. (I Cor 15)
- B. This view simply substitutes one miracle for another.

If we can believe that he appeared in a vision in a glorified state, why can't we believe in the bodily resurrection of Jesus and that he appeared in that resurrected body for some forty days?

- C. This theory does not explain the empty tomb.
- D. It is not in harmony with the gospel accounts that say that Jesus was seen and heard. The disciples also touched Him and ate with Him.

IV There Is The Hallucination Theory

- A. This theory says that the disciples wanted to see Jesus so bad, that they did in an hallucination.
- B. Well it is possible for people to have hallucinations. This may happen to individuals but not to crowds. Jesus was seen by over five hundred people at once. (I Cor 15:6)
- C. Hallucinations are not in harmony with the character of the witnesses. They were not neurotics. They were simply unbelievers with hardened hearts. They had given up all hope of seeing Jesus.
- D. Again this theory does not explain the empty tomb, nor why the hallucinations stopped after Jesus ascended into heaven forty days after the resurrection.
- E. This theory does not explain the conversion of three thousand on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:41) Nor does it explain the conversion of a blasphemer, a persecutor, the chief of sinners, that we know as the Apostle Paul. (I Tim 1:13, 15) Paul the persecutor became a preacher of the resurrected Christ. Why?

V Finally, There Is The Swoon Theory

- A. This theory was invented by the German rationalist Venturini in the eighteenth century. It says that Jesus did not die. He simply became unconscious. He passed out and was believed to be dead. He revived in the

coolness of the tomb, escaped, and appeared to the disciples.

- B. The swoon theory fails to consider the physical condition of Jesus. He had just spent time in prayer that was so agonizing that his sweat became as it were great drops of blood falling down upon the ground. He was up all night being dragged from one illegal assembly to another. He was scourged. This beating usually killed many before they ever got to the cross. Then he was crucified and hung on that cross for six excruciating hours. His brow was pierced by a crown of thorns. His feet and hands by Roman spikes and his side by a spear. Are we to believe that he lay in the tomb three days without medical treatment and then got up and removed the stone? Could he have removed that sealed and guarded stone with pierced hands and a hole in his side that was big enough to put a hand into? Are we to believe that in this condition, Jesus overpowered the guards and then walked fifteen miles to Emmaus?
- C. Make no mistake about it. Jesus was dead when they placed his body in the tomb. The centurion saw him give up the ghost. (Mk 15:39) Joseph asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. He believed it was dead. Pilate asked the centurion if Jesus were dead. The answer was yes and Joseph was granted Jesus' body. (Mk 15:42-45) When the soldier put the spear into the side of Jesus, blood and water came out. That is a sign that death has taken place. (Jno 19:31-34)
- D. If Jesus did not die, when did he die? Where did he die? Why did the Jews and Romans not capture Jesus and display him publicly? They had the power to find him. Is it possible that his life after the tomb could have been kept an absolute secret?

Conclusion:

The resurrection of Christ is the heart of Christianity. It makes it pulsate with the life of God. It is the keystone to the arch of truth which holds all the faith of the gospel together. It is the foundation of the church. It is the mainstay of Christian activity. It is the lever of power which shall move the world.

Resurrection Theories

Part II

Introduction:

Something distinguishes Christianity from all the religions of the world. It not only proclaims the truth of redemption through the death of Jesus, it proclaims that Christ rose again! Only Christianity claims that its leader died and rose again and is alive at this very moment. Many tombstones have the inscription, "Here lies . . ." But on the tomb of Jesus there is emblazoned, "He is not here!" In Joseph's garden is history's only empty tomb. Christianity has no shrine to visit, no dusty remains to venerate, and no tomb to worship. Many good men have lived and live on in the memory of those who loved them. Only one man has conquered death. He is Jesus Christ and he lives forever.

2. Many theories have been formulated over the centuries, in an effort to destroy the greatest miracle of all time, the resurrection of Christ. It shall be the purpose of this lesson to examine some of these theories for the purpose of refuting them.

I Some Say That Joseph of Arimathaea Or Mary Magdalene Stole Jesus' Body

- A. There is no evidence to support this theory formulated by Joseph Klausner, a German theologian, who lived in the nineteenth century.
- B. How did they get around the soldiers? How did they deceive the Apostles? What was their motive for stealing the body?
- C. Surely, if they did steal his body, they would have been labeled traitors like Judas. Yet, Joseph is called an honorable man. (Mk 15:43) He is called a good and righteous man. (Lk 23:50)
- D. Mary Magdalene is one of the most revered women in Bible history. She was one disciple who stuck with Jesus to the end. She expressed her love for Christ by coming early on the first day of the week to finish the the embalming of his body, not to steal it.

II The Mental Theory

- A. This is similar to other theories that we have already discussed and shall discuss.
- B.. It states that the body of Jesus was dead. Jesus was alive in the mind of the Apostles. They taught that he lived.
- C. This does not explain the empty tomb or the change in the attitudes and actions of the twelve, who went to their grave preaching the resurrected Christ.

III We Are Told That Women Went To The Wrong Tomb

- A. How could this happen in such a small garden cemetery?
- B. How could they forget in seventy-two hours where they had buried the beloved Christ? They saw Christ's body in the tomb. (Lk 23:55)
- C. The women even sat by the tomb. (Mt 27:61)

- D. The women told Peter and John and they also went to the same tomb and found it empty. Did all four go to the wrong tomb? (Jno 20:1–10)

IV The Spiritualistic Theory

- A. Jesus we are told was still in the grave after the third day or his body was stolen.
- B. This theory claims that the disciples believed Jesus was alive in the spirit. It is said that the disciples hoped so vividly to see Jesus arise that they were impelled to announce that he was alive, but only in the spirit. Liberal scholars say that a conviction came on the third day to the minds of the Apostles that Christ's spirit was alive, even though his body was around somewhere.
- C. This ignores the fact that the Apostles did not expect Christ to be raised in body or spirit.
1. When Christ did appear they were afraid. They thought he was a spirit. (Lk 24:36–37)
 2. When the women told them of the empty tomb, they viewed it as an idle tale. (Lk 24:11)
 3. Mary Magdalene saw Jesus and thought he was the gardener. (Jno 20:15)
- D. Furthermore, let it be said that there is no such thing as a spiritual resurrection. The spirit of Jesus Christ could not have been resurrected, for living things are not resurrected. If this theory were true, then that which happened to Jesus when he died, happens to all who die, their spirits live on, while the body remains dead forever.
- E. Peter in Acts 2:27 said, "Neither wilt thou give thy holy one to see corruption." Jesus' body was not to decay in the tomb. Peter then preached the bodily resurrection of Jesus. So did Paul. Paul wrote, "It is sown a natural body it is raised a spiritual body. There

is a natural body and there is a spiritual body.” (I Cor 15:44)

F. This argument does not explain the empty tomb.

V. The Truth About The Resurrection

- A. On Pentecost Peter preached, “Him being delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken and by wicked hands have crucified and slain. Whom God raised up, because it was not possible that it should be holden of him.” (Acts 2:23–24)
- B. In I Cor 15:20 Paul said, “But now is Christ risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep.”
- C. Peter penned these words in I Pet 1:3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.”
- D. John recorded these words of Jesus. “Fear not, I am the first and the last and the loving one, I was dead, but behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Hades and of death.” (Rev 1:17–18)
- E. The gospel of Christ is the gospel of the open and empty tomb! How was the tomb opened? Why was it empty. Did the Romans, Jews, or disciples open and empty it? No. An angel of God opened it. (Mt 28:2) God raised Jesus from the dead. (Acts 2:24)
- F. Consider the shroud. If robbers took the body, they would have kept the fine linen shroud given by a rich man like Joseph. If the disciples would have stolen the body, they would not have taken the time to have unwrapped each individual body part. Wrapping the body at his enbalming must have been a lengthy process.
- G. Note also the headband or napkin. It was rolled up

and placed in a corner. It was not hastily thrown down. Whoever removed the body was not in a hurry.

- H. We cannot overlook the over five hundred witnesses. There were five hundred and twenty-one to be exact. Perhaps there were more but this number can be arrived at through the scriptures. They ate and drank with him. They saw him with their eyes and heard him with their ears. They touched him with their hands. They went to their graves stating that they were witnesses of the resurrection. Many were killed for preaching the resurrected Christ.

Conclusion:

The resurrection of Christ was then documented by reliable contemporary witnesses. There is more evidence that Jesus rose from the dead, than there is that Julius Caesar lived or that Alexander the Great died at age thirty-three. It is strange that historians accept thousands of facts for which they can only produce shreds of evidence. Yet, when faced with the overwhelming evidence of the resurrection, they cast a skeptical eye and hold intellectual doubts. Abraham died in 1900 B. C. He was buried in Hebron and never resurrected, even though he was the father of the Jewish nation. Mohammed died on June 8, 623 A.D. Islam makes no claim of a resurrection for him. The remains of Buddha and Confucius are now dust. Christianity is the only world religion that claims an empty and open tomb.

The Meaning And Importance of The Resurrection

Introduction:

Konrad Adenauer, the former Chancellor of Germany said to a famous religious leader, that the most important ques-

tion in the world, centered around the resurrection of Christ. If Jesus is alive, he said, there is hope for the world. If Christ is still in the grave, then there is no glimmer of hope on the horizon. After I leave office, I shall spend the rest of my life gathering scientific proof of the resurrection of Christ.

2. My friends, here was a man who saw the resurrection of Christ as the central issue facing mankind and he was right. The resurrection of Christ is the single most important event in human history. Without it, the world is going nowhere.
3. Let us now consider the meaning and importance of the resurrection.

I The Resurrection Is A Doctrinal Necessity

- A. Our preaching is vain without the resurrection. "If Christ is not raised, then our preaching is in vain." (I Cor 15:14)
- B. Our faith is also vain without the resurrection. (I Cor 15:14)
- C. The Apostles were false witnesses, if Christ was not raised. (I Cor 15:15)
- D. If Jesus has not arisen, we are yet in our sins. (I Cor 15:17)
- E. The dead in Christ have perished if our Lord is still in the tomb. Paul said, "Thenthey also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished." (I Cor 15:18)
- F. If Christ's remains are still in Joseph's tomb, then we are of all men most miserable. (I Cor 15:19)
- G. We deny the existence of Christ by failing to believe in the resurrection. If there is a God, he rules. If he rules, then every enemy shall be destroyed and that includes death. The only way to overcome death is through the resurrection! (I Cor 15:22-26)

II Consider What The Resurrection Means To Christ

- A. The divinity of Christ depends on the resurrection. David in Psalms 16:10 said, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hades, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption." As Jonah was three days and nights in the belly of the whale, Jesus was to be three days and nights in the heart of the earth. Jesus foretold this in Mt 12:40. He also said in Mt 16:21 that he would go to Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders, chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and raised up on the third day. Jesus said, destroy this temple and I will raise it up in three days. (Jno 19) He was speaking of his body. (Jno 2:21) The fulfillment of these prophecies proves Jesus' deity.
- B. The Lordship of Jesus is related to the resurrection. After Thomas saw the resurrected Jesus, he cried out, my Lord and my God. (Jno 20:28) Peter preached the resurrection of Christ and called him Lord. (Acts 24, 36) He is the Lord of Lords because he broke the bonds of death. (Rev 17:14)
- C. The Sonship of Jesus was declared by the resurrection. (Rom 1:4)
- D. Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. His authority even extends into the world of the dead. All this because he arose from the dead. (Mt 28:18, Rev 1:17-18)
- E. The resurrection enabled Christ to bruise the head of the serpent. (Gen 3:15, I Jno 3:8)

III Note The Meaning Of The Resurrection To The Church

- A. The resurrection has much to do with the day on which the church meets. John was in the Spirit on the Lord's day. (Rev 1:10) It was the Lord's day because on this day he arose from the dead. This was the day the church met to worship. (Acts 20:7, I Cor 16:1-2)

On this day then the Lord's Supper was observed. The Lord's Supper commemorates the death, burial, resurrection, and second coming of Christ. (I Cor 11:23-29)

- B. The resurrection is connected with the terms of entrance into the church. Paul said that we are buried by baptism into Christ and his death. We then arise to walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:3-6, Col 2:12) to be in Christ is to be in the church, body, or kingdom. (Jno 3:5, Acts 2:38, 41, 47, I Cor 12:13) In Col 3:1 Paul wrote, "If then ye were raised together with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Col 3:1) This Letter was written to the church in Colosse.
- C. The resurrection assures the church of victory. The gates of Hades cannot prevail against the church. The kingdom of God cannot be destroyed or shaken. (Mt 16:18, Dan 2:44, Heb 12:28) Christ stands as a Lamb that had been slain. Therefore, he is worthy to take the book, and open the seals thereof, for he was slain and didst purchase unto God with his blood, men of every tribe, and tongue, and nation. (Rev 5:6, 9) Christians are those who will come out of tribulation. The kingdoms of the world will be the kingdoms of the Lord and his Christ. Thus, we can join with John and say, hallelujah, the Lord God the almighty reigneth! (Rev 7:14, 11:15, 19:6)

IV The Resurrection Has Meaning To The Christian

- A. Christ's resurrection assures us of our own resurrection. Jesus said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live." (Jno 11:25) Paul in I Cor 15:20 said, "Now hath Christ been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of them that are asleep." Christ then is the

down payment, pledge, or guarantee of our own resurrection. Again Paul wrote, "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." See also I Cor 15:55-57, Rev 14:13)

- B. Jesus was raised for our justification. (Rom 4:25) Thus, the resurrection is linked to our salvation. A dead Christ could not redeem man. Paul said, if thou shalt believe in thy heart that Jesus rose from the dead, thou shalt be saved. (Rom 10:9)
- C. The resurrection plays a major role in enabling the Christian to overcome the Devil. We can now resist him and he will flee from us. We can withstand him with our faith. (Jas 4:7, I Pet 5:9)
- D. The resurrection gives us a living hope. (I Pet 1:3-4) It is then a source of comfort. (I Thess 4:13-18)
- E. The resurrection gives us power. Paul said that he wanted to know the power of the resurrection. (Phil 3:10) Because of Jesus' victory over death Paul wrote, I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." (Phil 4:13)

V Finally, Consider What The Resurrection Means To The World

- A. The resurrection is God's way of proving that all that Jesus said and did were of God. All that Christ asks the Christian has meaning because of the resurrection. In other words, the resurrection was God's way of saying in a language that man could understand, that Jesus was his only begotten Son.
- B. The resurrection changed the world. After the death of Jesus the eleven Apostles were afraid and hardened in heart. They scattered like sheep on the night of Jesus' betrayal. Suddenly, they have turned the world

upside down with the gospel. They preached the gospel to the then known world in less than one generation. They were bold and aggressive. What brought about such a dramatic change in their lives? The resurrection of Christ! (Acts 17:6, Col 1:23, Acts 4:13, 33)

- C. The resurrection changed the world's concept of immortality. The Jews and the pagans offered no hope of life beyond the grave. Immortality was just a dream. Job once asked, if a man die, shall he live again? (Job 14:14) Through the resurrection of Christ, God fulfilled man's dream and made it a reality. He changed the grave from a prison to a way station. The road of hope then runs through the garden of Gethsemane, up to Golgotha, past Joseph's tomb, all the way to the right hand of God, where Jesus is!
- D. The resurrection is God's pledge that truth and right will win. When Christ died, it looked like evil had won. It seemed that force was more powerful than love. Could it be then, that wrong had won over right and sight had conquered faith? Again let us say that the resurrection is God's way of saying that evil will not win. One day all of earth's injustices and inequalities will be made right. The resurrection is God's guarantee that no matter how long or painful the struggle, truth will outlast every lie and right will destroy all wrong.

Conclusion:

Thus, the resurrection is the most important and meaningful event in all of human history. The resurrection of Christ is a fact that humanity cannot ignore. Our eternal destinies are shaped by it.

The Great Commission

Part I

Introduction:

1. One of the greatest and most glaring weaknesses in our profession to be practioners of first century Christianity is in the amount of mission work that we are doing.
2. Untold millions are dying untold!
3. Christ alone can save the world but Christ cannot save the world alone. This is why he has given us what we commonly call the great commission of Matt 28:18-20.
4. Let us now begin an analysis of this text. In particular we want to examine verse 18.

I The All Authoritative Christ

- A. Note the word "all." It means, "complete, total, supreme, and absolute."
- B. Consider also the word "authority." In the King James version it is rendered, "power." It also means, "the right to rule or govern. The right to require obedience and the liberty to do as one pleases are also inherent in this word."
- C. Many verses of the Bible that stress the governing responsibilities of Jesus.
 1. Psm 2:6 says that God has set his King (Jesus) upon the holy hill of Zion. Psalms two is one of the great Messianic Psalms.
 2. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulders, and his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and Prince of Peace." (Isa 9:6-7)
 3. In Dan 7:14 Jesus is given dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all peoples should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion and his kingdom shall not be destroyed.

4. Jesus is the King eternal, the blessed and only potentate, who is the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. (I Tim 1:17, 1:15, Rev 17:14) All of the world are his and he reigns supreme. (Rev 11:15, 19:6)

II The Source Of Authority

- A. Where did Jesus get his authority. What or who is the source of it?
- B. Jesus said, "all authority HATH BEEN GIVEN UNTO ME ... " The phrase "hath been given" means, "given by decree, legally entitled, that which has been granted or invested."
- C. Notice that he said, all authority hath been given to ME. Not to Moses, John the Baptist, Mohammed, or the Pope.
- D. The heavenly Father is the source of Jesus' authority.
 1. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, hear ye him. (Mt 17:5) God wants us to listen to Jesus because when Jesus speaks, the Father speaks. Jesus said, "he that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me, receiveth him that sent me." (Mt 10:40) The Father gave Jesus a name above every name. All knees were then to bow to Christ. (Phil 2:9-11)
 2. I Cor 15:27-28 teaches that God the Father subjected all things to Jesus. Yet, when all things are finally subjected, even Jesus will be subjected to the Father at the end of the world.

III Where Does Jesus Exercise Authority?

- A. First of all, "in heaven."
 1. The Father gave Jesus authority to execute judgment after this world ends. (Jno 5:27)
 2. Jesus is now at the right hand of God, far above

- all rule, authority, power, dominion, and every name that is named, whether in this world or in the world to come. (Eph 1:20-21)
3. Every knee in heaven shall bow before the authoritative Jesus, who has a name given to him by the Father that is above all names. (Phil 2:9-11)
 4. God never called an angel his only begotten Son. All the angels of heaven are to worship Christ. (Heb 1:5-6)
 5. Only Jesus, the slain Lamb of God had the power to open the book and the seals thereof. (Rev 5:9)
 6. Peter said that Jesus is at the right hand of God and that angels, authorities, and powers are subject to him. (I Pet 3:22)
 7. In Rev 19:11-16 Jesus, the Faithful and True is on a white horse leading the armies of heaven to battle.
- B. Jesus in the second place has all authority "on the earth."
1. Christ is the head of the church on earth. (Col 1:18) He is its ultimate authority.
 2. Christ has authority on earth to forgive sins. (Mt 9:6)
 3. Jesus has authority over demons. (Mt 10:1)
 4. Authority over the nations is exercised by Christ. (Rev 2:26)
 5. All authority has Jesus, over all flesh. (Jno 17:2)
 6. In him all things consist. He upholds all things by the word of his power. Thus, he has authority over nature. (Col 1:17, Heb 1:3, Mk 4:39)
 7. His authority extends to Satan. He brought to nought the Devil and his power over death for example. (Heb 2:14) See also Gen 3:15, I Pet 5:8-9, I Jno 3:8, Rev 20:10)

8. Christ was authoritative in his teaching. (Mt 7:29)
9. Thank God our Lord has authority, yea complete control over the world of the dead. He has the keys of death and Hades. We shall not be entombed in the grave. We shall rise from the dead! (Heb 2:14, Rev 1:17-18, Mt 16:18, Jno 5:28-29)
10. Even hell cannot escape the control of the all authoritative Jesus. The wicked will drink of the cup of the wine of the wrath of God. They shall be tormented in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. (Rev 16:10) In Matt 10:28 Jesus said, "And be not afraid of them that kill the body but fear him who is able to destroy both body and soul in hell."

Conclusion:

We must submit to the all authoritative Christ. We are not going into all the world with the gospel to a lost and dying world because we do not respect Christ's power and authority. Those who fail to do so are foolish men building a house on the sand. The storms of life will destroy it. (Mt 7:24-27) Those who will not respect the authority of Christ will be destroyed. (Acts 2:22-23) Jesus said, "He that rejecteth me and receiveth not my sayings, hath one that shall judge him, the words that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." (Jno 12:48) Someone has written, "O Church of Christ, what wilt thou say when in that awful judgment day, when they charge thee with their doom?"

The Great Commission

Part II

Introduction:

1. The great commission found in Mt 28:18–20 is one of the most familiar passages of the Bible to most Christians.
2. Yet, I wonder if it isn't one of the most misunderstood series of verses in the Bible.
3. Let us now make a detailed analysis of the text.

I. The Authoritative Christ

- A. Notice the word “all” in verse 18. It means, “total, supreme, and absolute.”
- B. Jesus has all “authority.” The King James Version renders the word authority as “power.” The word authority means, “the right to rule, or govern, the liberty to do as one pleases, the right to require obedience.”
- C. See these verses— Psm 2:6, Isa 9:6–7, Dan 7:14, I Tim 1:17, 6:15, Rev 11:15, 17:14, 19:6
- D. Who is the source of Jesus' authority? Notice that the text says, “hath been given unto me. . .” Where did it come from? It came from the heavenly Father. “This is my beloved son in whom, I am well pleased, hear ye him.” (Mt 17:5) These are the words of the Father. Consider also I Cor 15:27–28 and Phil 2:9.
- E. Where does Jesus execute this authority?
 1. In heaven
 2. Jno 5:27, Eph 1:20–21, Phil 2:9, Heb 1:5–6, Rev 5:9, 19:11–12, I Pet 3:22
 3. On earth
 4. Col 1:18, Mt 10:1, Jno 17:2, Col 1:17, Rev 2:26, Col 1:17
 5. Heb 1:3, Mk 4:39, Heb 5:8–9, I Jno 3:8, Heb 2:14, Mt 7:29

II Go Ye Therefore

- A. "Go ye" has been rendered, "having gone forth." Thus, assuming that the command will automatically be obeyed. In other words don't wait for the lost to come to you. You go to them. Don't wait for doors to open for you. You open the doors.
- B. "Go ye" has also been translated, "as you are going." Again it is assumed that in light of the complete and total power, strength, and authority of Jesus that Christians would go. No verse better expresses that power than Mt 10:2, "Fear not them that are able to kill the body but are not able to kill the soul, but rather fear him who is able to kill both body and soul in hell."
- C. Ivan Stewart has written a book on personal evangelism entitled, "Go Ye Means Go Me."
- D. Not all can personally go, but all can send those who will go. (Rom 10:15)
- E. Though not all can go, many are not going, who can go personally. Why is this true? There are of course many reasons known only to God. I'd like to call your attention to two reasons why many are not going.
 - 1. Many believe that since God gives the increase, man is not responsible for bearing fruit. Well, it is true that only God can save a soul, by turning it white as snow. (Isa 1:18) Paul wrote, "I planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase." Though God gives the increase, man is still to plant and water. These steps are essential to winning the lost. That man is to bear fruit can be seen in these verses, Jno 15:8, Rom 7:4, and I Cor 1:14.
 - 2. Some say that there are Christians who are called to reap and Christians who are called to sow. In Jno

4:37 the Bible says, "And herein is the saying true, One soweth and another reapeth." Paul was certainly called to sow but that does not mean that he did not reap. (I Cor 1:14) It is just not true that God would have some teach the saved and others teach the lost. Peter was told "to feed the sheep." (Jno 21:17) Yet, from Pentecost, we learn that he taught the goats as well. (Acts 2:21-41)

F. But how are we to go?

1. We must go with tears. (Psm 126:5, Lk 19:41)
2. We must go forth with precious seed (the word of God). (Psm 126:6, Lk 8:11)
3. We must go out quickly or with urgency. (Lk 14:21, II Tim 4:2) This is to be done in the streets and lanes of the city.
4. We must go forth and constrain men to come into the house of God. We must go up and down the highways and hedges. (Lk 14:23)

G. To whom shall we go?

1. The poor, maimed, blind, and lame must be reached. (Lk 14:21)
2. We must go to the jails and prisons. (Acts 16:30-34, Mt 25:43)
3. We must teach the hated and despised. (Mt 9:12)
4. The gospel must go to the intellectual centers of the day. (Acts 17:18)
5. The gospel should also be taken into religious centers. (Acts 5:42)
6. In other words, it (the gospel) must go to every creature in every nation. (Mk 16:15, Mt 28:19)

H. Where did the gospel go in Bible times?

1. Open courtyards Acts 2:1
2. The temple Acts 5:42
3. Halls or courts of justice Acts 4:5-12

4. Moving vehicles — chariot Acts 8:29–40
5. Homes Acts 5:42, 10:22, 20:20
6. Riversides Acts 16:13
7. Jails Acts 16:25–34
8. Streets Acts 17:17
9. Schools Acts 19:9
10. A third story apartment Acts 20:9
11. The steps of a soldier's barracks Acts 21
12. In rented halls Acts 28

III Make Disciples

A. How do you make disciples?

1. Go Rom 10:13–15
2. Teach Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15, Jno 6:45, Acts 6:7

B. What do you teach? The gospel Mk 16:15

1. The death, burial, and resurrection I Cor 15:1–4
2. Faith Mk 16:16, Jno 8:24, 3:16, Eph 2:8, Heb 11:6
3. Repentance Lk 13:3, 5 Lk 24:47, Acts 3:19, 17:30–31, II Pet 3:9
4. Confession Acts 8:37, Rom 10:9–10, I Tim 6:12
5. Baptism Mt 28:19, Mk 16:16, Jno 3:5, Acts 2:38, 10:48, 22:16
6. All things whatsoever Jesus commanded Jno 14:15, 23, 12:48

C. Who or what is a disciple? From a language standpoint the word disciple means:

1. A soldier that follows a leader II Tim 2:3–4, I Tim 6:12
2. Slaves that serve a master II Cor 4:5, Mt 6:24
3. One who follows another's advice Jno 6:68
4. Attaching oneself to another to obtain a favor Mt 24:13, Rev 2:10
5. A follower I Pet 2:21
6. A learner Mt 11:28, II Pet 3:18, Phil 3:8

- D. From a Biblical standpoint the word disciple means:
1. One who loves the brethren Jno 13:34–35, I Pet 2:17
 2. A fruit bearer Jno 15:8
 3. One who loves Christ more than himself and his family Lk 14:26 Mt 10:34–37
 4. One who bears his own cross Lk 9:23, 14:27, Gal 2:20, 5:24
 5. One who forsakes all Lk 14:33, Mt 19:27
 6. One who continues in the word Jno 8:31–32, Rom 10:17, Jno 6:68
 7. One who is a Christian Acts 11:26

IV All Nations (Panta Ta Ethne)

- A. Jesus did not say go into the larger nations. Rather he said, disciple all ethnic groups in all nations. It is estimated that there are 15,000 to 20,000 ethnic groups in the world with their own languages, customs, and culture. Most of these do not have the Bible in their own dialect and there are no missionaries to teach them, even if they had a Bible!
- B. Jesus did not say, go ye therefore and preach the gospel to every congregation. It is the will of God that all men be saved. (Rom 3:10–12, 23, Gen 12:3, Isa 2:2, Mt 13:38, Jno 6:45, Mk 16:20, Acts 1:8, 8:4, 28:22, Col 1:23, I Tim 2:6, Heb 2:9)
- C. One reason why we have not yet evangelized the world of our day is that like Luther, who wanted to insert the word “only” we go only to the so-called receptive nations. Many missionaries have found out that unless they report many baptisms each month, their support will soon be gone!
- D. Paul in I Cor 3:6 said, “I planted, Apollos watered, and God gave the increase.” The task of Christians is to plant and water. God is responsible for the increase

not us!

V Baptizing Them

- A. The word “baptizing” is a present active participle.
- B. Baptism is to be in the “name” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The word “name” stands for, “authority, rank, and character.” Notice that this is a statement of what to do and not what to say. There is no Biblical record of what was said during any baptismal ceremony.
- C. The baptism of our text is not Holy Ghost baptism.
 - 1. Holy Ghost baptism was a promise and not a command. Lk 24:49 Acts 1:8
 - 2. Jesus was the administrator of Holy Ghost baptism. Mt 3:11
 - 3. Holy Spirit baptism and water baptism equal two baptisms. Paul in Eph 4:5 said that there was one baptism.
- D. The baptism of the great commission is water baptism that is to be administered by immersion. It is not a promised baptism but a baptism of command. (Mt 28:19, Acts 2:38, 10:48, 22:16) This baptism is to be administered by men and not Jesus. The Apostles and disciples of Christ administered it.
- E. Candidates for this baptism must be taught. (Mt 28:19) They must be believers. (Mk 16:15–16) They must repent. (Lk 24:47, Acts 2:38) They must confess Jesus. (Acts 8:37, Rom 10:9–10)

VI Teaching Them (present active indicative)

- A. Who should be taught? The new disciples
 - 1. Acts 14:22, 15:32
 - 2. Acts 15:41, 16:5
- B. What should the new disciples be taught? To observe all things that Jesus has commanded. The verb tense

says that the new disciples are “to keep on observing.” The word “observe” means, “to look on, to view the scene, to adhere, to keep the rules, to obey the law, to abide by terms.” We must then develop new recruits into fullfledged soldiers for the army of Christ. We are not following the orders of Jesus in this matter. We are fighting the greatest battle in all of human history with the most untrained army on earth!

VII Lo I Am With You Alway

- A. Notice the personal presence of Jesus in this verse.
- B. Jesus does not send a representative but promises that he himself will be with us.
- C. He will be with us even when our numbers are small. Mt 18:20
- D. He will commune with us as we partake the Lord's Supper. I Cor 11:29
- E. He is with us in temptation II Pet 2:9
- F. He will not walk down the valley of the shadow of death alone. Psm 23:4, Rev 1:17-18
- G. He is with us at all times. Heb 13:5-6

Conclusion:

In the last three years, I have travelled around the world preaching the gospel. From first hand experience, I can tell you the world is shrouded in darkness, ignorance, and superstition. The world is lost. The world needs the Christ. It needs Jesus. We must go with the gospel of Christ or we ourselves will be numbered with the lost! There is no excuse for our negligence. (Jer 49:10) If there are degrees of punishment, we who have the gospel and its blessings in such great abundance, will surely be cast into the deepest pits of hell, unless we get out of our comfortable church buildings and homes. We must GO OUT QUICKLY. (Lk 14:21) All of us can do something

to carry out this command of Jesus. Are you doing all that you can? Anything less than an all out effort is not acceptable to God. Jesus said, "If ye love me, ye will keep my commandments." (Jno 14:15) Do you love him?

THE NON-CONVERSIONS IN ACTS

The Non-Conversion of The Athenians

Introduction:

1. Paul, Silas, Timothy, and Luke heeded the Macedonian call and began the second missionary journey which brought the gospel to Europe.
2. In Acts sixteen, they came to Philippi, where Lydia, the Philippian jailer and their families were converted.
3. In Acts seventeen, they came to Thessalonica. The Jews stirred up trouble and cried out, these that have turned the world upside down have come hither also. (Acts 17:6) Paul then went to Berea. Acts 17:11 says, "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind and searched the scriptures daily, whether these things were so." Again the Jews stirred up trouble and Paul was sent to Athens. (Acts 17:15)
4. In Acts 17:16 Paul's spirit is stirred or provoked within him, when he sees the city full of idols. What is he to do? It would be easy to say that the situation was hopeless and that after all, he was just one person.
5. Acts 17:17 says that he began to reason in the synagogues with the Jews and devout persons and in the market-places daily. There is no evidence that he had any success with the Jews or in the marketplace. He followed Jesus' example of teaching daily. (Mt 26:55)
6. In verse eighteen Paul encounters the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers.
 1. The Epicureans were founded by Epicurus. They believed that the chief aim in life was the pursuit of

pleasure. They had a very materialistic view of life. They believed that all you could learn came from or through the five senses. The world, they believed went back to an atom. Immortality was an illusion and the soul an atom, as the Epicureans understood it.

2. The Stoics were founded by Zeno. They believed that the greatest good came from being indifferent to the world and all of its pleasure and suffering. Happiness according to them came from wisdom, self-sacrifice, and dignity. The aceticism became more severe as time went by.
7. These philosophers wanted to know what this “babbling” which means, “seedpicker” had to say. They said he was a setter forth of “strange gods” because he preached Jesus and the resurrection. Note the words, “strange gods.” This has also been rendered as “foreign demons.” We must understand that to the Greeks any dead man who was deified was a demon. Jesus was dead. He was made into a god as the Greeks saw it, therefore, he was a demon.
8. In verse nineteen we find that the philosophers took Paul to the Areopagus or Mars Hill. The Areopagus was the supreme council of Athens. I think though that Luke refers us to the place where they met instead of the council. They met in a large open air area.
9. The Athenians and strangers that sojourned there spent all time in nothing else but to tell or hear some new thing. (Acts 17:21)

I The Gospel Delivered

- A. It was a personal gospel. He addressed the men of Athens. (Acts 17:22)
- B. The gospel was pointed. Paul told them they were, “very religious or too superstitious.” Literally, they were, “too demon fearing.” In I Cor 10:20 Paul said the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice

to demons and not to God. Paul also told them that he beheld the “objects of their worship or their devotions.” He found an altar with an inscription to an unknown god. (Acts 17:23) The Greeks are a good illustration of the fact that man is by nature a religious being. The Greeks called man, “anthropos” which means, “the upward looking one.”

- C. Paul's gospel was plain. You didn't have to cut through the philosophy, theology, sociology, or emotionalism, that we see in religion today, in order to get to the truth.
- D. The gospel was practical. It met a specific need the Athenians had. They were worshipping in ignorance! (Acts 17:24)
 - 1. Paul presented the true God to the Greeks. The true God made the world and all things therein. (Acts 17:24) The Greeks believed the world was made by several gods. Neptune created the sea and Jupiter created the sky, etc.
 - 2. Paul's God was a self-existent God. He did not dwell in temples (like the Parthenon) made with hands and he is neither to be worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed anything. (Acts 17:24–25)
 - 3. God was presented as the great benefactor to the Greeks. He is the God that giveth to all life, breath, and all things. (Acts 17:25, Jas 1:17)
 - 4. The God of the Bible is the Father of all nations. Verse twenty-six says that God hath made of one blood all the nations of the earth and hath determined their appointed seasons and the bounds of their habitation. This was in opposition to the national gods worshipped by the nations of men. (Acts 17:27)
 - 5. God is also omnipresent declared Paul. Men should

seek after the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him, for he is not far from us. The Greeks in their paganism were like a blind man, in a dark room, searching for a black cat that isn't there! In their ignorance they grope like the blind men they are. (Acts 17:27, Psm 139)

6. Paul presents God as our sustainer. In him we live and move and have our being. Without him we can do nothing. (Acts 17:28, Jno 15:5)
7. Finally, the Apostle, reveals the true nature of God. We should not think of the Godhead (Father, Son, and Holy Ghost) as being made of substances like gold, silver, or stone. He is not made by the artistic hands of mere men. God is Spirit. (Jno 4:24) God made man! (Gen 1:27)
- E. The gospel was prescriptive. It provided the medicine needed for the spiritual ills of the Greeks and for all peoples for all time! Paul's sermon destroyed the following false beliefs: atheism, pantheism, materialism, fatalism, polytheism, evolution, annihilation, and universalism.
- F. Finally, Paul's gospel was persuasive. (Acts 17:30-31)
 1. In this text Paul said that all men should repent in light of a coming judgment, which is guaranteed by the resurrection of Jesus.
 2. Judgment is something that the character of God requires. The experiences of our own lives point to a day of judgment. Men around the world believe in some kind of accounting. History would be incomplete without it.

II The Gospel Derided

- A. In verse thirty-two the Athenians mocked the preaching of Jesus and the resurrection.
- B. The word "mock" means, "to deride, to scoff at, to

jeer, to laugh at." The resurrection is still being scoffed at in the colleges and universities of the world today. It is called, "preacher talk, theological jargon, or Biblical nonsense." Other doctrines like the virgin birth, the inspiration of the Bible, baptism, unity, and worship in spirit and in truth are being mocked today.

- C. Why do people mock? They scoff because they cannot refute these fundamental doctrines. They jeer to sanction sin in their own lives or to ease a biting conscience. Others do it because they are blinded by false doctrine and tradition.

III The Gospel Deferred

- A. Note also in verse thirty-two that some said, we will hear thee concerning this, yet again.
- B. Others like Felix deferred by saying, go thy way for now and when I have a more convenient season I will call on thee. (Acts 24:25) Agrippa put off obedience. He was almost but not altogether persuaded to become a Christian. (Acts 26:28)
- C. Excuses without number have been offered down throughout the centuries of time for deferring obedience to the will of God.

IV Some Decide To Obey The Gospel

- A. Certain men clave unto him and believed. (Acts 17:34)
- B. The word "believed" is used in all inclusive sense.
 - 1. Acts 2:38 lays down the terms of redemption. They include repentance and baptism.
 - 2. In Acts 2:44 Luke speaks of those who "believed." The believers in this text were those who heard Peter's preaching. They believed it and obeyed the Apostolic commands to repent and be baptized. They received the remission of sins, the gift of the Holy Ghost, and were added by the Lord to the

church. (Acts 2:28, 41, 44, 47)

- C. One was Dionysius the Areopagite. There was also a woman named Damaris. Eusebius said that Dionysius became an elder in the church at Athens and Chrysostom said that Damaris was his wife. I do not know how accurate these statements are.

Conclusion:

1. Paul left Athens. He never returned. He never spoke of the church in Athens.
2. Paul presented God as the creator of all, within the reach of all, a God who wants to save all and a God who will judge all.
3. Paul's God was unknown. He is still unknown to the world!

The Non-Conversion of Agrippa

Introduction:

1. In Acts twenty-four Paul stands before Felix
2. Acts 24:26–27 tells us that Felix hoped that Paul would give him money to release him. Paul would not do so. He thus remained a prisoner for two years. Finally, Porcius Festus replaced Felix and found Paul still in bonds.
3. In Acts 25:1–3 we see the Jews informing Festus about Paul. They want him brought to Jerusalem so that they can kill him on the way.
4. Festus says no. He must remain in Caesarea. I am going there shortly and if you want to send some Jews with me to accuse Paul, then do so declared Festus. (Acts 25:4–5)
5. Finally, Festus left for Casarea. The Jews who went with him made charges they could not prove. (Acts 25:7)
6. Paul answered the charges. Festus tried to get him to go to Jerusalem to be tried. Paul refused and appealed unto

Caesar. (Acts 25:9–11)

7. Then Agrippa and Bernice came to visit Festus. Festus told Agrippa about Paul and sought his advice. He wanted to know what to do with him. Agrippa wanted to hear Paul. Thus, Paul is brought before Festus, Agrippa, and Bernice. (Acts 25:14–27)

I Paul's Defense Before Agrippa

- A. Acts 26:1 says that Agrippa told Paul to speak for thyself. He raised his chained hand and began his defense.
- B. Paul was happy to stand before Agrippa because he was an expert in the customs and questions among the Jews. (Acts 26:2–3)
- C. Paul begins his defense by pointing to his manner of life. From his childhood up the Jews have known him. He was a Pharisee, which was the strictest sect of the Jews. (Acts 26:4–5)
- D. Paul then argues that he is being judged because of the hope of the promise which God made to the twelve tribes. These tribes strove to serve God day and night in order to attain this hope. (Acts 26:6–7)
What is the hope?
- E. Paul answers this question in verse eight which says, "Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?" The word "you" is plural. Paul is addressing all of his audience. It would be incredible if the dead were annihilated at the point of death. If there were no power that could raise the dead, then it would be incredible. If God declined to raise the dead because it interfered with the laws of nature, then one could understand their reluctance to believe in the resurrection. But if the dead are still alive spiritually, then it would not be hard to believe in the resurrection of the body. If

there is an all powerful God, who promised to raise the dead, then it would be reasonable to believe in the resurrection. If God has raised Jesus from the dead, then why cannot man hope for the raising of his own body?

- F. In verse nine Paul states that he thought that he should do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Paul thought that Jesus was an impostor and that Christ's followers should be persecuted. He also mistakenly believed that he was doing God a favor when he sought to maintain the law of Moses. Paul soon found out that the resurrection of Jesus was not fiction! The wrong kind of thinking made of Paul a persecutor and a murderer. (Acts 26:10-11)
- G. Paul proceeds by relating the story of his conversion. The place was Damascus. (Acts 26:12) The time was mid-day and the instrument that got it started was the light from heaven. (Acts 26:13) Jesus was of course the power behind it. (Acts 26:14-15) We must supplement this account with the other two in Acts. Acts 9:9 says that he was three days without sight and neither did he eat or drink. In other words, he was a penitent believer. Acts 9:11 states that he was praying. God then sent Ananias to him and he laid his hands on Paul. Paul received his sight and was asked, "And now why tarriest thou? Arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." (Acts 22:16)
- H. Next Paul relates his God given commission. He was to be a minister and witness of the things he was to see. (Acts 26:16) He was sent to the Gentiles. He was to open their eyes, that they might turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan unto God.
- I. Those who turned to God would receive an inheritance, as well as the forgiveness of sins. This was

made possible by the sanctifying power of faith. (Acts 26:20)

- J. Paul then tells Agrippa that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision. He immediately began to preach the gospel in Damascus. From there he went to Jerusalem, then into all Judaea and to the Gentiles. (Acts 26:20)
- K. In verse twenty-one Paul states that this is the reason the Jews took him in the temple and tried to kill him.
- L. Paul now relates the providential care of God for himself. Paul was just preaching those things foretold in Moses and the prophets concerning the death and resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 26:22-23)

II Festus' Interruption

- A. He interrupted with a loud voice. (Acts 26:24)
- B. Festus said that Paul was beside himself. He said that Paul's much learning had made him mad! No doubt Festus thought Paul, who had once been such a zealous Jew, but who was now a Christian, had gone crazy. How can a man preach the same Jesus that he once persecuted? Perhaps at this point, he was also thinking that if Paul thought he was going to convert him, Paul had better not waste his time.
- C. Paul answered Festus by saying that he was not mad. Paul's words were of the truth and sober. I suppose that the preaching of the gospel has always been considered foolish by the wise, noble, and mighty. (I Cor 1 :21, 26) The truth of the matter is that Festus was beside himself with sin. His mind was the one that was twisted and perverted!

III Paul Before Agrippa And Bernice

- A. Paul knew that Festus was a lost cause.
- B. So he directed his remarks directly to Agrippa and I

think Bernice.

1. Agrippa was Herod Agrippa the II. He was the great grandson of Herod the Great. He was the great nephew of Herod Antipas. Herod Agrippa the I was of course his father. All three of these men were familiar with Jesus, John the Baptist, and the Apostles. He was the last of the Herods!
 2. Bernice was the oldest daughter of Herod Agrippa I. She was the youngest sister of Drusilla the third wife of Felix. It has been said that she was living in an incestuous relationship with Agrippa at this time!
- C. Agrippa then was part Jew. Because of his family background he was familiar with all that Paul had said. (Acts 26:26)
- D. Paul then directed his remarks to Agrippa. King Agrippa believest thou the prophets? In other words, do you believe what prophets like Isaiah, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Ezekiel had to say about Christ? Do you believe what they said about his birth, death, resurrection, and his church-kingdom? (Acts 26:27)
- E. Paul said, "I KNOW thou believest. How did Paul know? Did he see tears streaming down the face of Agrippa nodding with approval? (Acts 26:27)
- F. Agrippa replied, "... Paul, almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." (Acts 26:28) Agrippa was "almost" persuaded. His heart was touched. His mind was enlightened. His will was moved. Like Felix his spirit trembled. He was near to the kingdom.
- G. He was almost "persuaded." Paul was a very persuasive preacher. Paul wrote, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we persuade men." (II Cor 5:11)
- H. Agrippa was an "almost Christian." What is an almost Christian? Is it possible to believe in Christ and not be a Christian? Was Agrippa a believer? Paul said, I know

thou believest. Was Agrippa a Christian? No! Even he understood that! Why can't people see that it takes more than belief in Jesus to make them Christians today?

- I. In verse twenty-nine Paul said, "I would to God that whether with little or much, not thou only, but all they that hear me this day might become as I am, except these bonds." Well what was Paul? A Christian. The disciples were to be called Christians. (Isa 62:2, Acts 11:16) The name Christian glorifies God. (I Pet 4:16)
- J. Why did Agrippa become almost but not altogether a Christian?
 - 1. Perhaps he wouldn't give up his incestuous relationship with Bernice.
 - 2. Pride played a role in my estimation. Not many mighty or noble will answer the call to obey God. (I Cor 1:26)
 - 3. There is no historical evidence that Agrippa ever obeyed the gospel.

Conclusion:

- 1. There are many great lessons to be learned from this incident.
- 2. We learn a lot about the basic ways that people respond to the gospel. Felix wanted a more convenient season. Druscilla and Bernice apparently were not moved at all. Agrippa was almost persuaded.
- 3. From Paul we learn that one can be religious but lost!
- 4. Let us not overlook Paul's obedience to the heavenly commission. What about us? Are we disobedient to the great commission?

The Non-Conversion of Felix

Introduction:

1. The book of Acts is known as the book of conversions.
2. I submit to you that it is also the book of non-conversions! This is true, even though God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish but have everlasting life. (Jno 3:16)
3. Jesus knew that all men would not be converted. He cried out, ye will not come unto me that ye may have life. (Jno 5:40)
4. Paul quoted Isaiah, who foretold the fact that not all men would obey the gospel (Rom 10:16)
5. Our text will be Acts 24:1–27.

I The Events That Brought Paul Before Felix

- A. The high priest Ananias, the elders, and an orator named Tertullus came down to inform the governor against Paul. (Acts 24:1)
- B. Tertullus flattered Felix by thanking him for the peace and victory over evil that the people enjoyed. (Acts 24:2–3)
- C. The following charges were offered against Paul. (Acts 24:4–9)
 1. He was a pestilent fellow.
 2. He was a mover of insurrection among the Jews throughout the world.
 3. He was a ringleader of the sect called the Nazarenes.
 4. He profaned the temple, said the Jews.
- D. Paul's defense
 1. Seeing that Felix had ruled for many years, Paul said that cheerfully he would make his defense.
 2. Paul said that he was not found in the temple disputing or in the city or synagogue stirring up the

- crowds. This he said, cannot be proven.
3. Paul did make a confession. He said that after the way, that they call a sect, so serve I the God of our fathers. Paul further emphasized that he believed all things that were found in Moses and the prophets.
 4. Paul had his hope in God. He had the same hope of the Jews. They were all hoping for a resurrection of the just and unjust. Paul's conscience was always void of offence towards God and man.
 5. Paul argued that he was in the temple paying alms to his nation. He claimed to be pure and challenged his accusers to come in person and to spell out exactly what he had done that was wrong.
- E. Felix having a more exact knowledge of the way, deferred this case. Paul was restrained but given ample liberty. (Acts 24:22)

II Paul Before Felix (Acts 24:24-27)

- A. After certain days Felix and Drusilla sent for Paul.
1. Felix was a former slave to Agrippina, who was the mother of Nero. He was appointed governor of Judea. He was married three times. All were women of royal blood. Two of his wives were named Drusilla. One was the niece of the granddaughter of Antony and Cleopatra. He exercised his power without restraint.
 2. Drusilla was a Jew. She was one of the three daughters of Herod Agrippa I. He killed the Apostle James and imprisoned Peter. Her great uncle Herod Antipas killed John the Baptist. Her great grandfather was Herod the Great who killed the infants of Bethlehem in an effort to kill Jesus. (See Mt 2, 14, Acts 12) She was married to Azizus who was the King of Emesa. Felix used a magician

to get her away from her husband. Drusilla and her son were in Pompeii, when Mt. Vesuvius erupted in A.D. 79. They were both killed.

B. Paul was called before them so that they could hear about "the faith in Jesus Christ." (Acts 24:24)

1. Paul spoke of "the way" in verse fourteen. It was foretold in Isa 35:8. Jesus was its personification. (Jno 14:6)

2. Now we read of "the faith." Paul spoke of the "one faith" in Eph 4:5. See also Jude 3, Phil 1:27.

C. Paul's sermon is worthy of examination.

1. Note the fact that he "reasoned" with Felix and Drusilla. This word means, "to converse, discourse, argue, and discuss." Christianity is a religion that must appeal to the mind or intellect. Those who are not convinced intellectually will never remain faithful to Christ.

2. Paul spoke of "righteousness." This word means, "moral uprightness, justice, conforming to the will of God, and it is the sum of the total requirements of God." Psm 119:172 says, "all thy commandments are righteousness." Peter told Cornelius, "Of a truth, I perceive that God is no respecter of persons. But in every nation, he that feareth him and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him."

3. Paul then spoke of "self control or temperance." This word means, "exercising mastery or dominion over the appetites of the body and spirit." One of the fruits of the Spirit is self control. (Gal 5:23) Temperance is to be added to our faith. (II Pet 1:6) Paul said, "They that are of Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with the passions and lusts thereof." (Gal 5:24) See also I Pet 2:11.

4. Finally, Paul spoke of "the judgment to come." No better comments could be found on the

judgment than those in Romans two.

1. Rom 2:2 tells us that we will be judged by truth. Truth is God's word. (Jno 17:17) See also Rom 2:16
2. Rom 2:5 suggests that the hardened of heart and the impenitent are storing up wrath for themselves, that will be meted out on the day of wrath or judgment.
3. Each man will be judged according to his works. (Rom 2:6)
 - a. The patient, the well doers, those who seek glory, honor, and incorruption will be given eternal life. (Rom 2:7)
 - b. Those who obey not the truth and are unrighteous shall receive wrath, indignation, tribulation, and anguish. (Rom 2:8)
4. Felix was "terrified or some versions say, he trembled." He shows us that he still had a conscience. There is no evidence that Drusilla was moved. Why was Felix terrified? As he looked back into his guilty past, he saw an unrighteous life. The very presence of Drusilla, his third wife, with whom he was living in open adultery, should have caused him to fear. When he thought of giving an account of all that he had done, he was terrified. Tacitus the Roman historian said that Felix was guilty of every kind of cruelty and lust. You would think that fear would move him to obey like Noah. (Heb 11:7)
5. Felix said, "go thy way for now and when I have a more convenient season, I will call on thee." (Acts 24:25) That time though, never came. It is never convenient for a man like Felix to put a beautiful woman like Drusilla

away and change his whole manner of life. John the Baptist told Herod Antipas that it was unlawful for him to have his brother's wife. It was not convenient to give her up, so John's head was finally chopped off. (Mt 14)

6. Why did Felix reject the gospel? Lust and ambition smothered out the fires of his conscience.
7. Felix sought to delay his obedience. Yet, delay is rejection. Jesus said that we were either for him or against him. (Mt 12:30) Delay is delusion. We must be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving (deluding) our ourselves. (Jas 1:22) Delay can be fatal. The human heart could harden through the deceitfulness of sin. (Heb 3:13) A person could die. (Heb 9:27) Jesus could come back again. (Mt 24:44) "Now is the day of salvation." (II Cor 6:2) See also Ecc 12:13, Jas 4:13, Prov 27:1) Someone has said, that "yesterday" has slain its thousands. Many people live in the past. Their past sins plunge them into the valley of despair from which they never return. "Tomorrow" has slain her ten thousands. All of the promises, pledges, resolutions, and vows never become a reality for most!

III Let Us Learn From Paul What Biblical Preaching Consists Of

- A. Paul did not preach what Felix wanted to hear. No man living in adultery wants to hear about righteousness, temperance, and the judgment to come.
- B. Paul did not preach to please Felix. He offered no compromise. He made no apology. He did not preach a sermon that covered all in general and nothing in

specific! (Acts 5:29, 20:27)

C. Paul's preaching was persuasive. (II Cor 5:11)

Conclusion:

1. Felix had a wonderful opportunity to hear the gospel.
2. He took advantage of it. He was convicted but not converted because, he put it off.
3. It seems incredible that a man would delay anything that had to do with the salvation of his eternal soul. (Mt 16:26)
4. The story of Felix is relived daily.

The Non-Conversion of Stephen's Audience

Introduction:

1. Review the non-conversions of Felix, Agrippa, and the Athenians.
2. Stephen's audience

I Stephen The Man (Acts 6:1-8)

- A. One of the first problems in the early church arose over the neglect of the Grecian widows. The Apostles suggested that seven men be chosen from the church to oversee these matters. One of them was Stephen. The Apostles then laid down the qualifications.
 1. These men had to be of "honest or good report." Stephen was such a man. He was a man of good integrity. He had a good reputation. (Acts 6:3)
 2. Stephen was full of the Holy Ghost. (Acts 6:3)
Let us note that this does not mean that he had miraculous ability at this point. John the Baptist was full of the Holy Ghost and so was his father Zacharias. (Lk 1:15, 67) Yet, they never perform-

- ed miracles. Stephen later performed signs and wonders after he had the Apostle's hands laid on him. (Acts 6:6) We as Christians are to be filled with the Spirit. (Eph 5:18) This does not mean that we are to be baptized with the Holy Spirit.
3. Stephen was full of wisdom. (Acts 6:3) He had the ability to apply his knowledge in dealing with human relationships, especially in the church.
 4. He was "full of faith." (Acts 6:5) He had complete trust and confidence in God. He was full of the word of God that produces faith. (Rom 10:17)
 5. Again let us remember that he had Apostolic hands laid on him. (Acts 6:6) See also Acts 8:15–17.
 6. In Acts 6:8 the American Standard Version says he was "full of grace." He was a man upon whom God had bestowed his gracious favor on. He was given an abundant measure of God's goodness, love, and kindness.
 7. He was also "full of power." He performed signs and wonders. (Acts 6:8)
 8. Stephen had the face of an angel! (Acts 6:15)
 9. He was "full of courage." (Acts 7:51–56)
 10. He was also "full of love." (Acts 7:60)

II Stephen's Audience (Acts 6:9–15)

- A. They came from several different synagogues.
 1. Libertines were Jews who were slaves in Rome. Now they were free.
 2. Cyrene was in Northern Africa. Simon of Cyrene who bore the cross of Christ may have been a member of this synagogue.
 3. Alexandrians were Jews from Alexandria, Egypt. One fifth of the population of that city was Jewish at this time.
 4. Cilicia was where Tarsus, the home town of Paul

was. Maybe Paul had been a member of this synagogue.

5. The Asia here is not the continent or even Asia Minor but probably proconsular Asia, which was much smaller.
- B. These Jews “disputed” with Stephen. That is they “talked, argued their case or debated with him.”
- C. They were not able to resist him.
 1. He was too “wise.” He had great knowledge of the Old Testament. He could skillfully use it with his knowledge of the Jewish customs and questions.
 2. They could not resist his “spirit.” This is not the Holy Spirit but rather his zeal, ardour, or fervent proclamation or defense of the gospel.
- D. The Jews then “suborned” men. That is they “secretly instructed and bribed them.” These men accused Stephen of blaspheming Moses and God. Here Moses is placed on the same level of God! Then they took him before the council. There he was charged with blaspheming the temple and the law. His accusers said that Stephen was preaching that Jesus of Nazareth was going to destroy the temple and change the customs of Moses. As they looked upon Stephen, his face was as the face on an angel. Do angels have faces different than men? Yes. Did he have some kind of a glow or halo effect. Well Moses when he came down from Mt. Sinai had a glow around his face. Decide for yourself.

III Stephen’s Hard Hitting Sermon (Acts 7:2–53)

- A. Stephen began by discussing Abraham. He told of his call, the promise of Canaan, the covenant of circumcision, the birth of Isaac, and Jacob and his twelve sons, the patriarchs of Israel. (Acts 7:2–8)

- B. Next came Joseph. Joseph was sold into slavery by envious brothers said Stephen. God delivered Joseph and elevated him to second only to Pharaoh. A famine brought his family out of Egypt. Joseph revealed himself to them and they settled in the land of Goshen. Then a Pharaoh arose that knew not Joseph. The Israelites were then enslaved. (Acts 7:9–19)
- C. Moses was then born. Raised by the Pharaoh's daughter as her own. Moses at age forty killed an Egyptian slavedriver. He fled to Midian and married a daughter of Jethro. He served as a shepherd for forty years. At eighty years of age, God called him up on Mt. Sinai. He told Moses to go to Egypt and lead his people out of bondage. After ten plagues, Israel crossed through the Red Sea into the freedom so long desired. Moses foretold the coming of Christ. He was in the church in the wilderness. The ASV renders the word "church" as "congregation." The church was not established in Old Testament times. If so Jesus was wrong to say, Upon this rock, I will build my church. (Mt 16:18) Aaron lead Israel into idolatry. Israel wandered in the wilderness for forty years and many Jews were carried off into Babylon.
- D. Now Stephen begins to bear down in this sermon.
1. He calls them "stiffnecked." (Acts 7:51) This word was used to describe an ox that would not bend his neck, so that he could be yoked. Thus the stiffnecked were stubborn and unwilling to submit to the will or law of God. See (Prov 29:1)
 2. Next Stephen said they were "uncircumcised in heart and ears." The uncircumcised were considered unclean by the Jews. The uncircumcised were those who would not submit to the will or law of God. They were stubborn and rebellious.
 - a. There were some things that needed to be cut

out of their hearts. Paul said that the true Jew is one who is one inwardly and the circumcision is not of the flesh but of the heart. (Rom 2:28–29)

- b. Their ears were spiritually deaf. They heard but they didn't hear or understand. See (Acts 28:26–27)
- 3. They resisted the Holy Ghost. They were following in the footsteps of their fathers. Like father like son. There is a lot of truth in that! Their fathers persecuted and killed the prophets of God, who preached the coming of the "Just or Righteous One," who was Jesus.
- 4. Stephen then charged them with betraying Jesus. The Jews through Judas did just that.
- 5. He also accuses them of murder! Peter on Pentecost said, "ye by the hands of lawless men did crucify and slay." He was speaking of the role of the Jews in killing the Prince of Life. (Acts 3:15)
- 6. Stephen then reminds them that they received the law. Out of all the nations of the world, God chose them. They had a special privilege. Angels had even given them the law! (Heb 2:2, Gal 3:19) They kept it not. Paul told the Jewish Christians in Rome that breaking the law of God dishonored him. (Rom 2:23)
- D. To sum it up we can say that Stephen told the Jews that they broke God's laws, persecuted and killed God's prophets, killed God's Son, and resisted the Spirit of God!

IV Note The Reaction of Stephen's Audience (Acts 7:54)

- A. They were "cut to the heart." They were rasped to the bone. Stephen had touched their hearts, but their hearts were hearts of stone. They were filled with

pride and self-righteousness. They did not receive the word with all meekness, so that it would save their souls. (Jas 1:21)

- B. Other hearts were touched by the gospel.
 - 1. Three thousand souls were pricked to such an extent that they obeyed Peter's commands to repent and be baptized for the remission of sins. (Acts 2:37-38)
 - 2. Felix and Festus were touched in their hearts. One delayed and the other flew into an angry rage. (Acts 24:25, 26:24)
 - 3. Agrippa's heart was almost persuaded. (Acts 26:28)
- C. Then they "gnashed on him with their teeth." They were like a pack of snarling, angry wolves.

V. Consider Stephen's Vision (Acts 7:55-56)

- A. He saw the glory of God.
- B. He saw Jesus "standing." Does this denote interest and concern? I believe it does.
- C. Jesus normally is described as sitting at the right hand of God. (Acts 2:33)

VI. The Reaction To Stephen's Vision (Acts 7:57-58)

- A. They cried out with a loud voice. They were very emotional.
- B. They stopped up their ears. Their minds were made up. They would hear no more.
- C. They ran with one accord. They were acting as a mob.
- D. Stephen was cast out of the city and stoned. Stoning was the penalty for blasphemy under Jewish law. They stoned him illegally. There was no trial before the Sanhedrin. The Romans had taken away their power to put people to death.
- E. The witnesses, who were to cast the first stones, laid

their garments at the feet of Saul. We know him better as Paul. This may have been the beginning of his career as a persecutor, blasphemer, and one who inflicted injury. (I Tim 1:13)

VII Stephen's Last Words

- A. There is something special about the last words of a dying man.
- B. Stephen's last words were in the form of a prayer.
 - 1. He prayed, Lord Jesus receive my spirit. The body returns to dust at death but the spirit unto God who gave it. (Ecc 12:7) Jesus said on the cross, "Father into thy hands I commend my spirit." (Lk 23:46) These words must have made a great impression on Stephen.
 - 2. Stephen also prayed, "Lord lay not this sin to their charge." Jesus prayed, "Father forgive them for they know not what they do." (Lk 23:34) Stephen again must have been impressed with Jesus' last words on the cross. He was also practicing Jesus' teaching to love your enemy and to pray for them that persecute you. (Mt 5:44)
- C. Stephen then fell asleep. He died. Death is likened to sleep in several passages in the Bible. (I Thess 4:13, I Cor 15:18)

Conclusion:

- 1. Stephen is one of the greatest men in the Bible.
- 2. He was a dedicated Christian. He may have been one of the first Deacons. He was a gospel preacher who preached the gospel with great plainness and courage. He was very Christ-like.
- 3. He was the first Christian martyr. He lost his life but found it. (Mt 10:39) He will receive a crown of life for being faithful unto death. (Rev.2:10)

4. Let us not forget the reaction of the Jews to the gospel. They like many today are cut to the heart with the sword of the Spirit (Eph 6:17), when the gospel is preached.

THE GOSPEL ARMOUR

The Gospel Armour

Introduction:

1. Christians are likened to soldiers.
2. Christians are to war a good warfare. We are to fight the good fight of faith. Christian soldiers are to suffer hardship. The greatest soldier of them all, Paul, fought a good fight to the end of his life. (I Tim 1:18, 6:12, II Tim 2:3-4, 4:7)
3. While imprisoned and chained to a Roman soldier, Paul wrote Ephesians 6:10-18. These verses give us the famous "gospel armour."

I Christian Warfare Can Be Fought Only With Divine Help Eph 6:10-11

- A. The word "finally" means, "in conclusion." That is in light of all that has been said before, consider this advice.
- B. "Be strong or powerful." This phrase in the original language is a present, middle, imperative. In other words, keep on being strong or powerful. The middle voice points to the individual responsibility here. The imperative mood makes this a command. So Paul commands each individual soldier (Christian) to keep on being strong. Other translations render this phrase, "be made powerful or invigorated."
- C. Where can we find this strength? We find it in the Lord!
 1. Rom 10:10 tells us that we "believe UNTO salvation."
 2. Acts 11:18 says that we "repent UNTO life."

3. "Confession is made UNTO salvation." (Rom 10:10)
 4. BAPTISM puts us "INTO CHRIST." (Rom 6:3, Gal 3:27)
- D. We must utilize the "strength of HIS might." David sinned against God when he numbered Israel. (II Sam 24:10) He sinned because he trusted in the arm of flesh and not the arm of God to protect and save Israel.
1. Jesus has all power. (Mt 28:18)
 2. Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be "strengthened with power through his Spirit in the inward man." (Eph 3:16)
 3. We can do all things through Christ that strengthens us. (Phil 4:13)
- E. How do we go about utilizing the strength of Jesus? We can do it by "putting on the whole armour of God."
1. The words "put on" are aorist, middle, imperative. They mean, put on, array, or clothe yourself once and for all. This is an individual command for each soldier to obey.
 2. God's soldiers are to put on "the whole armour of God." Part of the armour will not do. The Devil's darts will find the exposed area and destroy the soldier. Not only must we have all the armour on, we must have on all the armour of GOD! Nothing that man has to offer can protect us from the arch-enemy of our souls.

II Christian Warfare Involves Conflict With The Powers Of Evil Eph 6:11-2

- A. "That" is a word denoting purpose.
- B. The word "stand" means, "to continue safe and sound, to stand prepared, to hold one's ground on the

firing line.”

1. Paul said that we were to stand fast in the faith. (I Cor 16:16)
 2. We are also to stand fast in the Lord. (Phil 4:1)
 3. G.C. Brewer used to say, “if you are not being fired at, you are not on the firing line.”
- C. Christian soldiers are to stand against the “wiles” of the Devil. The word “wiles” means, “methods or treacherous tricks.” Paul said, he was not ignorant of Satan’s devices. (II Cor 2:11) We too must not remain ignorant of Satan’s methods of operation. He tempts. (Lk 4:13) He persecutes. (Rev 2:10) He deceives. (Rev 12:9) He hinders. (II Thess 2:18) He oppresses. (Acts 10:38) He appears to be what he is not. (II Cor 11:14–15)
- D. The “Devil” is a real being. He is not a bogey-man, a spook, or medieval goblin, or an invention of the clergy. He is the fourth person of importance in the universe! Only the personalities of the Godhead are superior to him! He is our real enemy. How tragic that people see age, bad health, inflation, or unemployment as their real enemy.
- E. Christian soldiers “wrestle.” That is we, “fight, struggle, battle, or engage in combat.”
1. We do not fight flesh and blood. Jesus said, my kingdom is not of this world. If so, my servants would fight. (Jno 18:36) The weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh. (II Cor 10:4)
 2. We are fighting against principalities, powers, world rulers, and spiritual host of wickedness. In other words, the Devil and his angels and all who are controlled by them. Three times in the gospel of John the Devil is called, “the prince of this world.” (I Jno 5:19, Rev 12:9)
- F. Let us now take a closer look at our enemies. Consider

their position. They are not underlings or privates, but chieftains who are mighty in rank and nobility. Note the realm that they operate in. They work in darkness. Their essence is spirit. Their character is wicked. They are organized. They are lead by an astute and subtle commander, the wily Satan.

III Christians Will Be Victorious Only When They Are Completely Armoured

- A. This third point needs to be reemphasized.
- B. Christians by themselves are defenseless. Our enemy hates us and wants to damn our souls. Satan asked to have Simon Peter that he might sift him as wheat. (Lk 22:31) Satan is our adversary. He walks about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. (I Pet 5:8)
- C. Centuries ago the English and French fought an important battle. The English showered the French with arrows. The French were in full armour but their horses had no protection. The horses started bucking and threw off many French soldiers and trampled on them, causing them to lose the battle. We too must have all our armour on, lest Satan find our Achilles heel and destroy us.

Conclusion:

- 1. The most important war in our world is not being fought between democracy and communism. It is the war between God and Satan, between the church which is the army of God and the world which is the army of Satan!
- 2. We are fighting for our very souls! Eternity hangs in the balance!
- 3. We cannot remain neutral. The only way to be at peace is to go to war and win. There will be no victory without the battle.

The Girdle of Truth

Introduction:

1. Eph 6:10–14
2. In our last lesson, we pointed out three things. Christian warfare can be fought only with divine aid. Christian soldiers fight the powers of evil. Victory belongs to those who put on the whole armour of God.
3. An analysis of verses 13–14:
 - a. “Wherefore” means, “in light of the nature of our warfare and the strength and methods of the enemy.”
 - b. “Take up” is aorist, active, imperative. It means, “that each individual soldier is commanded to keep on picking up.”
 - c. “The whole armour” means, “let no part be naked or exposed to the enemy.” Any area of vulnerability will receive the deadly sting of the fiery darts of the evil one.
 - d. “Able to withstand” means, “to oppose, resist, or set oneself against.” Satan stood against Israel in I Chron 21:1 and we must stand against Satan.”
 - e. “An evil day” means, “a day of trouble, temptation, or persecution.” evil days will come. (Ecc 12:1, Mt 6:34)
 - f. “Having done all to stand” means, “to overcome, to vanquish, conquer, or be victorious.” God expects his soldiers who have on the gospel armour to win!
 - g. “Stand therefore” means, “to stand as a victor.”
 - h. “Having girded your loins” is an aorist, middle, participle. It means to gird your loins (lower back, hips, ribs, and sides) once and for all. It is the responsibility of each soldier to do this himself. The girdle was a belt which was used to gather in the loose flowing robes of the soldier. It was used to secure his armour and thus provide him with mobility. It also served as a support.

- i. "Truth" in our text has two basic meanings. "It means, sincerity, genuineness, honesty, or truthfulness in contrast with sham and hypocrisy. It can also be used to refer to the word of God. It is probably used in our text, in light of the first definition given. But we shall look at it in this lesson from both angles.

I Truth In Contrast With Hypocrisy Or Sham

A. Sincerity means, "genuineness or real."

1. "Fear Jehovah and serve him with sincerity and truth." (Josh 24: 14) Our service is then, to be real or genuine.
2. Jesus said, "ye seek me not because ye saw the signs, but because ye ate of the loaves and were filled. (Jno 6:26) Jesus pointed out the sham of their devotion to him.
3. Paul told the Corinthians that their contribution to aid the Jewish Christians, who were suffering from a famine, would prove the sincerity of their love. In other words, it would show just how real or genuine their love for them was.

B. Guileless means, "without deceit." Jesus chose Nathanael, a man without guile, to be one of the twelve. (Jno 1:47)

1. Jesus was not only without sin, he was also a man who spoke with no guile. (I Pet 3:10-12)

C. Unfeigned means, "unpretended."

1. Paul spoke of the need for an unfeigned faith in I Tim 1:5. Timothy, his grandmother, and mother had an unfeigned faith. (II Tim 1:5)
2. Paul's love was unfeigned. (II Cor 6:6)
3. Christians are to have an unfeigned love for their brethren. (I Pet 1:22)

D. Free from hypocrisy means, "without sham or pretense, real, or genuine."

1. The most vehement denunciation in all of the New Testament is given by Jesus against the hypocrisy of the religious leadership of his day. He defines hypocrisy, by saying that it is saying and doing not. (Mt 23:3) Those who do works to be seen of men are hypocrites. (Mt 23:5) Hypocrites are sons of hell and serpents that shall not escape the judgment of hell. (Mt 23:13, 33)
 2. Paul describes the hypocrite as having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof. He says, they profess to know God but by their works they deny him. They are an abomination, reprobates, and disobedient when it comes to good works. (II Tim 3: 5, Titus 1:16)
 3. We must be free from hypocrisy, if we are to gird ourselves with truth. Let love be without hypocrisy, said Paul. (Rom 12:9) We must put it away. (I Pet 2:1) Those who will not cease being hypocrites will fall away from the faith. (II Tim 4:1-2)
- E. **Honest** means, "to be truthful or to be characterized by integrity."
1. We are to provide things honest in the sight of the Lord and in the sight of all men. (Rom 12:17, II Cor 8:21)
 2. We are to walk honestly. That is our lives must be characterized by honesty or truthfulness. (Rom 13:13)

II Truth As The Word of God

- A. "Buy the truth and sell it not." (Prov 23:23) The truth is the word of God. (Jno 17:17)
- B. We must then, see the value of truth. Truth or the word of God, brings hope. (Psm 119:49) Great peace comes to the lovers of God's word. (Psm 119:165) It can prevent sin. (Psm 119:11) It nourishes. (Lk 4:4, I

Tim 4:16) Truth frees us and sanctifies us. (Jno 8:32, 17:17) Truth purifies our obedient souls. (I Pet 1:22)

C. How can we obtain truth?

1. We must want to know it. We can know it. "Ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. God would have all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth." (Jno 8:32, I Tim 2:4)
2. We must also pay a price to obtain or know the truth. The blessed man is the man who meditates on God's law day and night. (Psm 1:2) If we abide in the word of God, then are we truly his disciples. (Jno 8:31) We must then eat, drink, and sleep with God's word, twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty five days a year!

D. How can we put on the truth?

1. First of all, by applying the word of God to our lives. Like Ezra, we must set our hearts to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it." (Ezra 7:10) The word of Christ should dwell in us richly. (Col 3:16) We should be doers of the word and not hearers only. (Jas 1:22)
2. Secondly, the soldier should also go on the offensive and share the truth with the lost. We can do this when we function as the salt of the earth and the light of the world. (Mt 5:13-16) Christian soldiers are to be lights in the world, holding forth the word of truth. (Phil 2:15-16) Christians are to go into all the world and preach the gospel (speak the truth in love) to every creature. (Mk 16:15, Eph 4:15)

III Some Final Observations About Truth

- A. Nothing other than the truth should be preached.**
(Gal 1:6-9)

- B. Those who preach the truth should be supported financially. (I Cor 9:16)
- C. It is possible to distinguish between truth and error. We are to try the spirits whether they are of God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (Jno 4:1) See also Acts 17:11, I Thess 5:21.
- D. Men must believe and obey the truth. Those who love not the truth, that they might be saved, will receive a strong delusion or a working or error, that they might be damned. All this, because they loved not the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness. (II Thess 2:10-12) Those who will not obey the gospel will be lost. (II Thess 1:7-9)
- E. Men can forsake the truth. If we sin willfully after we receive a knowledge of the truth, we have nothing to look forward to, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment and a fierceness of fire that shall devour the adversaries. (Heb 10:26-27)
- F. Finally, let us not overlook the importance of a life that is sincere, genuine, without guile, unfeigned, honest, and without hypocrisy.

Conclusion:

1. Truth forever on the scaffold, wrong forever on the throne, but that truth will sway the future, and behind the dim unknown, stands God beneath the shadows watching over his own.
2. Truth cannot then be defeated. Truth crushed to earth shall rise again. Why? We shall be judged by truth! (Rom 2:2)
3. Will you gird yourself with truth by obeying the gospel?
4. Christian soldier, do you like the Gentiles of old, hold the truth but in unrighteousness? Then repent or perish! (Rom 1:18. Lk 13:3)

The Breastplate of Righteousness

Introduction:

1. Eph 6:10-14
2. "Having put on" is an aorist, middle, participle.
3. "Breastplate" in the Greek language is the word "thorax." The breastplate was one of the principal parts of the armour. It covered the vital organs, such as the heart and the lungs. It covered the chest and back.
4. The word "righteousness" is used of God in Isa 59:17. In this text and the surrounding context, God is pictured as a soldier, who is putting on his armour to do battle with Israel. God in Isa 59:17 puts on the breastplate of righteousness.
5. The righteousness that the Christian soldier is to put on is not our own righteousness, which is as filthy rags in the sight of God. (Isa 64:6, Titus 3:5) We are to put on the righteousness of faith. (Rom 10:6)
6. In order for us to put on the breastplate of righteousness, we need to understand what righteousness is. There are four basic definitions.

I The Word Righteousness Means To Be Justified

- A. "Justified" means, "freed from the blame or guilt of sin."
- B. Some say it means, "just as if I'd not sinned."
- C. We are justified by being doers of the law. (Rom 2:13)
- D. The grace of God justifies man. (Rom 3:24)
- E. Faith justifies. (Rom 3:28)
- F. Rom 5:8 says that we are justified by Christ's blood.
- G. Jesus was raised for our justification. (Rom 4:25)
- H. Do you have on the breastplate of righteousness?

II Righteousness Means A Right Relationship With God

- A. Enoch walked with God and he was not, for God took him. (Gen 5:24) Here was a man who had a right that he was taken to heaven alive!
- B. Noah was a man who found grace in the eyes of the Lord. He was a righteousness man and perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God. (Gen 6:8-9)
- C. Abraham was a righteous man. He was so righteous that three times he was called the friend of God. (Jas 2:23)
- D. What does a right relationship with God include?
 - 1. It includes loving God with body, mind, soul, and strength. (Mk 12:29-30)
 - 2. It includes being in subjection to God and resisting the Devil. (Jas 4:7)
 - 3. Drawing near to God, cleansing one's hands, and purifying the heart are included in a right relationship. (Jas 4:8)
 - 4. Humbling oneself in the sight of the Lord will be equated with righteousness.
 - 5. Talking to God through the avenue of prayer is essential to a right relationship with God. We should also let God talk to us through the word of God daily. (Lk 18:1, Acts 17:11)

III Righteousness Means Conforming To The Will Of God

- A. When Jesus came to John to be baptized, John hesitated. Jesus said, suffer it to be so for it fulfilleth all righteousness. (Mt 3:15) What did Jesus mean by fulfilling righteousness. David wrote, all thy commandments are righteousness. (Psm 119:172) Jesus was baptized then to conform to the will of the Father. John's baptism was part of the counsel of God. (Lk 7:30) Jesus conformed to God's will to the very end. While praying in Gethsemane, Jesus said, not my will but thine be done. (Lk 22:42)

- B. Jesus in the Lord's prayer taught us to pray, ". . . thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. . ." (Mt 6:9) He also taught, "not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father, who is in heaven." (Mt 7:21) God will hear the prayers of those who worship him and do his will. (Jno 9:31) Those who work righteousness (conform to God's will) are acceptable to God. (Acts 10:34-35)
- C. Paul said that we are to understand what the will of the Lord is. (Eph 5:17) James teaches that we are to consider the will of the Lord in all that we do. (Jas 4:15)

IV. Righteousness Is Moral Uprightness

- A. To be morally upright is to be just.
 - 1. God requires that we be just in our dealings with our fellow-man.
 - 2. We must treat others as we would be treated by our fellow-man. (Mt 7:12)
 - 3. We are to render to all their due, tribute to whom tribute, custom to whom custom, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. (Rom 13:7)
- B. Righteousness also demands moral purity.
 - 1. We must have pure hearts to see God. (Psm 24:4, Mt 5:8)
 - 2. Paul spoke of self-control to the immoral Felix and Drusilla. (Acts 24:25)
 - 3. Moral impurity will keep one out of the kingdom of God. (Gal 5:19-21)
 - 4. We are to live lives that deny ungodliness and worldly lust, while we live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. (Titus 2:12)
 - 5. We are to add to our faith virtue. Virtue means, "moral strength and excellence." (II Pet 1:5)

V We Can Not Over Emphasize The Importance Of Righteousness

- A. God has promised to bless those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. (Mt 5:6, Psm 37:25)
- B. Our righteousness must exceed that of the scribes and Pharisees if we are to enter into the kingdom of heaven. God wants us to do more than others, (Mt 5:20, 47)
- C. We are commanded to seek first God's righteousness. (Mt 6:33)
- D. Righteousness is proof of the new birth. "Put on the new man, that after God, hath been created in righteousness and holiness of truth. (Eph 4:24) John said, "everyone that doeth righteousness is begotten of him." (I Jno 2:29)
- E. We will not be acceptable to God without righteousness. (Acts 10:34-35)
- F. Righteousness is an essential ingredient in the church. (Rom 14:17)
- G. Christians will often have to suffer for righteousness sake. (Mt 5:10-12, I Pet 4:17-18)
- H. It will be better for some never to have known the way of righteousness. (II Pet 4:17-18)
- I. Many hold the truth in unrighteousness. (Rom 1:18) Many know the truth about salvation and have obeyed it. They know the truth about the church, salvation, worship, and Christian living. Yet from Rom 1:18 we learn that truth without righteousness is worthless!

Conclusion:

- 1. From I Cor 6:9-11 we learn that the unrighteous can be made righteous.
- 2. One day Christian soldiers will take off the breastplate of righteousness and put on fine linen, bright and pure,

which are the righteous deeds or acts of the saints. (Rev 19:8)

3. Nothing is settled, unless it is settled right. Nothing is settled right, until it is settled with God.

The Gospel of Peace

Introduction:

1. Eph 6:10-15
2. The Roman army under Julius Caesar used the long march as a successful military tactic. The soldiers wore shoes called "caliguli." They were named after the Roman Emperor Caligula. The word means, "little shoes." They were sandals that were bound around the feet and ankles.
3. The shodding of the feet may well have included the putting on of "greaves." The greaves were metal plates that were used to protect the soldiers from sticks, traps, or natural difficulties along the way of long march.
4. The shoe also had hobnails on the soles to give the soldier a firm grip of the ground which he needed in hand to hand combat. There is no way to overestimate the importance of the shoe. If the feet or legs of the soldiers were injured, the soldier could not stand and resist the enemy. He would not be able to pursue with agility the defeated or retreating enemy. George Washington's army in Valley Forge had bleeding and frostbitten feet. They were shoeless and thus helpless!
5. Note the phrase "having shod." It is an aorist, middle, participle. Once and for all the soldier must shod himself. No one can do it for him. The Greek in the literal rendering reads, "and having underwound the feet."

I We Are To Shod Ourselves With Preparation

- A. The word "preparation" has a two basic meanings.
1. It means, "readiness." This is a readiness of mind that comes from the gospel whose message is peace.
 2. The gospel of peace readies our mind to defend the gospel.
 - a. Paul defended the gospel. (Phil 1:16)
 - b. Christians are to give an answer or defence of the hope that is in them. (I Pet 3:15)
 - c. Christians are to contend for the faith. (Jude 3)
 3. The gospel of peace readies our mind to publish the gospel.
 - a. Isa 52:7 says, "How beautiful on the mountain are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth glad tidings of things, that publisheth salvation."
 - b. Paul referred to this verse when he wrote, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace." (Rom 10:15)
 - c. Jesus told a would be disciple to go abroad and publish the kingdom of God. (Lk 9:59-60)
 - d. Jesus was a preacher of the gospel of peace. (Acts 10:38)
 4. The gospel of peace also readies our minds to walk in the way that the gospel whose end is peace prescribes. We are to walk worthily, we are to walk in newness of life. We are to walk becomingly and by faith. We must walk in the light and as Jesus walked. We must walk in the truth. (Eph 4:1, Rom 6:4, 13:13, II Cor 5:7, I Jno 17, 2:6, III Jno 4)
 5. The word "preparation" means, "a firm foundation or stability." Those who hear and obey the

words of Jesus will build their house on the rock. The gospel which brings peace will bring stability that the soldier of Christ needs. (Mt 7:24–25, II Tim 2:19)

II How Can We Shod Our Feet With The Gospel Of Peace?

- A. We must turn to the source of peace. Jesus is the source or Prince of Peace. (Isa 9:6) His peace is not like that of the world. (Jno 14:27) Christ is the Lord of peace. (II Thess 3:16) See also Col 1:20, Eph 2:14, Rom 5:1, I Thess 5:23, Mk 4:39)
- B. We must obey the gospel of peace.
 - 1. The gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. (I Cor 15:1–4) These are facts. You cannot obey a fact but you can obey a likeness of a fact. When we die to sin and are buried in the watery grave. We arise to walk in newness of life. We will have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine, that will free us from our sins and give us peace. (Rom 6:3–6, 17–18)
- C. We then will enter into the kingdom of peace. Those born of water and the Spirit enter into the kingdom of God. (Jno 3:5) The kingdom of God is righteousness, joy, and peace in the Holy Spirit. (Rom 14:17) See also Acts 9:31.
- D. As people who have turned to the source of peace, obeyed the gospel of peace, and entered into the kingdom of peace, we must then imitate the example of the Apostles. Paul in Phil 4:9 said, “The things which thou has both learned, and received, and heard, and seen in me, do and the God of peace shall be with you.”
- E. The peace of God that passes all understanding comes to those who pray. (Phil 4:6–7)
- F. We can shod ourselves with peace by being peace-

makers. (Mt 5:9, Rom 14:19, Heb 12:14)

- G. The Holy Spirit at work in our lives will help us bear the fruit of the Spirit called peace. (Gal 5:22)
- H. Peace comes to the spiritually minded and to those who do good. (Rom 8:6, Isa 26:14, Rom 2:10)

Conclusion:

My friends the greatest battle in the world today is not between Communism and Democracy. It is between God and the Devil. The soul's eternal destiny is at stake. All responsible people are involved in this struggle, whether they realize it or not. We are all either in the army of God or Satan. Jesus said, "He that is not with me is against me." (Mt 12:30) Why not enlist in the army of God? Get on the winning side. Put on the whole armour of God so that you may be able to escape the wiles of the Devil. Child of God, what about you? Have you girded your loins with truth? Do you have on the breastplate of righteousness? Are your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace? If you do not have on the whole armour of God, then the fiery darts of the evil one will slay your soul.

The Shield of Faith

Introduction:

1. We must gird our loins with truth, put on the breastplate of righteousness, and shod our feet with the gospel of peace. But this is not enough.
2. Eph 6:10-16
3. We must then have the shield of faith to ward off the fiery darts of Satan. The other parts of the gospel armour cannot do this.

4. The story of Paris who abducted Helen of Troy also contains the story of Achilles a military hero. His mother dipped him in the river Styx and he became invulnerable except for his heel by which she held him. During the Trojan war that was fought over Helen, Paris shot an arrow that was covered with poison which stuck in Achille's heel. It killed him.
5. Do you know how King Ahab died? He was at war with the Assyrians. He wore his armour next to his body. He wore clothes of a peasant on the outside to disguise himself. An arrow was shot that entered between the joints of his armour. It pierced his heart. His blood ran out of his chariot for the dogs to lick up and he died.
6. These two stories show that armour alone is not sufficient.
7. Christians must have the shield of faith.

I An Analysis Of The Text

- A. "Above all" has been translated, "withal, in addition to, or over all."
- B. The word "Taking" is aorist, active, imperative. Thus, each individual soldier is to actively obey the command to take the shield of faith. How is this done? "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ." (Rom 10:17)
- C. The "shield" was oblong in shape. It was two and a half by four feet. It was often made of wood that was covered by leather. Many shields were made of metal. They were carried on the left arm. The word "shield" literally means, "door."
- D. "Faith" means, "to rely, surrender, yield, trust, or believe." Heb 11:1 tells us that faith gives a foundation to our hope. Faith is the conviction that brings exist, that cannot be perceived with the senses according to this verse.
- E. Note the phrase "shall be able." It is a positive declaration.

- ration. There are no maybes about it.
- F. "Quench" means, "to extinguish." This verb is an aorist, active, infinitive.
 - G. "Fiery darts" were missiles, such as javelins, arrows, or spears, that were on fire or covered with poison that burned like fire in the body of the enemy.
 - H. "The wicked" should be translated, "the wicked one." This is a reference to Satan. (Jno 17:15, II Thess 3:3)

II Faith Shields The Head From The Dart Of Doubt

- A. Faith then protects the intellectual processes that reasonable people use to weigh the evidence for the crucial questions of life.
- B. Does God exist? Is the Bible inspired? Is Christ divine? Is there life after death? Does the church really matter?
- C. These are questions that cannot be answered by the intellect alone. Surely we must use our heads in religion. But these questions and others like them will ultimately be answered by faith. We walk by faith and not by sight. (II Cor 5:7) "Without faith it is impossible to be pleasing unto him . . ." (Heb 11:6)
- D. The Bible begins in Gen 1:1 by saying, "In the beginning God. . ." The Bible does not try to prove the existence of God. It assumes that by faith men know that God is. The Bible in passages like II Tim 3:16-17 and II Pet 1:20-21 claims inspiration. But ultimately men accept the inspiration of the Bible by faith that comes from observing the divine influence of its contents in the lives of men. The deity of Jesus cannot really be proved intellectually alone. Life after death cannot be proven to the five senses. The element of faith must enter into the picture. The importance of the church and its place in our lives can be seen not only in Bible passages like Mt 16:18, Acts 2:

47, Eph 5:25, I Cor 15:24, but it can be perceived as it functions in the world like no other institution can.

III Faith Shields The Heart From The Dart Of Worldiness

A. I Jno 2:15–17

1. Satan inflames the lustful passions of the flesh and eyes.
2. He also hurls the poisonous dart of pride our way.

B. Satan has always worked in these three ways. These three darts are his deadliest.

1. In Gen 3:6 Eve sees that the forbidden fruit was good for food, a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise. Here we see Satan appealing to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life.
2. In Luke chapter four we see the Devil appealing to the same basic desires in an effort to tempt Jesus Christ the Son of God. (v, 3, 5, 9)

C. We need protection from the world. Demas forsook Paul and thus the cause of Christ for the world. (II Tim 4:10) Those who are the friends of the world are the enemies of God. (Jas 4:4)

IV Faith Can Shield The Hand That Holds The Sword Of The Spirit

A. Eph 6:17 tells us that the sword of the Spirit is the word of God.

B. In Heb 4:12 Paul said, “The word of God is living and active and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.”

V The Shield Of Faith Will Bring Us Victory

A. The Bible is a book of realism. It presents its characters

as they really are. Human nature is described as it truly is.

- B. Note the fact that history, the story of humanity, is moving towards victory. The Christian religion was originally born in persecution, martyrdom, suffering, imprisonment, bloodshed, and death. This was true in the life and death of Jesus. The Apostles were all killed in a violent manner. John was the only exception. The early Christians were persecuted (Acts 8:4) and even today in many parts of the world persecution is still present.
- C. We must observe further that the note of victory is ever present in the Bible. The Book of Books tells us that there is a greater day coming. There will be a day on the morrow. There is something to rejoice and be glad about! Christians are more than conquerors. (Rom 8:37–39) We have victory over sin and death. (I Cor 15:57) Faith gives us victory over the world. (I Jno 5:4) The kingdoms of the world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ. (Rev 11:15) Christians have overcome Satan because of the blood of the Lamb, the word of their testimony, and because they loved not their lives even unto death. (Rev 12:11) Let us say with John, “. . . hallelujah, the Lord God the almighty reigneth.” (Rev 19:6)

Conclusion:

1. Won't you take up the shield of faith? If you are not a Christian you can take it up by hearing and obeying the words of the Bible. (Rom 10:17, Mt 7:24–25, Acts 2:28) It is a must if you are to escape the fiery darts of the Devil.
2. Child of God, soldier of God, what about you? Do you have the shield of faith in addition to truth, righteousness, and peace? The battle will be lost without faith. Don't let the fiery darts of the Devil slay your soul .

The Helmet of Salvation

Introduction:

1. Eph 6:10–17
2. “Take” is in the imperative mood. Some have rendered it, “receive or accept.” I think it emphasizes the grace of Salvation is not something that we earn by works. (Eph 2:8–9, Titus 2:11, 3:5)
3. The “Helmet” of the Roman soldier had reinforcing bars that crossed one another at the crown. It had a hinged cheek guard and a plume of feathers on the top.
4. The Christian’s helmet is not a metal one to be worn in carnal warfare. In Isaiah 59:17 God is pictured as a soldier putting on his armour. Here he puts on the helmet of salvation. Paul in I Thess 5:8 speaks of “a helmet the hope of salvation.”
5. Thus, we must take up the helmet of the hope of salvation. The hope of salvation can preserve us in times of conflict. It motivates God’s soldiers to fight to the end and to fight to win.
6. Let us now examine the matter of salvation closely.

I The Two Fold Nature Of Salvation

A. God’s side

1. Grace of God – Titus 2:11
2. Gospel of Christ – Rom 1:16
3. Name of Christ – Acts 4:12
4. Longsuffering of God – II Pet 3:15
5. The foolishness of preaching – I Cor 1:21
6. The church-kingdom – Acts 2:41, 47, 20:28, Eph 5:25, I Cor 15:24
7. Jesus himself was God’s greatest contribution. (Mt 1:21, Lk 19:10, Jno 4:42)

B. Man’s side

1. Man must want to know what to do – Acts 2:37,

9:6, 16:30

2. Man must save himself — Acts 2:40. How? (See Acts 2:38, 42)
3. Man must work out his own salvation — Phil 2:12
4. Man must obey the author of his salvation — Heb 5:8–9
5. Man must obey truth — I Pet 1:22

II What Is Salvation?

- A. Salvation is “deliverance.” The Deliverer came out of Zion. (Rom 11:26) He has delivered us from this present evil world. (Gal 1:4) He has translated us out of darkness. (Col 1:13) We have been delivered out of darkness into his marvellous light. (I Pet 2:9)
- B. Salvation also means, “to preserve.” Jesus has promised to be with us (preserve) until the end of the world. (Mt 28:20) Christ nourishes and cherishes the church. (Eph 5:29) That’s preservation. Christ will in nowise fail or forsake us. Thus, with good courage we can say, the Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (Heb 13:5–6) Christians are guarded by the power of God. (I Pet 1:5) Our hearts are guarded or preserved by the peace of God that passeth all understanding. (Phil 4:6–7)
- C. Salvation is that which must be understood in three tenses.
 1. We as Christians have been saved from our past sins. Paul wrote, “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature, old things are passed away, and behold all things are become new.” (II Cor 5:17)
 2. As Christians we are presently being saved. I Cor 1:18 says, “The word of the cross is to them that perish foolishness, but unto us who are saved, it is the power of God.” The original language says, “But unto us who are being saved.” We are in the

- process of being saved.
3. Finally, we shall be saved eternally. Jesus is the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him. (Heb 5:8–9)

III How Do We Take The Helmet Of Salvation?

- A. Consider the principles of the great commission.
 1. We must be taught and baptized. (Mt 28:19)
 2. We must believe and be baptized. (Mk 16:16)
 3. We must repent. (Lk 24:47)
- B. The Bible examples of conversion in the book of Acts illustrate the principles of conversion in the great commission.
 1. Those on Pentecost heard the gospel and believed it. They obeyed the Apostolic commands to repent and be baptized. (Acts 2:38, 41, 47)
 2. The Samaritans believed the gospel and were baptized. (Acts 8:12)
 3. The Ethiopian eunuch heard Christ preached. He believed the message and after making the good confession, was baptized. (Acts 8:35–39)
 4. The Philippian jailer heard and believed the gospel. A penitent heart caused him to wash the stripes of Paul and Silas. He and his family were baptized immediately. (Acts 16:30–34)
 5. The Corinthians heard, believed, and were baptized. (Acts 18:8)

Conclusion:

Won't you take up the helmet of salvation? We all need the hope of salvation to motivate us to be faithful soldiers in the army of God. Good reader we must not see men as black or white, rich or poor, Republican or Democrat, but we must see them as SAVED OR LOST! Surely then with all the urgency that we can muster we must tell

them that NOW IS THE DAY OF SALVATION! (II Cor 6:2) Some are lost in youth because they are too young. In manhood they are too busy. In maturity they are too worried. In old age they are too sick. When they are dead, it will be too late! Men must not let excuses keep them from putting on the helmet of salvation.

The Sword of The Spirit

Introduction:

1. To be a Christian is to be a warrior.
2. We should not expect a life of ease (II Tim 2:3—4)
3. We cannot be friends with the world. (Jas 4:4)
4. To the Christian soldier the world is a battlefield.
5. The Christian's occupation is war! We must not only stand and withstand, we must be on the offensive. It is not enough not to be conquered, we must conquer. We conquer by fighting. We cannot win by talking, debating, compromising, or by trying to be neutral. No battle is won by accident. Battles are won with blood, sweat, and tears.
6. Eph 6:10—17
7. Take the sword! That is the message of the Holy Spirit, Paul, and Jesus. Take the sword. The message is loud and clear. We cannot obey this command, unless, with sharp, clear, and decisive firmness, we take the sword!
8. The sword is the only offensive weapon in Paul's gospel armour. The sword hung from the left side of the soldier's belt.
9. The Christian's sword, however, is the word of God. Jesus is pictured with a two-edged sword with which, he will smite the nations. (Rev 1:16, 2:12, 19:15) Paul said in Heb 4:12, "The word of God is living and active and

sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and the intents of the heart."

I The Holy Spirit Has A Sword

- A. Though the Holy Spirit is quiet as the dew, tender as anointing oil, and is as gentle and peaceful as a dove, he carries a deadly weapon.
- B. Do you remember the time before your conversion? Do you remember how the sword of the spirit of God would slash you Sunday after Sunday? Can you remember how the Spirit's sword pursued you day in and day out? Finally, that sword laid bare your soul and exposed the secrets of your heart.
- C. On Pentecost Peter took the sword and began slashing and gashing the hearts of his audience. They were "pricked in their hearts." (Acts 2:37) Stephen cut open the hearts of his audience. (Acts 7:54) The sword of the Spirit so angered them, that they became a mob of animals and stoned him to death.
- D. When you obey the gospel, one sin after another was slain. One by one when you repented, your sins laid their heads on the chopping block and the Holy Spirit took his sword and cut their heads off! Christians are those who have died to sin. (Rom 6:2. 6)
- E. The amazing thing about the sword of the Spirit is that the same sword that kills the old man gives life. (Jno 6:63, Lk 4:4, Heb 4:12)
- F. Let us not forget that the Holy Spirit is at war with all evil. He will spare none. As long as time remains, the Spirit of God will cut, slash, and stab to death all spiritual enemies through the preaching of the gospel. He will never rest until the task is complete. (I Cor 15:25)

The weapons of the Holy Spirit are not carnal. Jesus

II The Holy Spirit Has No Sword But The Word

- A. The weapons of the Holy Spirit is not carnal. Jesus said, that if his kingdom were of this world, then his servants would fight. (Jno 18:36) The weapons of our warfare are not carnal. (II Cor 10:4)
- B. The sword of the Spirit will not give you a mere flesh wound. It will pierce much deeper than that. It will reach the soul and spirit. (Heb 4:12) It will wound the conscience and leave it bleeding and in agony. No physician on earth can heal its gaping wound.
- C. Let us learn once and for all that the Holy Spirit rides in the chariot of scripture and not in the ox cart of human reason! In other words the Holy Spirit convicts, converts and consoles through the word of God only!
 - 1. Jno 16:8, Acts 2:36–37
 - 2. II Tim 3:16–17, II Pet 1:20–21, I Cor 2:13
 - 3. Jas 1:18, 21, I Pet 1:23

III The Word Is Not Only The Spirit's Sword, It Is Our Sword!

- A. The Christian soldier needs a sword! Our warfare is not child's play. Our enemies are real. We must either slay the foe or he will slay us! We must take the Sword to ward off temptation and to guard ourselves against sin.
- B. We need the sword to attack! The best defense is a good offense.
- C. These verses show us that the church is to be on the attack.
 - 1. Mt 28:19, Mk 16:15, Lk 24:47, Mk 16:20
 - 2. Acts 1:8, 8:4, 17:6, 28:22, Col 1:23
- D. If we are going to get to heaven, we are going to have to fight our way there! We cannot dream our way to that upper and better kingdom. There will be none to

ride in a chariot of ease while others have fought and died and sailed across bloody seas.

- E. We need the sword of the Spirit, the word of God. We cannot face Satan with human reason, philosophy, or theology. These are wooden swords, that the Devil would instantly break into a million pieces. The folly of meeting the arch-enemy of mankind with these and similar weapons can be seen in these verses.

1. Jer 10:23, Prov 14:12, Prov 3:5

2. Isa 55:8-9

- F. Let us stress again that the sword of the Spirit is our sword.

1. We are to "take" the sword. This word means, "receive." It is a verb in the imperative or command mood.

2. It is the sword "of" the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the source or provider of the sword.

3. Note also the fact that the word "take" is a present tense verb. This means that we are to continuously take the sword of the Spirit. Some soldiers in the armies of men may put their swords up. There has been though, no new regulation from heaven telling the soldiers of God to put their sword in the sheath. Yet, some are putting their swords away and are attempting to use other weapons.

4. Many are trying to convert the lost with entertainment, social programs, and the motivational techniques that are being used today.

- G. Yet, nothing will ever take the place of the sword of the Spirit which is the word of God! (Acts 6:7)
Take the sword!

Conclusion:

It may be that you would like to enlist in the army of

God. Maybe you desire to put on the whole armour of God. But you have Satan and sin to overcome. Well then, my advice is to take the sword of the Spirit. Take the sword and put these obstacles to flight and to death. (Psm 119:11, Lk 4:4) Maybe as a Christian your life is not what it ought to be. Perhaps you are discouraged and depressed. Take the sword. Drive these hindering attitudes away. The sword of the Spirit which is the word of God is powerful! Heb 4:12 says the word is "active." This word means, "powerful, full of energy to bring about genuine change." See also I Cor 1:18, Rom 1:16, Isa 55:11.

Prayer And Supplication

Introduction:

1. Eph 6:10–20
2. From this text we learn that it takes more than armour and weapons to make a soldier. Without courage a man in armour is not a soldier.
3. Prayer is communication with the great commander, the captain of our salvation, Jesus.
4. The prayer and supplication of Eph 6:18–20 refer to general and specific petitions offered to God. We need prayer as Christian soldiers to provide us with the motivation needed to use the armour and the weapons.
5. Let us now note the characteristics of the soldier's prayer.

I Prayer Must Be Constant

- A. Soldiers must pray at all seasons. (v 18)
- B. Paul was a man of all seasons when it came to prayer
 1. Rom 1:9, Col 1:9
 2. I Thess 1:7
- C. Once two people were in trouble. One said to the other, if you know how to pray, pray. Is it that bad?

came the reply. To these people, prayer was something that you used only in emergencies. Not so. It must be used when times are good, as well.

II Prayer Must Be In The Spirit

- A. What did Paul mean by prayer and supplication in the Spirit in verse 18?
- B. Some think that the human spirit is referred to here instead of the Holy Spirit. They say that we are to worship God in spirit and in truth. (Jno 4:24) That is of course true. Paul said that we are to pray with the spirit and with the understanding. (I Cor 14:15) I personally do not agree with this view, though I do believe that we must use our own spirits to pray.
- C. I believe Paul is referring to Rom 8:26 which says, "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not how to pray as we ought: but the Spirit himself maketh intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered." I don't fully understand this verse, but I do believe that it teaches that in some way the Holy Spirit aids our prayer life.

III The Soldier's Prayer Life Is To Be Intense

- A. Note the fact that in verse 18 Christian soldiers are to "watch and persevere."
- B. The word "watch" means, "to be on guard, to be vigilant or ready."
 - 1. Jesus said "watch and pray." (Mt 26:41)
 - 2. We are to be on guard or on alert against the Devil. (I Pet 5:8)
- C. The word "perseverance" means, "to be steadfast or persistent."
 - 1. These verses teach persistence in prayer. Lk 18:1, Acts 2:41
 - 2. Col 4:2, I Thess 5:17, Rom 12:12

IV The Soldier's Prayers Are To Be Unselfish

- A. According to verse 18 prayers are to be offered for "all the saints."
- B. Notice that Paul did not pray for release from prison or ask for comfort in the midst of his hardships. He was praying for others. Early Christians did this. (Acts 12:5)
- C. He prayed that he might use his difficulties for the glory of God and the good of his fellow man.
 - 1. He prayed that he might be able to speak boldly about the mystery of the gospel. Other Christians prayed for boldness in times of persecution. (Acts 4:29)
 - 2. Paul was an ambassador for Christ in chains. As an ambassador, he said that he "ought" to speak boldly. (V 20) All Paul was concerned about was carrying out the will of God. He felt that he owed this to God. Paul was a debtor. (Rom 1:14)
- D. We too are ambassadors for Christ. (II Cor 5:20) We should also be praying that we will carry out our God given obligations with all boldness. Do we pray such prayers? Or do we pray for self? James said in James 4:2, "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it on your lusts."

Conclusion:

Summing it all up we can say that the Christian soldier is to offer all kinds of prayers, at all seasons, with all perseverance, for all the saints.