

Why We Believe What We Believe

Volume 2

by

J.C. Choate

Published by
J.C. Choate Publications
Winona/Singapore/New Delhi/Capetown

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**First Printing in India, 2,000 Copies
Second Printing in Indonesia, 2,000 Copies
Third Printing in U.S.A., 10,000 copies
Cover Design, Betty Burton Choate
Typesetting, Eulene Ramsey
Layout and Design, Barbara Ann Oliver**

**To Order:
J.C. Choate Publications
PO Box 72
Winona, MS 38967
Phone: 601-283-1192
Fax: 601-283-1191**

Dedication

**To Roddie and Mary K. Draper,
fourth generation Christians of Mason, Texas,
for their many years of love and service to the Lord,
and for the encouragement and support they have given
to Betty and me in our efforts to spread
the cause of Christ.**

Introduction

In this second volume of radio sermons, originally presented over Radio Sri Lanka and directed to the people of India, I have continued the theme of **Why We Believe What We Believe**. Speaking both to believers and unbelievers, my main purpose was to lay out some of our beliefs and then show that these things are clearly taught in the Bible, which is why we believe them. The religious world believes all kinds of doctrines but the fact which distinguishes them from us is that many of their teachings are not found in God's word.

These sermons were originally recorded and printed in New Delhi in 1987. They have been aired again and again in India and in other countries throughout the world. They have also been printed in Jakarta, Indonesia, before being printed here in the U.S.A. World Bible School teachers will now use them, sending copies to their students in numerous countries around the globe.

If you would like to use these sermons on your local radio program, or if you have a magazine and would like to print one or more of the lessons, feel free to do so. My only desire is to see the truth go forth to a lost and dying world.

Again, I am grateful to my wife, Betty, Sis. Eulene Ramsey, and Sis. Barbara Oliver for helping to prepare these sermons for printing.

J.C. Choate
Winona, MS
June 26, 1996



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Lesson 1

Why There is Power in the Blood of Christ

Blood may not be a pleasant thought for some people. It may suggest a cut, a wound, or even death. Some in the religious world have tried to eliminate that word from their vocabulary.

In Old Testament times God required animal sacrifices, or blood offerings, to atone for man's sin. Blood was very important because it represented life, since life was in the blood. For this reason, the eating of blood was forbidden. We read, *"For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul. Therefore I said unto the children of Israel, No soul of you shall eat blood, neither shall any stranger that sojourneth among you eat blood"* (Leviticus 17:11,12).

Even the Old Covenant was dedicated with blood. The Hebrew writer said, *"For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and*

scarlet wool, and hysop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people, Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission" (Hebrews 9:19-22). The Hebrew writer also says that the High Priest went into the Most Holy Place once a year with blood "*which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people.*" (Hebrews 9:7). Then the Hebrew writer concludes, "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*" (Hebrews 10:4).

Although the animals offered were to be the best of the flock, and without spot or blemish, still they were but animals. A perfect sacrifice was therefore needed. The blood of animals only typified the blood of that perfect sacrifice. But since animals could not take away sin, and since man himself was a sinner and could not save himself or others, then who could serve as that perfect sacrifice? There was but one and that was Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Christ lived without sin. Peter said that he did no sin (1 Peter 2:22). Because he lived without sin, keeping the law perfectly, and not yielding to temptation, then he was able to die upon the cross for the sins of the world.

We sing some songs that emphasize the blood of Christ. We sing one called, "There Is Power In The Blood." Another one says, "What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." How true those

words are.

There are many things that cannot save. As already pointed out, the blood of animals could not save us. Neither could the law save. It only brought people to Christ. Paul said, *"But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster"* (Galatians 3:22-25). Not only can we not be saved by the works of the law, but we cannot be saved by our own good works. Paul also wrote concerning this, *"For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life"* (Titus 3:3-7).

Peter tells us that we have not been redeemed or saved by such things as silver and gold. Hear him, *"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb with-*

out blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18,19). Man may buy or bribe his way through this life, but he cannot buy salvation and neither can he bribe the Lord to save him. We would therefore be wise not to put our trust in material things. Finally, the religions of men and obeying the doctrines and commandments of men will not take one to heaven. Christ said, *"But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"* (Matthew 15:9). John said that if we bid false teachers God's speed, then we are partakers of their evil deeds (2 John 11). Again, Paul wrote that those who cause divisions serve not our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 16:17,18).

Being sinners, there is just one way for us to be saved and that is through the sacrifice of Christ and the shedding of his blood. There are many statements in the scriptures that emphasize the importance of Christ's blood. Paul said that we are reconciled to God, or we are able to become the friends of God, through the blood of Christ. He says, *"For it pleased the Father that in him should all fullness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven"* (Colossians 1:19,20). Paul wrote to the Ephesian Christians that they were at one time far away from God but that they had been brought to God by the blood of Christ. He shows that both Jews and Gentiles were now one in Christ and that it was through his death that the middle wall of partition was broken down; that is, the Old Law

was removed that separated them (Ephesians 2:13-17).

Speaking of Christ and his blood, Paul wrote the Christians at Ephesus, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace"* (Ephesians 1:7). To the Colossian Christians, he said, *"In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins"* (Colossians 1:14). Christ said, in instituting the Lord's Supper, *"For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins"* (Matthew 26:28). Those who are saved through the blood of Christ are added to the Lord's church (Acts 2:47), and Paul said to the elders of the church at Ephesus, *"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood"* (Acts 20:28). We are told in Ephesians 5:25 that Christ died for the body or the church, that is, he shed his blood for it or bought it with his blood. Another way of putting it, he paid the price that was necessary for the church to exist. Then as Christians, we are cleansed by the blood of Christ. John wrote, *"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin"* (1 John 1:7). And finally, as the Lord's people we assemble each first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ (Acts 20:7). Paul explained to the Christians at Corinth that Christ said they should partake of the bread in

remembrance of his body and *"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come"* (1 Corinthians 11:23-29).

More could be said about the blood of Christ, why it was shed, and the power that is within it, but let us sum up what we have already read from the scriptures:

1. Christ was the perfect sacrifice, dying on the cross, shedding his blood for the sins of man.
2. With the shedding of the blood of Christ, the old law was removed and the New Testament was sealed with his blood.
3. We are saved by the blood of Christ. We reach that blood through obedience. In other words, Christ stated that in order for man to be saved he should believe in him, repent of his sins, confess him as the Son of God, and be baptized (buried in water) to be saved or to have the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). When one, through obedience to the Lord, comes into contact with the blood of Christ through the waters of baptism, one receives the benefit of the Lord's death. That is, the washing away of sin by the blood of Christ. We may read this in Romans 6. Also, when Saul was told to arise and be baptized, after he had become a believer, had repented of his sins, and had acknowledged the Lord, then he was assured that his sins would be washed away. We read these exact words, *"And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy*

sins, calling on the name of the Lord" (Acts 22:16). Also, Christ said his blood was shed that man might have the remission of his sins (Matthew 26:28; Ephesians 1:7). Then in Acts 2:38 Peter told a large number of people who had become believers in Christ that they could have remission of their sins if they would now repent and be baptized in the name of Christ. They did so and the Lord saved them and added them to his church (Acts 2:47). So if one wants to be saved he must believe, repent, confess Christ, and be baptized, and in so doing he comes into contact with the blood of Christ and his sins are forgiven.

4. The Lord's church was purchased with the blood of Christ. Therefore, it is blood-bought and very important. We must be members of it to belong to the Lord.

5. The blood of Christ continues to cleanse the Christian as he walks in the light of Christ or according to his will; that is, in being faithful to him.

6. As the Lord's people we are to partake of the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, partaking of the bread in remembrance of the body of Christ and partaking of the cup, or fruit of the vine, in remembrance of the blood of Christ. This helps us to remember the sacrifice Christ made that we might be saved.

My friends, Christ died for you. He shed his blood that you might have the forgiveness of your sins. Do you believe in him? Have you obeyed him? If you have not, we want to encourage you to do so. What a shame it would be to fail to accept the salvation the Lord has made possible for you.



Lesson 2

Why The Foundation Is So Important

As we know, in this physical world, when it comes to building a house, an apartment building, or anything that is expected to stand very long, it is necessary to construct it on a proper foundation. Even if we are going to be successful at work, or in our professions, we are aware of the fact that it is necessary to adequately prepare by getting a sufficient amount of education or training. When we overlook the importance of this foundation, or that of preparing for the future, we are in for some bad times.

Our Lord illustrated the need for a good spiritual foundation by referring to the two builders, one who built upon a rock, and the other who built upon the sand. Jesus said, *"Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto*

a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house: and it fell: and great was the fall of it" (Matthew 7:24-27).

In the foregoing illustration Jesus shows, by contrasting these two earthly builders, who is the wise man and who is the foolish man. He shows that a wise spiritual builder is the one who hears the sayings of Christ and does them. He is a wise builder because in obeying the Lord he is building upon Christ. He digs down past the customs and traditions, the worldly things, and even the religious teachings of man, until he comes to Christ, and his teachings, and his way, and there he builds. As a result, he is on a solid foundation. He has the truth. He has Christ. He is a Christian. He is a member of the Lord's church. Nothing can move him. He has something to hold on to. He has the hope of eternal life.

The other man that Jesus talks about is a foolish builder. He also hears the sayings of Christ but he fails to obey them. Perhaps he does not believe. Maybe he thinks there is plenty of time. He might even reason that he is good enough. Or maybe he goes off after the teachings of men. Whatever the problem, the fact remains that he fails to obey the Lord, and therefore, that which he finally builds on will not hold him up. He is lost and will be eternally lost.

In the long ago, the prophet Isaiah pointed to the day in which the Lord would lay a foundation in Zion. That foundation would be Christ and it would be laid in Jerusalem. But let us read the prophecy. Isaiah said,

"Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation: he that believeth shall not make haste" (Isaiah 28:16). Please notice the description of this foundation. It would be a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, and a sure foundation. We'll notice these descriptive terms later in the New Testament, all of which refer to Jesus Christ. But the Psalmist David also pointed to this foundation when he said in Psalm 118:22,23, *"The stone which the builders refused is become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes."* We will also see in the New Testament that this was fulfilled in Christ.

Turning to the days of Jesus we read, *"Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: that is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?"* (Matthew 21:42). In Luke 20:17,18, in speaking to the chief priests and the scribes, Jesus said, *"What is this then that is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner? Whosoever shall fall upon that stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder."* A literal stone or rock could be used for a foundation, but also if one stumbled on it or fell on it he could be broken or killed. Likewise, if it fell on someone it could destroy that person. In other words, when properly used it can be a blessing but when overlooked or misused it can be a destructive force. The

same is true with the spiritual rock, Christ.

Going over to the book of Acts, we have Peter speaking to the high priests, rulers, and scribes about a man who had been healed, and he said, *"Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by him doth this man stand here before you whole. This is the stone which was set at naught of you builders, which is become the head of the corner. Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved"* (Acts 4:10-12). Paul said concerning Israel, or the Jews, *"But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore? Because they sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone; As it is written, behold, I lay in Sion, a stumbling stone and rock of offense: and whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed"* (Romans 9:31-33). Here, of course, Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:16.

But who is the rock or foundation? Paul says, *"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ"* (1 Corinthians 3:11). In 1 Corinthians 10:3,4, Paul said concerning the Israelites in the days of Moses, *"And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of the spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ."*

Speaking to the Christians at Ephesus, Paul wrote,

"Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; In whom all the building fitly formed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit" (Ephesians 2:19-22). Here the Apostle was talking about these Christians as being the household of God or the family of God, which was the church, and how that it was built on the teachings of the Apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. Not only is the general foundation important, but the corner stone is even more important, or the most important part of the foundation, and he said that Christ was that part of the foundation. Without that foundation, a house, earthly or spiritual, could not stand. Again, Paul said, *"But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Timothy 3:15). With Christ being the foundation, the chief cornerstone, and with the house of God or the church being built thereon, then the church serves as the pillar and ground of the truth. That is, the church being built on a solid foundation is therefore in position to hold up the truth or to proclaim it to a lost world.

The Apostle Peter said to the Christians of his day, *"Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as new-*

born babes desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed" (1 Peter 2:1-8).

Again, you can see that the writer is showing how Christ was the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah 28:16 in that he became the chief corner stone. Note that the very one that the Jews had rejected and stumbled over had become not only the foundation but the chief corner stone, the most important part of the foundation. Peter also shows how that in accepting Christ he can be a blessing, but to those who reject him, they will be lost.

In Matthew 16:13-19 Christ spoke to the Apostles about what the world thought of him. The Apostles explained that some thought he was one prophet and others thought he was another prophet. But that was not what Christ was looking for. He could not build his

church upon that kind of faith in him. Then he turned to the Apostles and asked them what they thought of him. They explained that they believed he was the Son of God. As a result the Lord then responded by saying he was going to build his church upon that confession, that is, that they believed he was the Son of God. In Acts 2 the Apostles preached the gospel of Christ and some three thousand souls obeyed the Lord and on saving them he added them to his church. But what did he build the church on? The church was built upon Christ; that is, on the fact that he was the Son of God. Not only so, but the church continues to rest upon that fact even up to our day. If it could have been proven in years gone by that Christ was not the Son of God then the church would have fallen or gone out of existence long ago. But the church still exists and the only possible way it can stand is based on the fact that Christ is the Son of God, that he is the rock, the chief corner stone. As Paul said, he is the sure foundation.

My friends, on what are you building? You can build on Christ if you will hear his sayings and do them. If you will believe in Christ, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized for the remission of your sins, the Lord will save you and add you to his church, the church that is built on Christ (Acts 2). If you are a wise person you will do this. We pray you will.



Lesson 3

Why We Preach The New Birth

What is the new birth? That is a good question. As a matter of fact, that question has been asked many times and many different answers have been given to it. Still, most people are left not knowing what it is.

Our denominational friends would define the new birth as being a miraculous change that takes place in a person's life when that individual accepts Christ as his personal saviour. But surely there is more to it than that, and there is.

When we turn to John 3 we hear Christ talking about the New Birth, or that one must be born again. Keep in mind that this was taught before the death of Christ and before it was even binding as law. It was taught, however, in anticipation of what would be required once the law of Christ, or Christianity, had come into force. It was also taught before the kingdom, or church, was established, but the Lord was saying that once the kingdom, or church, was established, it would be necessary for one to be born again in order to enter it.

But let us now read about the new birth. The record says, *"There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews: The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him. Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born again when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born? Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit. Nicodemus answered and said unto him, How can these things be? Jesus answered and said unto him, Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness. If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall ye believe, if I tell you of heavenly things? And no man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven"* (John 3:1-13).

From the foregoing, please notice the setting. A

man by the name of Nicodemus came to Jesus by night. Some have thought he came at this time so that he might keep his visit secret, since he was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. The Pharisees were a religious sect of the Jews. They believed in the resurrection and that angels existed. Being a ruler of the Jews, that meant he was an elder and one who had position and respect. Anyway, on coming to Jesus, he indicates that he was a believer in him, inasmuch as he spoke of him as a Rabbi, or teacher, and he confesses that it was evident that God had sent him, since he was able to perform miracles. It was in a setting like this that Jesus responded by explaining to him that it was necessary for one to be born again if he were to see the kingdom of God. But this puzzled Nicodemus since he didn't understand what Christ was saying. Then he wanted to know how a person could be born again when he was old. He continued by asking if that meant that a man would have to enter the second time into his mother's womb and be born. Of course he could not do that, and neither was Jesus teaching such. Christ was talking about a spiritual birth, but Nicodemus was thinking about a physical birth, since that was the only birth he knew anything about.

Continuing, Jesus came right back and explained the new birth in greater detail. He said in so many words that he was telling him it was necessary for one to be born of water and of the Spirit to enter the kingdom of God, and besides this, there was no other way to enter it.

But let us examine these words a little more. First, notice that he said it was necessary to be born of water.

To be born means to come forth. A birth suggests new life. But what about the water here? It has nothing to do with physical birth, since Jesus explained to Nicodemus that this birth was different to that of entering a second time into his mother's womb to be born again. Another rule we should keep in mind when we think about this word 'water' is that in all other places where it is used, if it is spiritual water that is under consideration, it is said to be living water or something that would indicate that it is not literal water. On the other hand, in the various verses where only the word water appears, then it means literal or actual water. But what about the way it is used here? Since only the word water appears, we must conclude that he is talking about real water. Now to the next question: What command do we read of in the scripture that is tied in with water? If you are very familiar with the Lord's word, you know that there is only one command, or act, that involves water, and that is baptism. In Acts 8:26-39 we read of a man from Ethiopia being taught of Christ and then he was taken down into the water and baptized. Furthermore, Christ said one must be born of water. How can one be born of water? Well, if water here has reference to baptism, we should remember that baptism in water is a burial (Colossians 2:12), and if there is a burial in water, then it means that when one comes up out of that water there is a coming forth, or a birth experience, and the Apostle Paul explains that this is what happens in baptism (Romans 6:3,4).

As we continue our thinking on being born of water,

or being baptized, we are reminded that when one is born again, he comes forth, or experiences new life. Again, this fits in with baptism, since the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 6:3 and Galatians 3:26,27 that baptism puts one into Christ, and those who are in Christ are new creatures. Paul said, *"Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new"* (2 Corinthians 5:17). Speaking to Christians, Peter said, *"As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby"* (1 Peter 2:3).

Second, Christ said that one must be born of the Spirit. Who is the Spirit here? Paul said in Ephesians 4:4 that there is one Spirit. And what Spirit would that be? The Holy Spirit or Holy Ghost, of course (John 14:26; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:38; 1 Thessalonians 4:8). But what was the work of the Holy Spirit? For one thing, he directed the Apostles and others to write down the Lord's word. Before that, he guided holy men of old to write the word of God (2 Peter 1:21). Paul wrote that all scripture is given by the inspiration of God (2 Timothy 3:16,17). But what is revealed in the word of the Spirit, or the Lord's word? The truth (John 17:17), the gospel of Christ (Romans 1:16), or what one must do to be saved (Acts 2:37,38). If one believes the word of the Spirit, will he not obey it? Peter wrote to the Christians of his day, *"Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: Being born again, not of corruptible*

seed but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you" (1 Peter 1:22-25). Notice in John 3:5 that Christ said that one must be born of the Spirit but in 1 Peter 1:23 the inspired man of God said that one is born of the word of God. But who gave the word? The Spirit. Therefore, to be born of the Spirit and to be born of the word of God means the same. But how does faith come? By hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17). Then if one believes God's word, he will obey it, and if he obeys it, he will be baptized, or buried in water, that he might be saved (Colossians 2:12; Mark 16:16). And that is what Peter says in 1 Peter 1:23; that is, we are born again by obeying the truth through the Spirit or as the Spirit directs one on what to do through the word of God.

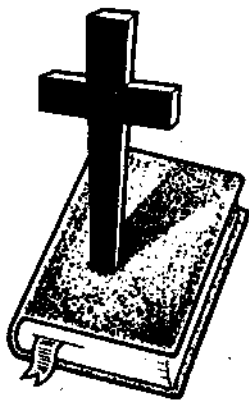
To be born of water and of the Spirit means that when one obeys the teaching of God's word and believes in Christ, repents of his sins, confesses Christ as the Son of God, and is baptized in water for the remission of his sins, then the Lord saves that person and adds him to the kingdom, or the church. Read Acts 2 and you will see that this is exactly what the people did there at Jerusalem. Nothing is said about being born again, as far as using those exact words, but we know that they were born again because Christ said that when one was born of water and of the Spirit that this would

make it possible for him to enter the kingdom of God and when the people of Acts 2 heard the gospel preached, believed it, repented of their sins, and were baptized for the remission of their sins, the Lord saved them and added them to the church. But what about the kingdom and the church? Weren't they different institutions? No, since the kingdom and the church are identified in the scriptures as being the same institution or organization. In Colossians 1:14, for example, Paul was writing to the church at Colosse and yet he said that they, the individual members, had been delivered from the power of darkness and translated into the kingdom of God's dear Son (Colossians 1:13). In Acts 2, when the people believed and were baptized, they were saved and added to the church, but in Acts 8, when the Samaritans believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, it says that they were baptized both men and women (Acts 8:12). Does that mean that the people in Acts 2 became members of the church, and the Samaritans became members of the kingdom, and that these were two different organizations? No, they were both the same organization or institution.

Therefore, when one is born again of water and of the Spirit, it just means that he hears the Lord's word, he believes it, repents of his sins, confesses his faith in Christ, and is baptized in water that he might be saved and then the Lord adds him to his church, that is, he enters the kingdom of God. As a member of the Lord's family, as a new creature, as a new Christian, he is to

grow and develop and become strong in the faith that he might be a full grown Christian. This we must do and this we must preach to one and all, and even to the whole world if we are to please the Lord and if we are to have the hope of eternal life.

Have you been born again? Are you a Christian? If not, then you are lost and you will remain lost until you do this. There is no other way to be born again, to be saved in this world, and in the world to come. We pray that you will continue to study until you fully understand God's will on these matters, and that you will then do as he has instructed.



Lesson 4

Why There Is But One Baptism Today

I don't know if you are aware of it or not, but among those who claim to believe in Christ, there are those who teach that there are several baptisms.

Some of these include baptism by immersion in water, baptism by sprinkling some water on one's head, baptism by pouring water on one's head, baptism in the Spirit, and so on. There are different purposes for baptism according to those who teach on this subject. Most say baptism is a sign of one's salvation. Others teach that baptism is for the remission of sins, to put one into Christ and his church.

The Bible teaches that there is but one baptism. Paul said, *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all"* (Ephesians 4:4-6). Please note that the inspired man of God said that there was but one God, one Lord or Christ, one Spirit or Holy Spirit, one faith, one baptism, one body, and one hope. Among all of these, he declared that

there was but one baptism. If it means one God, Christ, and so on, then one baptism means one baptism.

But which baptism would this be? Besides the baptisms that men talk about today, even in the scripture we read of several different baptisms. For example, in Luke 7:29 we read where the people were baptized with the baptism of John. Christ asked a group of people who were trying to tempt him, "*The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me*" (Mark 11:30). Christ was baptized by John (Matthew 3:13-17). Although Christ was baptized to fulfill all righteousness, the people in general were baptized to prepare for the coming of the Lord's kingdom, the church. It was therefore referred to as the baptism of repentance (Luke 3:3). Paul found some people in Ephesus who had been baptized according to John's baptism but they had not heard of the Holy Ghost or Holy Spirit, and therefore, after he had taught them concerning the purpose of John's baptism, "*saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*" (Acts 19:1-5). John's baptism then was not intended to go on indefinitely. It served a purpose and then ceased to exist.

In Matthew 3:11,12, John the Baptist, or John the baptizer or immerser spoke of two baptisms that Christ would administer. We read, "*I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire:*"

Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire." Here John illustrates how Christ would deal with the people as he pictured a reaper. The people of that day were familiar with the harvesting of wheat. The wheat would be threshed and with the help of the wind or a fan the chaff and wheat would be separated. The wheat would be gathered up and saved for food but the chaff or that which was worthless would be burned up. In a similar fashion, John said that Christ would then baptize with the Holy Ghost, and with fire. Later, Jesus promised the Apostles that he would send the Comforter, or the Holy Ghost, upon them (John 15:26; John 16:7,13). In Acts 1:8 he again promised to send the Holy Spirit upon them. Read also Luke 24:49. In Acts 2 we read of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, giving them the power to remember all that Christ had taught them, to speak in other languages, and to perform miracles. Through them, all would be blessed. But he said that Christ would also baptize with fire. What does this have reference to? If that which is saved, the wheat, represents the righteous then that which is burned up, the chaff, represents the wicked. Christ would baptize the Apostles with the Holy Spirit, but he would baptize the wicked with fire. When we understand that baptism means an immersion, and therefore the Apostles were immersed or overwhelmed with the Holy Spirit, we must understand that when it says that Christ will baptize with fire, it means that the wicked will be immersed

in fire. Where in the scriptures do we read of the wicked being so dealt with? In the first place, we are told that Christ one day will judge the world and that the wicked will be cast into hell (2 Peter 2:4) or will go away unto everlasting destruction (Matthew 25:46). Again, hell is described as a lake of fire (2 Peter 3:7; Jude 7; Revelation 20:10,14; 21:8). That means that the wicked, the ungodly, those who are lost, will be immersed or baptized in the lake of fire, meaning eternal damnation. Surely no one in his right mind would want to be baptized with fire.

In 1 Corinthians 10:1-4, Paul wrote, *"Moreover, brethren, I would not that ye should be ignorant, how that all our fathers were under the cloud, and all passed through the sea; And were all baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; And did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ."* Although it wasn't necessarily thought of as being baptism in those days, but as Paul looked back on the children of Israel passing through the sea, with water on either side of them, and with a cloud overhead, he described that as a baptism. In other words, they were buried or immersed in the cloud and in the sea.

When the mother of Zebedee's children requested that Christ allow her sons to sit on either side of him in his kingdom, we read, *"But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism*

that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father" (Matthew 20:22,23). Again, Christ said, *"But I have a baptism to be baptized with . . ."* (Luke 12:50). The baptism that Christ speaks of here has reference to his suffering upon the cross, that is, as he was immersed in suffering. Naturally he went through this only one time.

Finally, the scriptures speak of believer's baptism. This baptism was in water (Acts 8:26-39), a burial (Colossians 2:12; Romans 6:3,4), for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38), to wash away sins (Acts 22:16), to save (1 Peter 3:21), to put one into Christ (Galatians 3:26,27), and to put one into the church (1 Corinthians 12:13). It was to be done in the name of Christ (Acts 2:38), that is, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19,20). Christ said, *"Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned"* (Mark 16:15,16).

Going back to Ephesians 4:4-6, remember that Paul said there was but one baptism. At the time he made that statement, it was approximately 64 A.D. But of all the baptisms that we read of in the scripture, which baptism would be the one baptism? A good rule to observe would be that any time a baptism was not water baptism or believer's baptism, it was always stated. In other

words, the scriptures talk about the baptism of the Holy Spirit and of fire, John's baptism, the baptism of suffering, and the baptism in the cloud and in the sea. Therefore, when we read of the one baptism in Ephesians 4:4-6, we must conclude that this refers to believer's baptism.

Of course we hear people today talking about Holy Spirit baptism being for people of our time, but that baptism was promised by Christ to the Apostles and he was the one who administered it. That baptism therefore was for a specific purpose and there is no one today being baptized with the Holy Spirit. There are others who teach water baptism, but they claim that the believer is saved, and then he is to be baptized to show that he has been saved. That means, if they are right, that one is saved outside of Christ and outside his church, since the word of God says that one must be baptized to enter Christ and his church (Galatians 3:26,27; 1 Corinthians 12:13). We know that such people are in error on this point. One cannot be saved until he has obeyed the Lord and a part of that involves water baptism.

As to sprinkling and pouring for baptism, this is as far from the teaching of God's word as one can go. Sprinkling and pouring of water on the head in no way can be said to be baptism. Baptism is a burial, an immersion. Sprinkling is sprinkling and pouring is pouring, but not baptism. Such practices were invented by men.

Now the question is this: have you accepted the one baptism of the Bible? If you have not, you need to do

so. If you will read through the book of Acts in the New Testament you will discover that all who obeyed the Lord heard the gospel or the good news of Christ, believed in God and Christ, repented of their sins, confessed Christ as the Son of God, and were baptized or immersed in water for the remission of their sins. Then the Lord saved them and added them to his church (Acts 2:38,41,47). If you will do what they did, the Lord will save you and add you to his church, too.

If you have been baptized, or if you think you have been baptized, but it was sprinkling or pouring or it was not for the right purpose, you have not been baptized scripturally. You need to be baptized as already explained. But you might say this would make two baptisms. No, there is only one baptism and if you were not baptized according to the Lord's teaching you have never been baptized. Only when you have been baptized according to the scriptures can you say that you have been baptized with the one baptism of the Bible.



Lesson 5

Why We Do Not Accept The Conscience As A Safe Guide

The word conscience has to do with the heart, mind, and soul of man. It means one has gathered a certain amount of information and knowledge, which is used to compare with other things to determine whether they are right or wrong. The information may be based on facts or it may be based on false reports. Regardless of whether it is true or false, it may be accepted as truth and then used as a guide. There are those who feel that the conscience may serve as a safe guide. Others talk about having a good conscience, and since they have a good conscience, they feel that this within itself makes it right. Yet, one may have been deceived, but thinking that he received the truth, end up having a good conscience. His good conscience then is not based on truth but on error. That is why one cannot allow his conscience to serve as being his final authority for determining whether something is right or wrong.

To illustrate further how the conscience works, think

about a young child. He is taught by his parents that it is wrong to steal or to take something that does not belong to him. He continues to be taught this during all of the years he is with his parents. Because he respects them, and this is in keeping with what other honest people teach, and what the law says, he grows up accepting this as being the truth. But suppose one day he sees something in a friend's house that he would like to have. He is tempted to take that which does not belong to him, and so he does. Because he is going against what he has been taught, which amounts to nothing more than his conscience, his conscience bothers him, and he finally feels compelled to return what he had taken. But the same could be said of those who have been taught error. Even though it is error, or it is something false, if it is taught to be the truth, and it is accepted as truth, one's conscience would bother him if he went against what he had been taught as being the truth.

Then for one's conscience to be reliable, it has to be based on truth. In other words, the truth, God's word, must govern the conscience. If one's conscience is based on falsehood or error, the conscience cannot be recognized as a safe guide.

When we turn to God's word, we find that Saul is a good example of what we are talking about. First of all, remember that Saul was a Jew, that he was a follower of Judaism, that he was very zealous for his religion, and he thought Christianity was the enemy of that religion. As a result, he went forth to persecute Christians. We read concerning him: *"As for Saul, he made havoc of*

the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Continuing, we read, "And Saul, yet breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters of Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound unto Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1,2). As the story continues, Saul and his companions were on the road to Damascus when the Lord appeared to him. Then we read, "And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do" (Acts 9:4-6). The record goes on to tell how a gospel preacher by the name of Ananias came to him, and told him to arise and be baptized that his sins might be washed away (Acts 22:16). Now what did Saul do? He became a believer in Christ, he repented of his sins, he acknowledged Christ as Lord, and he was baptized. On doing so, it says he straightway preached Christ as the Son of God (Acts 9:20).

Now think about this man. He was a very sincere, zealous man for Judaism. He opposed Christianity to the point of persecuting Christians, both men and women. But suddenly he became a believer in Christ

and on obeying the Lord he preached Christ as the Son of God. Not only so, but he spent the rest of his life serving the Lord and spreading his cause.

But what about those years before he became a Christian? Was he honest and sincere in what he did? Hear him as he explains why he did all of that. He said, *"I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem: and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even into strange cities"* (Acts 26:9-11).

All of this is to say that Saul had a good conscience during those days when he persecuted the church. He was honest and sincere in what he was doing. He no doubt felt good about what he was doing. But the fact was, his conscience was not operating on the basis of what God would have him to do, but on the basis of what he thought was right. Only after he learned the truth, and had obeyed the truth, was he acceptable to God.

After Saul's conversion, his name was changed to Paul. Sometime after that, he wrote, *"And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; Who was before a blasphemer, and a persecuter, and injurious: but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in*

unbelief. And the grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief. Howbeit for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew forth all longsuffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting. Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen" (1 Timothy 1:12-17).

In the foregoing scripture I think Paul is reminded of the time he had lived in all good conscience before God (Acts 23:1) and yet he had spent his earlier years fighting God and his Son, Jesus Christ, and persecuting the Lord's people. On learning the truth, and obeying God to become a Christian himself, he realized the mercy and grace of God was great indeed, if he, the chief of sinners, could be saved. He never forgot his past but only allowed it to give him greater incentive to move forward, and to do everything in his power to make up for the past, by giving the rest of his life spreading the cause of Christ.

My friends, if all that God requires of a person is that he have a good conscience, that means all people of all religions could be saved as they are. It would mean all people of all churches could be saved as they are. It would mean that people could be saved, whether they believed in God or not. It would mean that one could be saved on the basis of a good moral life or by simply

doing good works. It certainly wouldn't matter if one was a Christian or not, whether one was a member of the church or not, or even whether one was faithful to God or not. All people have a tendency to eventually justify their own thinking, actions, religion, and so on. They may even sear their conscience or go against God's will so long that it no longer bothers them (1 Timothy 4:1-5). This would finally produce a good conscience.

A good conscience alone, then, is not the answer. That will not assure one of salvation. The only time one can count on his conscience as being right, is when it is based on a knowledge of God's will, and therefore one's thoughts, actions, and very life, is governed by the Word of God. The conscience can be a safe guide only when it is being guided by the word of God. Or another way of putting it, when one knows God's will, and believes it, then when one's conscience bothers him, when he goes against God's teaching, or doesn't live up to what the Lord expects, it means his conscience is alive and well.

The Bible contains the word of God, it is true, and it is right. Now when we live up to it, as given by the Spirit, that means we are right. When the Spirit bears witness with our spirit, that is, the Spirit's word agrees that we have complied with the Lord's teachings, then we may know we are the children of God. That is what Paul said. Hear him: *"The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God"* (Romans 8:16). On the other hand, when the Spirit's

word, the word of God, says one thing or teaches certain things, and we fail to obey it, or to live up to what the Lord requires of us, it means the Spirit through the word is bearing witness, or is declaring that we are not children of God, or that we are not obeying the Lord as he would have us to.

That means that good feelings, or having a good conscience alone, is not proof we are saved or that we are God's children. Please do not be deceived into thinking you can be saved in some way other than the way the Lord has prescribed in his word. Of course, if we know God's will, and we fail to obey it, this means that if our conscience is alive, if it matters to us what God has said, our conscience will bother us, and it should. This is a good reminder that we must make things right with God. When we do that, and we know we have complied with his will, this produces good feelings, a good conscience, but only on the basis that we know God's will and we have obeyed him. In that case we should have a good conscience and we should be happy, but only then.

Do you have a good conscience? Do you know God's will? Have you obeyed his will? If not, I would hope that your conscience is bothering you, and that it will continue to do so until you have obeyed the Lord. If you will believe in Christ, repent of your sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized for the remission of your sins, the Lord will save you and make you his child and a member of his family, the church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Galatians 3:26,27; Acts 2:47). If

you'll do this you can have a good conscience, in that you can know it is the Lord's will for you, and you have obeyed the Lord, and therefore he has saved you.

Lesson 6



Why We Call On The Name Of The Lord

The scriptures speak a number of times about calling on the name of the Lord. Let us notice some of these. In the long ago, Joel prophesied, "And it

shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions. And also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my spirit. And I will shew wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered; for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call" (Joel 2:28-32).

After the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles, and they had begun to speak in other tongues or languages, those present began to jump to various

conclusions as to how they were able to do so. Some thought they were full of new wine. Then we read, *"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, lifted up his voice, and said unto them, Ye men of Judaea, and all ye that dwell at Jerusalem, be this known unto you, and hearken to my words: For these are not drunken, as ye suppose, seeing it is but the third hour of the day. But this is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my Spirit upon all flesh: and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams: And on my servants and on my handmaidens I will pour out in those days of my Spirit; and they shall prophesy: And I will shew wonders in heaven above, and signs in the earth beneath; blood, and fire, and vapour of smoke: The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood, before that great and notable day of the Lord come: And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved"* (Acts 2:14-21).

In the prophecy Joel gave in the long ago, and in its fulfillment on the day of Pentecost in the city of Jerusalem, it is obvious it had to do with the death of Christ, the pouring out of the Holy Spirit, and the coming of salvation. All of this was happening in the last days, those days that followed the death of Christ. The Hebrew writer said that God would speak to man by his Son in the last days (Hebrews 2:1,2), and Christ spoke in those early days through the Apostles, and since that

time he has spoken to us through his word as revealed in the New Testament. Concerning that which Paul preached, he said, *"For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ"* (Galatians 1:12). Concerning what John had seen, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, he said, *"Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand"* (Revelation 1:3).

Thus in Acts 2 we have the record telling us that after the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles they preached concerning the coming of Christ, the miracles he did to prove that he was from God, of his death, burial, and resurrection, and of his return to the Father in Heaven to sit down at the right hand of God to reign as King of kings and Lord of lords. On hearing these things some three thousand were cut to the heart and they wanted to know what they should do. The record continues, *"Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized; and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and*

fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:38-42).

Now let us notice several things here. First of all, Peter makes mention of the Lord's calling people. How does he do that? Paul told the Christians at Thessalonica, *"Whereunto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus"* (2 Thessalonians 2:14). In other words, they had been called through the gospel which Paul had preached. What was that gospel? In Romans 10:15 it was good news of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and the salvation that was made possible because of the Lord's death, burial, and resurrection (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Furthermore, there were conditions of the gospel that had to be met in order for one to be saved. One of those conditions was that one believe in Christ. Another was that one repent of his sins. And finally, there was the condition that one should be baptized for the remission of his sins. Now all of this was preached in Acts 2; that is, the Apostles preached the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and when some three thousand became believers and wanted to know what else they should do, they were told as believers they should repent of their sins and be baptized for the remission of their sins. Through the preaching of the gospel, the Lord was calling on them to obey him. As mentioned, some three thousand answered that call and obeyed the Lord, and he in turn saved them and added them to his church.

Second, it was prophesied by Joel that the day

would come when whosoever should call on the name of the Lord would be delivered or saved. Peter and the Apostles told the people on the day of Pentecost that this prophecy was being fulfilled at that time. What did it mean to call on the name of the Lord that they might be saved? Many have said to call on the name of the Lord means to ask him for salvation. In other words, they would equate calling on the name of the Lord with prayer. But where is prayer mentioned in relation to salvation? Actually, after Christ had been preached, and they were cut to the heart, or had become believers in Christ, they wanted to know what they should do. Peter told them they should repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins. The record goes on to say that some three thousand did this and the Lord added the saved to his church. We would therefore conclude that to call on the name of the Lord in this case means to obey the Lord. Another way of putting it, Christ promised that when one or more obeyed him he would save them (Mark 16:15,16). Therefore, on obeying the Lord one is simply calling on the Lord through his obedience to request him to keep his promise to save him. Naturally, he does.

Third, it was prophesied that the day would come when the Lord would pour out his Spirit upon all flesh. He kept that promise, and I might add he continues to keep that promise. On the day of Pentecost he poured out his Spirit, or baptized the Apostles with the Holy Spirit, and through them, all the world would be blessed through their preaching, and in the recording of the

Lord's word, as directed by the Holy Spirit. All who obeyed the Lord as a result of their preaching were not only saved, but they also were given the Holy Spirit. This was not only for those on the day of Pentecost, but also for their children, or future generations, and those who were afar off, that is, the Gentile population. A little later Cornelius and his household were baptized with the Holy Spirit to prove that the Gentiles were accepted of God as well as the Jews. In addition to the Apostles and Cornelius and his household receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit, the Apostles were authorized of the Lord to lay their hands on selected ones that they might also have the power of the Holy Spirit. All others received the ordinary measure of the Holy Spirit, or the non-miraculous measure of the Holy Spirit, and that has continued on down to our time. Thus the Lord has fulfilled these prophecies, and his word has been kept in every instance.

On another occasion, Paul wrote the Romans, *"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek; for the Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the*

name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Esaias saith, Lord, who hath believed our report? So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:8-17).

In the scripture just read please notice that again the writer refers to calling on the name of the Lord that one might be saved. What is involved here? From the context we see that the word of God must be preached, one must hear it, believe it, confess Christ, and although repentance is not specifically mentioned here, and neither is baptism, nevertheless, it would certainly be a part of preaching the word of God and in believing in the Lord. This would have to follow to be in harmony with all of the cases of conversion listed in Acts, and the many other passages of scripture that have to do with salvation. But the point is, when one obeys the Lord, again he is calling on the Lord to keep his promise to save him, and of course the Lord never fails. Peter says, *"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness, but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance"* (2 Peter 3:9).

Have you called on the name of the Lord for salva-

tion? No, we are not necessarily talking about prayer here. We are concerned with obeying the Lord. If you will call on him through your obedience to his will, he will respond by saving you and adding you to his church. There is no other way to be saved.



Lesson 7

Why Good Moral Living Alone Is Not Enough To Save

Whether you realize it or not, probably most people will be lost because they are trying to be saved on the basis of their own goodness. This reminds us of a young man who came to Jesus seeking eternal life. We read, *"And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He said unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. The young man saith unto him, All these things I have kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me. But when the young man heard that saying he went away sorrowful: for he had great*

possessions" (Matthew 19:16-22).

The foregoing story took place in an Old Testament setting. In other words, the law was still binding at that time, and therefore Jesus answered this man according to what the law said. On hearing Jesus explain that if he wanted to have eternal life, that he should keep the commandments, having reference to the ten commandments, he responded by saying that he had kept those from his youth up. As we would think of it, in keeping those commandments, he was certainly a good moral man. Or another way of putting it, he was not a wicked or evil man by any means. It would appear he thought he was good enough to go to heaven, but he merely wanted to have the Lord's approval. But in this case, that was not enough. Jesus could look into his heart and life and see that there was a hindrance. It seems he was a wealthy young man, and therefore, he was putting his trust in his riches. Jesus therefore told him he should go and sell all that he had, and give it to the poor. Then we have a sad statement. It says that when he heard that, he went away sorrowful, because he had great riches. Good moral living is not enough to save one.

We have a good example of this in the story of Cornelius and his household. Cornelius was a Gentile. He was a man who held a responsible position in the army; that is, he was a centurion. The record also says that he was "*A devout man, and one that feared God with all of his house, which gave alms to the people, and prayed to God always*" (Acts 10:2). Yet, he was a lost man. Through the Lord's intervention, Cornelius and

his household and Peter and his brethren were brought together. At this point Peter preached to them and the record says the Holy Spirit was poured out on them to convince the Jews that the gospel was for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. Then Peter asked, *"Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed they him to tarry certain days"* (Acts 10:47,48). Now if you will take note again of the kind of life Cornelius was living, you will see that any person even today who can say he is a devout man, one that fears God with all of his family, and one who gives to the poor, and prays always, would be classified as being a pretty good person. Yet, Cornelius was a lost man. Therefore, it was necessary for him to hear the gospel, to believe it, and to obey it that he might be saved, and be added to the Lord's church. Had he refused to do so, he would have remained lost in spite of all of the good things he was doing.

It is true that one must live a good moral life to be saved. That simply means one must refrain from doing those things that are bad and wrong. It further means one cannot do the works of the flesh, or the things of this world. Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, *"Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, Nor thieves nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit*

the kingdom of God" (1 Corinthians 6:9,10). Speaking to the brethren at Corinth concerning their fellowship with the worldly, Paul said, *"I wrote unto you in an epistle not to company with fornicators: Yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must we needs go out of the world. But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one not to eat"* (1 Corinthians 5:9-11). Here Paul is saying that it is not possible to go through this life without having to deal with worldly people, but when it comes to an unfaithful brother in Christ, one who is living an ungodly life, we should not fellowship such a person.

Paul goes on to say to the Galatian brethren, *"Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God"* (Galatians 5:19-21). Paul is saying in these various scriptures that one cannot indulge in these sinful activities and enter the kingdom of God or the Lord's church. Neither as Christians can one engage in such sinful acts and please God. While one cannot be saved solely on the basis that he doesn't do such things, but

still to be the kind of Christian the Lord wants one to be, then he must abstain from the very appearance of evil (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Some people have the erroneous idea that the Christian is allowed more moral freedom than those in other religions. They think the Christian can smoke, drink intoxicating beverages, engage in immoral practice, use bad language, dress immodestly, etc. Of course those who know what the Bible teaches, and what it means to be a Christian, know this is not so. It is true there are some who claim to be Christians who engage in these and other practices, but in doing so they are displeasing to God. Unless they repent they will be lost. For one to be saved, and to be a Christian, he must not only believe in God, and in Christ as the Son of God, but he must also repent of all of his sins or turn away from them, and he must acknowledge or confess Christ as the Son of God, and finally to be baptized to wash away his sins. It is only when one does this that the Lord is willing to save him and to add him to his church. As a Christian he must be faithful to the Lord unto death if he is to receive the crown of life. We read all of this over and over again in the scriptures (Mark 16:15,16; Acts 2:38; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:47; Revelation 2:10).

Now one can be a good moral person and believe that he is saved on the basis of his good living, but as with the wicked, he must obey the Lord if he is to be saved. His goodness alone will not save him. Doing the works of one's own righteousness will not save him (Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5). Where one is depending

on his own goodness to save himself, he must repent of that sin. Paul tells us all have sinned (Romans 3:23). Therefore we read that the Lord came to seek and to save that which is lost (Luke 19:10). No, Christ did not die because man was already saved, but because man was lost and needed to be saved. Paul said Christ died for our sins (1 Corinthians 15:1-4). Peter said, *"For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit"* (1 Peter 3:18).

My friend, are you saved? If so, how were you saved? Are you one of those who is trying to go to heaven by living a good moral life? Are you putting your trust in yourself, in worldly riches, in some man, in some man-made system, or in something else of this world? Then you are trying to go to heaven through your own devisings. If so, you need to realize you cannot do this. No one can save but Christ. When you obey him, and live a pure and godly life unto death, he not only has promised to save you, but to give you a home in heaven. That is what the Bible and Christianity is all about.

In the long ago, the prophet of God laid down a principle that was true then, and it is true today. He said, *"O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps"* (Jeremiah 10:23). It takes humility to admit that, but one is wise when he does so.

Again, regardless of who you are, the kind of life you are living, whether good or bad, I would like to urge

you to obey God that you might be saved. Only then can you be saved (Mark 16:16) and only then will Christ add you to his church (Acts 2:47).



Lesson 8

Why We Meet For Worship

We as Christian, and as congregations of the Church of Christ, meet each first day of the week for the purpose of worshipping God. There are a number of reasons why we do this.

To begin with, we need to understand that there is one God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He is our creator and the giver of all the blessings we have. Because of his love, and the sending of his Son, Jesus, to die on the cross for the sins of the world, by his grace and mercy he has made it possible for us to be saved. Being his children, we desire to live for him, serve him, and worship him as he has directed. Christ said, *"God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:24). The God we serve is not a man, an animal, or an inanimate object. He is not represented by the sun, moon, or stars, a river, a mountain, or a man-made image. He is a Spirit, the creator of all things, the giver and sustainer of life. Only a fool would deny him (Psalm 14:1).

The worship we engage in involves service, praise,

and honor that is directed to the God of heaven. Our worship is rendered in spirit. That is, we do it in all sincerity, in humility, concentrating on the things that we do.

We also render our worship in truth. That means that we worship God according to the truth, or according to the things that God has said in his word. God is the one that we worship and we want to please him instead of attempting to please ourselves.

That means we are not to worship God according to the doctrines and commandments of men (Matthew 15:9). Neither will God be pleased if we ignorantly worship him (Acts 17:23), or if we use the reasoning that it doesn't matter how we worship, just so long as we are honest and sincere. It does make a difference how we worship, or else God would not have spoken on the subject.

According to the teaching of the Bible, we as Christians are to meet on each first day of the week for worship. We have an example of this in Acts 20:7. We read, *"And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight."* Under the Old Testament Law, the Sabbath Day was the day of worship, but when Christ died on the cross he took that law out of the way and replaced it with his own law (Colossians 2:14). In taking away the law, the Sabbath Day was likewise removed as the day of worship. We read that Christ came forth from the grave on the first day of the week

(Matthew 28:1-6). Likewise the gospel was first preached on the first day of the week, and the church had its beginning on the same day (Acts 2). Finally, Paul wrote the Christians at Corinth that they should give of their means on the first day of the week. But someone might say that nowhere does it say that Christians are to meet each first day of the week. Neither did God tell the people under the old law that they should keep every Sabbath. The fact is, there is a first day of the week in each week, and if the first day of the week is the Lord's day, the day of worship, then Christians are to meet each first day of the week for that purpose.

The Hebrew writer tells us we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. Hear him, as he says, *"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised); and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries"* (Hebrews 10:23-27). Please observe that he says we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together. What is he talking about? Well, what assembly do we have on a regular basis that we should not forsake? He said that some were forsaking it, but

we should not do as they did. Rather, he says we should exhort one another, or encourage one another, to attend the assembly as we see the day approaching. But he hastens to say that if we go on and sin willfully, even though we know God's will, the Lord cannot save us as long as we go in our sin. It is therefore not only important that we know God's will, but that we obey his will, which includes attending the assemblies of the church.

Now what are we to do on the first day of the week in worship to God? There are several things listed in the scripture. As noted in Acts 20:7, Christians met to break bread, or to partake of the Lord's Supper. The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth: *"For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body"* (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). Please note that Paul

said that the bread was to be partaken of in remembrance of the body of Christ and the cup was to be partaken of in remembrance of the blood of Christ. In other words, the Lord wants his people to continue to remember the price that was paid that they might be saved. In partaking of the Lord's Supper the Christians look back to the cross. In so doing they also point to the time when Christ will come again. So the Lord's Supper is very important. It is a time for one to take a look at his own life to see where he stands before the Lord in a spiritual sense. It likewise presents Christians with the opportunity to teach some valuable lessons to the world concerning Christ.

Next, Christians are to assemble on the first day of the week to worship, and when they do so, they are to lay by in store, or to give of their means to the Lord for his work. Paul said, *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come"* (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). In 2 Corinthians 9:6,7 Paul wrote, *"But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."* Of course Jesus said that it is more blessed to give than to receive (Acts 20:35). Under the Old Law God's people were commanded to tithe, or to give a tenth of their

earnings, but that law no longer exists. We as Christians are to give as we have prospered. How much is that? No doubt it is more than a tenth. We certainly have greater blessings and promises than those who lived before the time of Christ.

We are to assemble on the first day of the week to sing songs of praise to God. Paul said to the Christians at Ephesus, *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"* (Ephesians 5:19). In Colossians 3:16,17 Paul declared, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him."* As you can see in these verses, and other passages, the emphasis is on singing praises to God. The Hebrew writer says we are to praise the Lord with the fruit of our lips (Hebrews 13:15). As the Lord's people we do not use mechanical music in worship. But what is wrong with using mechanical music in worship? What is good about it? Can we not worship God by just singing? You know that we can. Therefore, let us sing as the scriptures clearly teach. To go beyond that is to invite the Lord's displeasure. For after all, it is not we who are to be pleased, but the one that we worship.

Finally, as Christians we are to assemble on the first day of the week to worship by letting God speak to us

through his word, and with our speaking to God through prayer. We are encouraged to study (2 Timothy 2:15). Christ asked that we search the scriptures (John 5:39). The early Christians "*continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers*" (Acts 2:42). How could we possibly worship without Bible study and prayer?

Do you worship God? Do you do so on a regular basis? Are you a Christian? If you are not, then you are not in a proper relationship with him so that you might worship him acceptably. I would like to encourage you to become a Christian. Christ said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:16). If you will do that, Christ will add you to his church (Acts 2:47). Then you can worship.



Lesson 9

Why We Meet On The First Day Of The Week

The Bible teaches that we as Christians, members of the Lord's church, are to worship God in spirit and in truth (John

4:24). That means we are to worship with the understanding and sincerity of what we are doing, and we are to do so according to the teaching of the Lord's word. But the question is: When are we to do that and how often should we do it? Should it be on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, or some other day of the week? Does it really matter, just so long as we meet for worship?

When we read through the Old Testament we observe that God required his people, Israel, to remember the Sabbath day and to keep it holy. This was one of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:8-11). But when we come over to the days of Christ, we learn that when Christ died on the cross he took out of the way the old law, or the law that required God's people to observe the Sabbath day (John 1:17; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 9:15-17). Therefore, when the old law was removed, it was replaced with a new law. That being true, the

Sabbath day ceased to be binding, and at that point, the Lord introduced a new day for his people to assemble for the purpose of worship. That day was the first day of the week. As it was, the Sabbath day came on Saturday or the seventh day of the week, but now he would expect us to put Christ first in worship, and in all other things.

The New Testament portion of the Bible has a lot to say about the first day of the week. We will now take the time to mention some reasons why this day is so important, and why we are to meet on the first day of the week for worship.

First, Christ was resurrected on the first day of the week. If the sabbath day was still the holy day of the week, or the day on which God's people would still meet for worship, why was Christ raised on the first day of the week or Sunday? Of course it might be argued that the reason he was not resurrected on the Sabbath day was because it was a holy day. But how much more holy would it have been, if the Sabbath day was still binding, to have Christ come forth from the grave on that day? Actually, Christ arose on the first day of the week to put emphasis on this day as being the new day of worship. When we turn to Matthew 28:1, we read, *"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre."* Reading on, we are told about the Lord being resurrected on this day. We read the same basic thing in Mark 16:1,2 and likewise in Luke 24:1,2, and finally again in John 20:1.

Second, after Christ was resurrected from the grave on the first day of the week, he saw fit to meet with his disciples on two other occasions, both of which were said to be on the first day of the week. We read, *"Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when he had so said, he shewed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad, when they saw the Lord."* (John 20:19,20). Again we read, *"And after eight days again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them: then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God. Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* (John 20:26-29). Now if Jesus came forth from the grave on the first day of the week, and appeared to the disciples that evening, and appeared to the disciples eight days later, would that not mean that he met with them again on the first day of the week? Doesn't it seem strange that the scriptures emphasize that all of these things took place on the first day of the week, if the first day of the week has no significance? I suggest to you, however, that there is great significance attached to the fact that Jesus came forth

from the grave on the first day of the week, and he met with the disciples on two other occasions on the first day of the week.

Third, Pentecost always came on the first day of the week, fifty days after the Passover. This means, according to Acts 2, that the Lord chose this day to send the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, for the gospel to be preached for the first time in fact, telling men and women what they should do to be saved, and on that day for the church to be established. Now if this doesn't place special emphasis on the first day of the week, what would it take? And the very fact that this day was chosen above the other days of the week means there must have been some special reason for it. If the Sabbath day, for instance, was still binding, why did the Lord not choose to use that day instead of the following day? The Sabbath day was being replaced with the first day of the week, as being the day of worship, under the law of Christ and during the time of Christianity.

Fourth, we have an example of the early Christians meeting on the first day of the week to worship God. We read, "*And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech unto midnight*" (Acts 20:7). When we take a look at the context, we are told that Paul and others had arrived in Troas from Philippi by ship, and that they had stayed over seven days in order that they might meet with the church on the first day of the week. We can surely see by this that had the Sabbath day or some

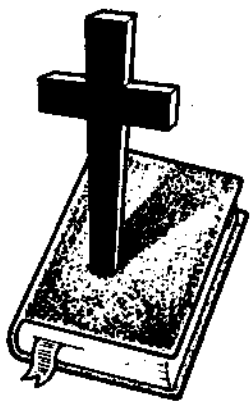
other day been the day of worship, they could have proceeded with their assembly with the local Christians for worship, and could have continued their journey. Instead, they waited over to the first day of the week so they could worship on the day the Lord had appointed for his people to meet for worship. Then what happened on that day? For one thing, the disciples came together on this day. And why did they come together? The record says they came together to break bread, and this has reference to the fact that they assembled to partake of the Lord's Supper in remembrance of the body and blood of Christ (1 Corinthians 11:23-29). That means, by scriptural example, we are taught that the first day of the week is the day on which Christians are to break bread. Which first day of the week? Every first day of the week, of course. Back in Old Testament times when the Sabbath day was the day of worship, God didn't say that they should remember every Sabbath day, but merely that they should remember the Sabbath day. For them to remember that day meant they should remember all of them, or each Sabbath day. The same is true with the first day of the week with regards to partaking of the Lord's Supper. They had some preaching during that meeting. The record says that Paul preached, and that he continued his speech until midnight. Although it does not say that they had prayers, or engaged in singing, and so on, they no doubt did. But if Paul and the Christians of that day met on the first day of the week to break bread and to worship God, that means that if we are Christians, we are to do the same today.

And fifth, we read where Paul commanded the Christians of his day to lay by in store, or to give of their means, on the first day of the week. We read, *"Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come"* (1 Corinthians 16:1,2). Note that Paul said he had instructed both the churches in Galatia and the church there in Corinth to give, or lay by in store, on the first day of the week. A lot could be said about the attitude of giving, how much was to be given, the purpose of giving, and so on, but the main thing we want to see right now is the fact that the giving was to be done on the first day of the week. Wonder why it was to be done on the first day instead of some other day? Evidently because this was the scriptural day Christians were to assemble for worship, and while they were together, this would also be a good day to give of their means. The same is likewise true today.

To sum it all up, the first day of the week is not a holy day, a rest day as the Sabbath was, and certainly it is not the Sabbath day, but it is a day that was honored with the Lord's resurrection, and the day chosen for the coming of the Holy Spirit, for the gospel to be preached for the first time in fact, and for the church to be established. Not only so, but it was the day the Lord chose for his people to meet to worship. It is therefore the scriptural day of worship. We will make no mistake to follow the example set forth in the New Testament, to

assemble on the first day of the week for the purpose of worshipping God. The mistake would be to neglect to meet on this day. The Hebrew writer even exhorts us not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together (Hebrews 10:25). How wonderful it is then, for us who are Christians, to be honored with the privilege of meeting on the first day of the week, to praise our Lord by worshipping him on the day he has set aside for that purpose.

Are you a Christian? Do you assemble each first day of the week with other Christians for the purpose of worshipping God? If not, we pray you will continue to study God's word, you will believe in Christ, you will repent of your sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized to have your sins washed away. If you will do this, the Lord will save you and add you to his church. Read Acts 2 and see if they did not do that. We pray you will.



Lesson 10

Why We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

The Lord's Supper goes back to the Last Supper, when Jesus and the Apostles gathered in the upper room on the Passover to partake of it. The Passover (Exodus 12) was an annual feast to commemorate the death angel passing over those homes where the blood of a lamb had been sprinkled over the door posts. This feast was passing away, but with the coming of the New Testament, the Lord's people would now partake of the Lord's Supper.

The record says, *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it; For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives"*

(Matthew 26:26-30).

In Mark's version, we read, *"And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: This is my body. And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives"* (Mark 14:22-26).

Finally, Luke records it like this: *"And when the hour was come, he sat down, and the twelve apostles with him. And he said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: For I say unto you, I will not any more eat thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves: For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come. And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you"* (Luke 22:14-19).

In these three accounts of the institution of the Lord's Supper, there are several things we need to notice. First, as pointed out earlier, Jesus used the set-

ting of the Passover Supper to introduce the disciples to a supper, or a memorial feast, that would be engaged in after his departure. He said that the bread would be his body, or would represent his body, and that it should be partaken of in remembrance of him and his suffering. He said that the cup, the fruit of the vine, was his blood, that is, it would represent his blood, and that it should be partaken of in remembrance of the blood that was shed that man might have the remission of his sins. Of course, we know the bread he spoke of in these passages of scripture, even when partaken of in this supper, would not be the literal body of Christ. Neither would the cup, the fruit of the vine, or grape juice, be the literal blood of Christ. But they would simply represent or remind those who would participate in the Lord's Supper of Christ's body and his blood. It should be pointed out that the Passover included unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine. Since Christ and the Apostles ate the Passover and at the same time he used the bread and the cup to institute his own supper, when we partake of the Lord's Supper even to this day, we use unleavened bread and the fruit of the vine, or grape juice, to remember the Lord's body and to remember the Lord's blood. Second, Jesus told his disciples he would not partake of this Supper again until he did it with them new in the kingdom of God. This just simply means that Christ would soon be betrayed, crucified, and thus shed his blood for the sins of the world upon the cross. Then he would be buried and after three days and nights he would come forth from the grave, appear to the disci-

ples and others for some days, and then return to the Father in Heaven. The kingdom of God, or the church, would be established in Jerusalem and from there it would spread throughout the world. Please notice that right after it had been established, we read, "*And they*" (that is, the members or Christians) "*continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.*" (Acts 2:42). The breaking of bread here has reference to the Lord's Supper. But Christ had promised to be with the disciples in the coming of the kingdom or church as they partook of the Lord's Supper. Of course he did not mean that he would physically be with them, but he was with them, and he is with his people today in Spirit. He said that where two or three were gathered in his name he would be with them (Matthew 18:20). Again, he has promised to be with us always, even unto death (Matthew 28:20). Therefore the church exists, and as the Lord's people we partake of the Lord's Supper, and in so doing, he is with us.

Now, turn with me to 1 Corinthians 11:23-29, and we will read the words of the Apostle Paul, when he said, "*For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in*

remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord, But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

In the foregoing, there are some things we should give special attention to. First, Paul said he had delivered to the Christians at Corinth the information he had received from the Lord concerning the Lord's Supper. Second, he said they were to partake of the bread in remembrance of the body of Christ and the cup in remembrance of the blood of Christ, that blood which was shed to confirm the New Testament or the law of Christ. Third, it was said that as often as they partook of this supper, this would be the means of pointing to the death of Christ until he comes. But how often is often? In Acts 20:7 we have an example of where Paul met with the Christians at Troas for the purpose of breaking bread. How often does the first day of the week come around? Once a week. That is how often Christians were to meet to partake of the Lord's Supper. The same is also true of Christians today. We have no authority to meet on Thursday, once a month, once every three months, and so on. Rather, we are told the Christians of the first century met on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper, and since there was a first day

in every week, that is how often they met to partake of the Lord's Supper for the purpose of remembering Christ. The same must follow today if we are to follow their example.

Continuing, and fourth, in partaking of the Lord's Supper we look back to the cross to remember the sacrifice Christ made in order that we might be saved and have the hope of eternal life. As we break bread we are saying we believe in Christ and we are therefore pointing to the time when he will come again.

Fifth, we should remember that if we partake of this Supper unworthily, that is, not being faithful to the Lord and not being sincere in what we are doing, we are guilty of abusing the body and blood of Christ. Another way of putting it, to partake of the Lord's Supper in an unworthy manner means that we are eating and drinking damnation to ourselves. Now that does not mean we must be perfect before we can partake of it, but it does mean we must be faithful to the Lord, if the Lord's Supper is going to mean anything to us and to the Lord.

And finally, and in the sixth place, we are encouraged to examine ourselves before we partake of the Lord's Supper so we can be sure our heart and life are right before God. Only when we know we are doing the best we can, that we are faithful to the Lord, should we partake of it. If we cannot honestly say within our hearts, based on what the Lord requires of us, that we are faithful to him, then we should repent of our sins and ask the Lord to forgive us before we continue, week after week, to break bread with the Lord's people.

My friends, the Lord's Supper is very important to the Christian, the one who is a member of the Lord's church. It is the means to remember Christ and to remain faithful to him. It is not for show, to be eaten as a meal, or to be partaken of without understanding the purpose of it. It is to strengthen the Christian and at the same time to give him an opportunity, through the Lord's Supper, to point others to Christ.

Are you a Christian? What does the Lord's Supper mean to you? Do you break bread with the Lord's people each first day of the week? If you are not a Christian, we would like to encourage you to become one. You can do that by believing in Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Christ, and by being baptized, buried in water, for the remission of your sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). When you do this the Lord will save you and add you to his church (Acts 2:47). As a Christian, and as a member of the Lord's family, you can eat the Lord's Supper each first day of the week, as you live the Christian life, thus confirming your faith in Christ and proclaiming your faith in Christ to the world.



Lesson 11

Why We Have Vocal Music Only In Worship

We of the church of Christ are different from most other religious groups, in that we have only singing in our worship services. Such is to say, we do not accompany our singing with mechanical music. I might hasten to say that this is not for the sake of just being different. Rather, we have only singing in our worship services because that is what the Bible teaches.

There are two kinds of music. One is vocal and the other is mechanical. Vocal music is a result of singing, the blending of human voices, which produces harmony and the most beautiful music in the world. This kind of music comes from God's creation. It comes from the soul and is offered as praise to God, our creator. It is full of spirit and life. Mechanical music comes from instruments made by man. Those instruments are lifeless. They have no soul or spirit. The only reason they make sounds is because man beats on them, plucks them, or plays them. Now the question is this: Does God want his creation to praise him or man's creation to

praise him? Which would be more meaningful to him? The Hebrew writer says, *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name"* (Hebrews 13:15). Please notice that he says we are to praise God with the fruit of our lips. What would be the fruit of our lips? It would be our speech, our singing, our prayers, our words of praise. To whom would this be directed? To God, of course.

Going on with the idea of praising God with the fruit of our lips, Paul says, *"Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord: Giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"* (Ephesians 5:19,20). Please observe that he talks about speaking or singing to one another, that is, through the use of different types of songs. He emphasizes also that they should be spiritual and scriptural. Finally, he says specifically that these songs should be sung, and the melody should be made in the heart, not on some mechanical instrument. Now if Christians sing and sing only, can they worship God? You would probably say yes. But what about singing with mechanical music? That might be fine if the scriptures taught that, but where do the scriptures teach it? If they do not teach it, then would we be doing the Lord's will if we added mechanical music to our singing?

Again, Paul says, *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs,*

singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). Now what is Paul saying here? He is emphasizing the word of Christ, teaching and admonishing through spiritual and scriptural songs, and doing through singing praise unto the Lord. That being true, do you see anything in Paul's statement that would include the use of mechanical music? If not, would you not be adding to God's word if you proceeded to add mechanical music as a means of praising God in worship?

But you might argue that you see nothing wrong with it. Then someone else might not see anything wrong with something else, and on and on it might continue. The point is, we must abide by the teaching of God's word. If we do not, then why bother with it anyway?

You might come back with the argument that you like it, or what about those who have the talent or ability to play the instrument? Wouldn't God be honored if they praised the Lord through mechanical music? But again, it is not a matter of what I like, but a matter of what God wants. If one has the talent or ability to play an instrument, and on that basis he should be allowed to use a mechanical instrument of music to praise God, what about all of the others who have unusual talents and abilities? Would we advocate that they should bring such abilities into the worship that they might offer them to the Lord? I think you can see the point that is being made.

Again it is argued that if you can have mechanical

music in the home surely you can use it in worship. The fact is, there are many things that are found in the home that we cannot carry over into worship. My family and I like music, and we usually listen to music on the radio, or play it on the cassette recorder, but when it comes to worship we cease doing those things that would please us, and begin to do those things that would please the Lord. We also like to eat ice cream at home and drink ice tea, but we realize that it would be out of place to try to do those things in worship.

One of the main arguments made in favor of mechanical music in worship is that of claiming that David and others taught it in the Old Testament. Whether that be so or not, the fact is that the Old Testament is no longer binding as a law, since Christ died on the cross to take it out of the way and to give a new law. We read that *"the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ"* (John 1:17). Christ said that the law would not pass away until it was all fulfilled (Matthew 5:17,18). Christ fulfilled it when he died on the cross, thus to blot out the old law (Colossians 2:14). That being the case, we cannot use Psalms or any other portion of the Old Testament to justify mechanical music in worship today. There were many things done in those times that we do not, and cannot, do in our present age.

Another main argument that is made in an effort to justify the use of mechanical music in worship is that there will be music in heaven. They conclude if there will be music in heaven, surely we ought to be able to

have music in worship here on the earth. They are talking about mechanical music, of course. But where can be read in Revelation, or anywhere else, that there will be literal man-made, mechanical instruments of music. But even if there should be mechanical music in heaven, that does not mean that the Lord would permit us to have it in worship today. As a matter of fact, there will be many things in heaven that we do not have access to here on earth. What God requires today, especially in worship, and what may eventually appear in heaven, are two different things.

Bible scholars and great religious leaders over the years have admitted that there is no indication, both from the scriptures, and from other sources of information, that the Christians of the first century used mechanical music in their worship. Many of these leaders therefore concluded that neither should the people of their time, and right on up to our day, use mechanical music as worship to God. For example, the Catholic church eventually divided, and one of the things that brought about this division was the question of whether mechanical music should accompany their singing in praising God. The group that felt it should be included became known as the Roman Catholic Church, and they still use it to this day. The other group who objected to its use became known as the Greek Orthodox Church, and neither do they use it in their worship services to this day. Later, in the Reformation and Protestant Movements, men like Martin Luther and John Wesley openly declared their objection to the use of such addi-

tions to God's divine plan for worship, as set forth in his holy word.

Going back to God's word, there are several verses of scripture we need to read. We'll begin with a statement made about the Lord and the disciples after the institution of the Lord's Supper. We read, "*And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives*" (Matthew 26:30). After Paul and Silas had been beaten, and put into the inner prison, with their feet made fast in the stocks, and all of this because of their work for the Lord, it says, "*And at midnight Paul and Silas prayed, and sang praises unto God: and the prisoners heard them*" (Acts 16:26). Paul wrote the Corinthian Christians, "*For if I pray in an unknown tongue, my spirit prayeth, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is it then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also: I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*" (1 Corinthians 14:14,15). James said, "*Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms*" (James 5:13). In the book of Revelation there are several statements about singing. John wrote, "*And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation . . .*" (Revelation 5:9). "*And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of*

saints" (Revelation 15:3). As pointed out earlier, Revelation tells us also about how John heard in heaven "*the voice of harpers harping with their harps*" (Revelation 14:2). But please note that he also heard the voice of many waters and the voice of a great thunder, and he talks about four beasts and "*the hundred and forty and four thousand which were redeemed from the earth*" (Revelation 14:2,3). Here, and throughout the book of Revelation, John uses a lot of figurative language to try to convey to man what he saw and heard in heaven. He therefore heard a voice that sounded like many waters, that sounded like thunder, that sounded like harps harping, but he did not mean that there were literal, earthly, mechanical instruments in heaven.

And so the matter of singing, or having the accompaniment of mechanical instruments of music with our singing in our worship to God, is a matter of authority. Shall we speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent, or shall we proceed to do what we want to do regardless of what God has said? The Bible says that Christ has all authority in heaven and in earth, and therefore he has spoken. We must then respect him and his word and go no further than what he has said. Therefore we must limit our music in worship to vocal music, or singing only. Then, and only then, can we be sure that God will be pleased.

How do you worship God? It does matter, you know. Are you a Christian? If not, we would like for you to become one. Christ said, "*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved . . .*" (Mark 16:16). And then

we read that the Lord adds the saved to the church (Acts 2:47). As a saved person, as a Christian, and as a member of the Lord's church, you can worship God in spirit and in truth (John 4:24).



Lesson 12

Why We Believe In Prayer

Prayer is a Bible theme. Defined, it means to talk, speak, or to make request of God. The Apostle Paul said, *"Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God"* (Philippians 4:6).

In our relationship to God, He is our Father, and we as Christians are his children. God has need of nothing. He is eternal, almighty, and the one from whom all blessings come. James says, *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning"* (James 1:17). As children, we have need of God. He is our Father and we must go to him for all of our needs, for help to overcome temptations, and for forgiveness when we sin.

Let us take a look now at some verses of scripture that talk about prayer, making request of the Lord, and his assurance of hearing us and answering our prayers. Christ said to the disciples of his day, *"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father*

may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it" (John 14:13,14). Again, he said, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you" (John 15:7,8). Then he said, "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you" (John 15:16).

While giving the sermon on the mount, Jesus said, *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Matthew 7:7,8).*

The Apostle John wrote these words: *"And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him" (1 John 5:14,15).*

From all of the foregoing scriptures, we might conclude that the Lord would answer our every prayer, regardless of the requests being made, and without setting any preconditions. But when we take a closer look at the scriptures, we can see that there are any number of things involved in praying an acceptable prayer, one that the Lord will hear and answer.

First, the scriptures teach that one must be a Christian or a child of God to have his prayers answered. We read in John 9:31 that God heareth not a

sinner's prayer. Why would God not hear the sinner? Because of sin — sin comes between God and the individual who is trying to pray to him. The prophet said in the long ago, *"Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear"* (Isaiah 59:1,2). Again, how can the sinner approach God, when he is not a child of God, and God is not his Father? If a sinner could pray to God, and expect God to hear him and answer his prayer, then what advantage would the Christian have over the non-Christian? Contrary to what some think, there is a big difference in not being a Christian, and in being a Christian, when it comes to praying to God, and having confidence that the Lord will hear and answer one's prayers.

Second, the word of God teaches that a child of God must remain righteous and faithful to the Lord if his prayers are to be heard. Peter wrote the Christians of his day, *"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil"* (1 Peter 3:12). If the Christian does sin, or stray away from God, he must repent, confess his faults, and pray to the Lord that he may be forgiven. James said, *"Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much"* (James 5:16). After Simon the sorcerer had obeyed the Lord and had become a child of God, the

record tells us that when he saw Peter and John laying their hands on certain of the Samaritan Christians, that they might have the power of the Holy Spirit, he tried to buy the gift of God with money. Now notice what followed: *"But Peter said unto him, Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter: for thy heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. For I perceive that thou art in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity. Then answered Simon, and said, Pray ye to the Lord for me, that none of these things which ye have spoken come upon me"* (Acts 8:20-24). Had Simon not repented and asked for forgiveness, could we imagine for a minute that he could have gone on praying to God and being acceptable with him? Surely not.

Third, note that in the verses that seem to indicate that all the disciples had to do to have their prayers answered was simply to make some request, you will see that either in the verses before the promise, or the verses following the promise, the Lord makes the promise on the basis that certain conditions are met. For example, in John 14:14 Christ said, *"If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it."* But in the very next verse, John 14:15, Christ said, *"If ye love me, keep my commandments."* Now can you imagine the Lord giving even a child of God anything that he requested of the Father, if he did not love the Lord enough to keep

his commandments? In John 15:7, he said, "*If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.*" The key words in this statement are "*if ye abide in me, and my words abide in you.*" If one abides in the Lord, and the Lord's word abides in him, what kind of person would this be? He would be a faithful child of God, of course. But suppose one did not abide in the Lord, and his word did not abide in him, would the Lord still grant that person's requests? Surely not.

In John 15:16 Christ said "*. . . that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, he may give it you.*" But in the first part of that verse he said that he had chosen them and ordained that they should bring forth fruit. He was speaking to the Apostles here, but can you imagine the Lord granting these requests should they have failed to bring forth good fruit? Again, Christ promised that if one would ask, he would receive (Matthew 7:7,8). Christ continues by saying, "*Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?*" (Matthew 7:9-11). Of course Christ is dealing with the disciples, those who are in a Father-Son relationship, and faithful children at that, according to the context. As you study the scripture, you will always notice that the Lord's blessings are only for those who are willing to obey him and remain faithful to him.

How could he bless the disobedient and rebellious type?

And finally in 1 John 5:14,15 John makes it very plain that the Father will hear and answer our prayers if they are according to his will. A father who loves his children will not give them those things which would harm them or destroy them. But if there is any way at all possible, a father will grant his children's requests. The same is true with our Father. We may think that something is in our interest, but our Father who is all wise may see it otherwise. But we can be sure that a loving Father will respond according to what is best for us, and then we remember Paul's statement when he says that all things will work together for our good if we truly love the Lord (Romans 8:28).

As Christians we are so blessed to have a Father to whom we can always turn. Christ said that men ought always to pray (Luke 8:1). Paul said that we should pray without ceasing (1 Thessalonians 5:17). We are told that the early Christians continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in prayers (Acts 2:42). Again, James says that if any are afflicted that they should pray (James 5:13). Then he said that the prayer of a righteous man availeth much (James 5:16). Although the Lord has not promised to answer our prayers for the sick with a miracle, prayers do make a difference. We can pray that God will work through the laws of nature, medicines, doctors and nurses, to heal the sick. We often underestimate the avenues and means that God has at his disposal through which he may work to change things. We sometimes think the only way he can show

his power or the only way he can do something, is through a miracle. That is not the case. Where is our faith? Besides, Jesus said that they that are sick need a physician, and we should not tempt the Lord our God (Matthew 9:12; Matthew 4:7).

Of course if our prayers are to be heard of our Father we must pray in the name of Christ who is advocate, mediator, and our High Priest (1 John 2:1; 1 Timothy 2:5; Hebrews 3:1).

Do you believe in prayer? Are you able to pray with the assurance that the Father will hear you and grant your requests? If you are not a Christian you are not on praying terms with the Father. You can correct that by believing in Jesus Christ, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Christ, and by being baptized for the remission of your sins (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1; Matthew 10:32; Acts 2:38). Once you do that the Lord will save you and add you to his church (Acts 2:47). Then as a member of the Lord's family, and if you remain faithful as the Lord's child, you have the promise that the Lord will hear your prayers and answer them.

Lesson 13



Why There Is Only One Way To Heaven

In the religious world we often hear statements like "There are many way to heaven," "We are all traveling on different roads but we are all trying to go to the same place," and so on. That sounds good on the surface, especially if you don't stop to think about it, but that is certainly foreign to the teaching of the Bible.

The Bible tells us about heaven, and all of the beauties of it, and how it has been prepared for the Lord's people in the world to come. Christ said, *"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself: that where I am, there ye may be also"* (John 14:1-3). Therefore, all who believe in Jesus, and all who believe in the heaven that he has prepared, will surely want to go there. But the question is, how can we go there? Is there only one way to go, or are there many ways to go?

Jesus said again, *"I am the way, the truth, and the*

life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6). Notice that Jesus is the way, the only way, to the Father, and one can go to the Father only by or through Christ. If there were many ways to the Father then Christ would not be the only way.

Jesus pictures himself as the good shepherd, Christians as sheep, and the church as the sheepfold. Now hear what Jesus says about the door: "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep*" (John 10:7). Jesus goes on to explain, "*I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture*" (John 10:9). Then he says, "*Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber*" (John 10:1). In other words, Jesus is saying that he is the door to the sheepfold, the one way into the church and into heaven itself. He then explains that when one does not enter by the door, but tries to climb up some other way, he is to be considered as a thief and a robber. But what will eventually happen to thieves and robbers? The Apostle Paul tells us that they will not even be able to enter the kingdom of God, or church, or heaven, that is, unless they repent of their sins and obey God. Of course, one who is trying to go to heaven in some way other than the way the Lord has given, that person will be cast into hell.

On another occasion, Jesus said to the people gathered around him, "*Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruc-*

tion, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it" (Matthew 7:13,14). Let us notice that Jesus encourages one and all to enter the strait gate. This strait gate represents Christ, the way to enter the church, and through which one passes to go to heaven. He continues by saying that those who enter this strait gate find themselves on a narrow way that leads to heaven. In this case, there is one gate, and there is one way, and that way only leads to heaven. Who would be on that way? Those who believe in Christ, the ones who have obeyed the Lord, the saved, Christians, members of the Lord's church, those who are godly, righteous and holy, and those who are faithful to Christ. Can we imagine anyone who has done otherwise being upon that strait and narrow way that leads to heaven? Then Christ talks about the other side. He speaks of those who enter the wide gate and travel upon the broad way that leads to destruction. Who would dare do such? The majority, the worldly, and the ungodly. Those who refuse to respect the authority of Christ and reason that they can do it their way. Those on the broad way are the ones who join man-made churches, wear the names of men, worship as they please, and so on. They are the ones who are deceived and they deceive others. The unfaithful Christian would also be in this group. But where does this road or way lead? It leads to eternal destruction. Oh yes, many of them will be honest and sincere. They will be very religious, and all of that. But they will be

lost because they are on the broad way.

My friends, there may be many roads that lead to a major capital city, but if someone had an agreement with you that you should travel on one road only, then what would happen if you chose another road? I am afraid that you would be in trouble. Likewise, Christ has all power and authority in heaven and in earth (Matthew 28:18). When we respect that authority, and we follow the instructions that the Lord has given us, we'll find that it works the same way. We must travel the road the Lord has specified.

Our problem in talking about the way to heaven is that we want to put it on the level of human reasoning. We reason that if there are many roads to a city, and all of them will take one to that city, then surely the same will be true in spiritual matters. But with the Lord and his way there is only one. There may appear to be other ways, such as going through the beliefs of men, the churches of men, and so on, but these are not ways to heaven after all. No one can go to heaven through these man made ways and organizations. All we need to do to realize this is just to read our Bibles. Christ said, "*But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men*" (Matthew 15:9). Again, Christ said, "*Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I*

profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity" (Matthew 7:21-23). There are dozens and dozens of other similar statements to be found throughout the scriptures. Now do we think for one minute that we can disobey God, do things our way, join man-made churches, wear man-made names, worship as we choose, and travel on whatever way we want to travel, but at the same time still go to heaven? If we are thinking things like that, we are certainly mistaken. Look at Saul. He was a very religious man. He was zealous for his religion. He had a good conscience, even though he persecuted the Lord's church. But he found out that he was wrong. It was only when he repented of his sins, and obeyed the Lord, that he was saved (Acts 9 and 22). But what about Cornelius and his household? They were good people. They gave alms to the poor and prayed often to the God of heaven. Yet, after hearing Peter preach, they were commanded to be baptized so they might be saved (Acts 10). There are also many other examples in the scriptures that would support the fact that there is but one way to heaven.

My friends, think about this. The Bible teaches that there is but one God, one Lord or Saviour, one Holy Spirit, one body or church, one faith, one baptism, and one hope (Ephesians 4:1-6). The Bible tells us that there is but one gospel, or one way to be saved. The Lord is the saviour and he has commanded one and all to do the same thing to be saved. All are commanded to hear him (Matthew 17:5), to believe in him (John 8:24), to repent of their sins (Luke 13:3), to confess Christ as

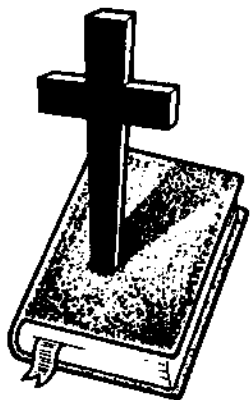
the Son of God (Matthew 10:32), and to be baptized for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38). Christ has commanded that the same gospel should be preached to the whole world, and even to every creature in all the world (Mark 16:15,16). The Lord adds all the saved to the same church, his church, the one that he built, the one he died for, the one he purchased with his own blood, the one he is head of, and the one he will come back for one day (Acts 2:47; Matthew 16:16; Ephesians 5; Acts 20:28). The Bible teaches that God wants all to worship him in Spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Therefore, all are to meet on the first day of the week to partake of the Lord's Supper, to study God's word, to pray, to give of their means, and to sing praises to God (Acts 20:7; 2 Timothy 2:15; Acts 2:45; Ephesians 5:19). God wants all of his people to do all in the name of Christ (Colossians 3:17), and that means that all are to wear the name of Christ (Acts 11:26), and all are to live the faithful Christian life (Revelation 2:10).

There is one Bible for all of us to read, to believe, and to obey. There is but one heaven to go to, if we will obey the Lord and remain faithful to him, and there is but one hell for the sinner and the unfaithful. (Matthew 25:46).

Now, if all of the foregoing is true, and you can read and study the scripture for yourself, and see for yourself, how can there be more than one way to heaven? Yes, there is a way to heaven, but there is only one way, and that is the Lord's way. We would be wise to accept that

way and do what the Lord wants us to do so that we might travel on the way that leads to heaven. We can go in no other way. The wise man said, "*There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death*" (Proverbs 14:12).

On what road are you traveling? The broad way or the narrow way? The way that leads to destruction or the way that leads to heaven? You can't travel on both roads at the same time. Christ said no man can serve two masters (Matthew 6:24). He said that we are either with him or against him (Matthew 12:30). It is therefore left to each one to decide which way he will take. We plead with you to choose Christ and the way to heaven.



Lesson 14

Why We Believe In The Existence of Satan

There may be those who would wonder why anyone would believe in Satan, especially in modern times like we have now. They would reason that in times when men go out into space, surely a character like Satan would be out of date. For such people to so reason, they are only deceiving themselves.

Yes, Satan exists. He lives. He is just as real as God and Christ. He lives throughout the world. His works are seen everywhere. His influence is seen in everyone. Not only so, but the Bible teaches that he is in the world. He is not human but he is a spirit, an evil spirit. He is the very opposite of what God and Christ represent. He is always behind that which is bad and wrong. He is called the devil, the wicked one, the father of liars, and the god of this world. He represents darkness, sin, and sorrow. He causes death and brings eternal destruction. We need to be acquainted with him because he is our enemy. The better we know him and understand how he works, the better we can prepare ourselves to meet him.

Without such knowledge, and proper armour, he can deceive us, overpower us, and destroy us.

Let us go to God's word now and read some verses of scripture that speak of him and his work. In explaining the parable of the tares of the field, Jesus said that the tares are the children of the wicked one and *"the enemy that sowed them is the devil"* (Matthew 13:38,39). Peter wrote to the Christians of his day, *"Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour"* (1 Peter 5:8). Paul speaks of Satan as being the tempter. He said, *"For this cause, when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain"* (1 Thessalonians 3:5). A religious sect of Jesus' day accused the Lord of casting out devils by the power of Beelzebub. We read, *"Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? therefore they shall be your judges."*

But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you. Or else how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house. He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad" (Matthew 12:22-30).

The Apostle John wrote, *"I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one"* (1 John 2:14). John goes on to say, *"For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous"* (1 John 3:11,12). Again, he said, *"We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not. And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness"* (1 John 5:18,19). Later John wrote in the book of Revelation, *"And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him"* (Revelation 12:9). Describing further what happened to the Devil, John said, *"And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the drag-*

on, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season" (Revelation 20:1-3).

Christ said concerning some of his day, *"Ye are of your father the devil and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it. And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not" (John 8:44,45).* Jesus said to his disciples, *"Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).* Paul wrote to the Christians at Corinth, *"But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Corinthians 4:3,4).*

But where did Satan come from? you might ask. Since God created all things (Genesis 1:1), then naturally God created him and all of the angels who joined him. The scriptures reveal that he exalted himself, rebelled against his maker, and became God's enemy. We read in 2 Peter 2:4, *"For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment,"* and he goes on to give examples of

others that he did not spare, the point is that if we oppose God and his will, we will also have to suffer the consequences. In Jude we read, *"And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day"* (Jude 6). On the day of judgment Christ will say to the wicked, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 25:41).

Going back to the beginning, we are told that after God had created Adam and Eve, and had placed them in the Garden of Eden, that he explained that they could partake of the fruit of every tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. It was made clear to them that should they partake of that fruit they would surely die. Now let us read, *"Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and*

gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons. And they heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day; and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God amongst the trees of the garden. And the Lord God called unto Adam, and said unto him, Where art thou? And he said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked; and I hid myself. And he said, Who told thee that thou wast naked? Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat? And the man said, The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat. And the Lord God said unto the woman, What is this that thou hast done? And the woman said, The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat" (Genesis 3:1-13). Of course on that day man and woman died spiritually, but God went on to put curses on man, woman, and the serpent, and all creation. In Matthew 4 the tempter, Satan himself, came to Christ. He tempted him on three different occasions in an effort to get him to bow down before him. But each time Christ responded with a thus saith the Lord. Finally, the devil left in defeat.

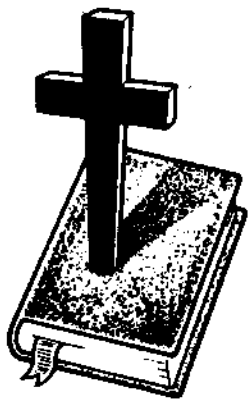
The greatest victory that Christ experienced over Satan was when he came forth from the grave, to not only prove that he was the Son of God, but to make it possible for man to be saved, and to assure one and all of a future resurrection. All who obey Christ and

remain faithful to the Lord have his promise that he will save them, help them to overcome all temptations, and finally to take them home to heaven.

My friends, don't allow Satan, the old devil himself, to control your life. Don't allow him to get to you through the material things of this world. Don't allow him to use the things of this world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of this world to influence you. Don't allow him to use false religion and the teachings of men to deceive you and to lead you astray. Christ pleads with us not to follow Satan to certain death. The Bible, the word of God, sets forth the beauty of truth and the way to eternal life, but at the same time, it warns us against Satan's cunning and deceptive ways that brings ultimate death.

Be warned therefore against Satan. Be not deceived by him. Read and study God's word. Learn about the Lord and his ways, but also get acquainted through the scriptures with your enemy, Satan. Believe in God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. Without faith it is impossible to please him (Hebrews 11:6). Christ said if we believe in God we should also believe in him (John 14:1-3). He wants us to turn away from Satan and sin and all that is bad and wrong that we might follow Christ. We are told that God commands all to repent (Acts 17:30) and Christ says that if we refuse to repent we will perish (Luke 13:3). Then we are asked to confess Christ as the Son of God (Matthew 10:32) with the Lord's promise that if we will confess him before men he will confess us before the Father in heav-

en. And finally, we are commanded to be baptized, or buried in water, for the remission of our sins. Christ says that if we will believe and be baptized he will save us (Mark 16:16). Peter says that if we'll repent and be baptized we may receive the remission of our sins (Acts 2:38). Now when we do that, the Lord has promised to save us and add us to his church (Acts 2:47), that we might be new creatures in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17). As such, we will no longer belong to Satan, but to Christ, known as Christians (1 Peter 4:16), and being faithful to the Lord unto death, to have a home in heaven (Revelation 2:10; Revelation 22:14).



Lesson 15

Why We Believe In Heaven

When I speak of heaven I am not talking about the sky, clouds, or atmosphere. I am not even talking about outer space. Sometimes we refer to these as

heaven, but the heaven that I am thinking about is where God dwells. It is a beautiful place, the home of the righteous, where godly souls shall spend all eternity. Heaven is even described in God's Word as the New Jerusalem.

The scriptures speak generally of heaven. Christ said to those who were persecuted for righteousness sake, *"Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"* (Matthew 5:12). Jesus taught the disciples to pray, *"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name"* (Luke 11:2). He instructed them, *"But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also"* (Matthew 6:20,21). Christ said to the Apostles, after they had con-

fessed him as the Son of God, *"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven"* (Matthew 16:19). Speaking to the seventy that he sent out on the limited commission, the Lord said: *"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy: and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven"* (Luke 10:19,20).

Continuing, we are told that there will be joy in heaven over one sinner that repents (Luke 15:7). It is said that Christ came down from heaven (John 3:13). Jesus spoke of the Father giving the disciples bread from heaven (John 6:32). Paul said to the Christians at Corinth, *"For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens"* (2 Corinthians 5:1). Again, Paul said to the Galatian Christians, *"But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we preached unto you, let him be accursed"* (Galatians 1:8). Some day, Paul assured the Thessalonians, the Lord would descend from heaven to take vengeance on those who know not God and obey not the gospel (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Peter said, *"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, To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3,4). John said, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband"* (Revelation 21:1,2). And on and on we could go with any number of similar passages of scripture that speak of heaven, the eternal abode of God and the home of the soul.

Who will be going to heaven? Jesus told the people of his day, *"Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven"* (Matthew 18:3). That means that infants and little children, or those who have not reached the age of accountability, and are therefore not held accountable for their actions since they do not know right from wrong, will go to heaven when they die. The Lord's kingdom or church will be saved in heaven. Paul said, *"Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom of God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule and all authority and power"* (1 Corinthians 15:54). We also read in Ephesians 5:23 that Christ is the saviour of the body or the church (Colossians 1:18; Acts 20:28). It should also be pointed out that the Lord will present it as a *"glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish"*

(Ephesians 5:27). We read in Matthew 13:41 how the Lord will send his angels to gather out of the kingdom or church all things that offend and they will be cast into the fire that they might be destroyed. But if the church is going to be delivered up to God in heaven, that means that we must be in the church to be eternally saved. The scriptures also say that the faithful, or those who keep the Lord's commandments, will go to heaven. Christ said, *"Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life"* (Revelation 2:10). James said, *"Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him"* (James 1:12). John wrote, *"Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city"* (Revelation 22:14).

At the same time it should be pointed out that certain others will not be in heaven. This will include Satan and his angels (Matthew 25:41), unfaithful Christians (Matthew 13:41), and the wicked (1 Corinthians 6:9,10; Galatians 5:19-21). In Revelation 21:8 we read, *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."* Remember, too, that neither will the hypocrite go to heaven (Matthew 24:51). And finally, all of those who are deceived and are in religious error will be lost (2 Timothy 3:13; Romans

16:17,18).

Who is in Heaven? God is there. Heaven itself is described as being the city of the living God (Hebrews 12:22). Jesus Christ is there (Acts 2:32,33). The angels of God are there (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).

What will heaven be like? John wrote this about heaven, *"And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, or crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful. And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely. He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son"* (Revelation 21:1-7). Reading on, John writes, *"And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare*

twelve manner of fruits, and yielding her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him: And they shall see his face; and his name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever. And he said unto me, These sayings are faithful and true: and the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done. Behold, I come quickly: blessed is he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book" (Revelation 22:1-7).

Of course, as we read through the entire book of Revelation, we have the inspired John saying that heaven will have streets of gold, the foundations of the wall of the city will have all manner of precious stones, and so on. John began the book of Revelation with these words: *"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John: Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw. Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand" (Revelation 1:1-3).* John, therefore, as a human being, was able to see things that no man had ever seen before. To write about heaven and all of its glory, he

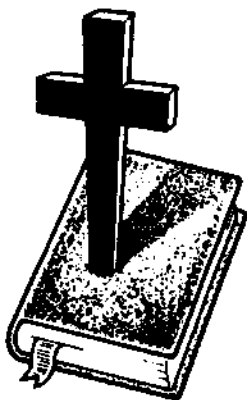
had to put it in words that man could understand. He therefore described much of what he saw in figurative language, comparing it with things here on earth, like gold and precious stones. It was so beautiful and wonderful that it was really beyond description. After reading what heaven is like in Revelation, if one is impressed and made to want to go there, remember that the half has not been told.

Someone has said that heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people. It is a place where God and his people will live forever. Man therefore will not really die when he departs this life. He will die physically, but his soul will live on for all eternity. Those who have obeyed the Lord, and have been faithful to him, will one day be taken home to heaven where they will never die. All of this is really beyond our comprehension when it comes to fully understanding it. We therefore accept it by faith and press on to the time when it will become a reality. We have every confidence that God will not disappoint us, but will provide for us far above all we have ever dreamed or imagined.

Don't you want to go to heaven? Don't you want to live with God one day? How terrible it would be if this life was all there was. There are so many problems and troubles and heartaches here. There are so many pains and aches and so much suffering. But when we can look beyond this life to a better world, then we can somehow make it through this life.

If you are not a Christian you are lost and you have no hope beyond the grave. I would pray that you would

realize this and that you would take steps to correct it. You can be saved and have the hope of going to heaven one day if you will believe in Jesus, repent of your sins, confess your faith in Christ, and be baptized that you might be saved (Mark 16:16). If you will do this, the Lord will not only save you, but he will also add you to his church (Acts 2:47). We pray that you will do so while you still have time and the opportunity.



Lesson 16

Why We Believe In Hell

Because we do believe in hell, sometimes we are accused of preaching hell-fire and brimstone. It is implied that we enjoy telling people they are going to be cast into the lake of fire as punishment for their sins. It is true that we do believe in the hell that the Bible talks about, and that the wicked will be sent there some day, but we don't want anyone to go to such a terrible place. And we certainly find no joy in seeing people stubbornly going on their way to certain damnation.

Perhaps we should take the time to define hell before continuing with our study. It might be that you would not fully understand what we are talking about. Sometimes in the scriptures the word hell is used for death. For example in Matthew 16:18, when Christ was talking about how he would die, but that even his death would not keep him from building his church, the record there says, "*And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it,*" or the gates of death will not prevent it. Hell, however, is generally defined as a place of torment, a lake of fire and brimstone, eternal punishment,

where the wicked will live forever and ever. It will be the permanent home of lost souls.

But why would anyone go to such a terrible place or why would a loving God send anyone to hell? Such questions mean we need to explain further what hell is all about. Hell was prepared originally for the devil and his angels. Speaking of the wicked, Christ says that on the day of judgment the judge shall say to them, *"Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels"* (Matthew 25:41). The devil represents sin, ungodliness, and wickedness. He is the very opposite of what is good and right. He is God's enemy, and he has angels who have sided with him. Therefore, hell was prepared for them. At the same time, it should be pointed out that hell was not prepared for the souls of human beings. Although man is a sinner, God has provided a way for man to escape hell. It is only when he rejects God, and the salvation that he offers through his Son, Jesus Christ, that man is lost and sentenced to hell. But even then, it is not a matter of God sending him there. Man sends himself, and therefore, he has no one to blame but himself.

Hell is often described as a place down below while heaven is said to be in the sky. The Bible doesn't really reveal where either place is but both places have been prepared for those who shall be judged to go there.

As already indicated, hell is a place of punishment. Christ warned those who would call his brother Raca, or vain and empty, as being in danger of hell fire (Matthew 5:22). Speaking of sending his angels to gather out of

the kingdom all things that offend, Christ said of them, *"And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there will be wailing and gnashing of teeth"* (Matthew 13:42). John wrote, *"And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life was cast into the lake of fire"* (Revelation 20:14,15). He also said, *"But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death"* (Revelation 21:8). It should be pointed out that there is physical death, and the second death that he speaks of in the foregoing verses has reference to being separated from God. Being cast into hell, a place of eternal punishment, means one is cut off from God, and there is no hope for such a person.

When John the Baptist described the coming of Christ and his work, he said, *"I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: Whose fan is in his hands, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire"* (Matthew 3:11,12). Here it is pointed out that Christ would have the power to baptize with the Holy Ghost, and of course this was having reference to his promise to the Apostles, that he would send the Comforter, or Holy Spirit, and then we read of their being baptized

with the Holy Spirit (John 16:13; Acts 2). But Christ would also have the power to baptize with fire. This would have reference to the wicked being cast into the lake of fire. Then he illustrates it by saying he would purge his floor and gather the wheat, or the righteous, into the garner, but the chaff, or the wicked, would be burned up with unquenchable fire.

Speaking of the wicked, we read, *"The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb: And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name"* (Revelation 14:10,11).

Jesus said, *"And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell"* (Matthew 10:28). Again, he said, *"Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?"* (Matthew 23:33). Jesus has reference here to the religious Pharisees and hypocrites of his day.

The Hebrew writer said, *"He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?"* (Hebrews

10:28,29). Paul said, ". . . the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power" (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9). Speaking of the wicked and the righteous, Christ said, "And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal" (Matthew 25:46). Again, he said, "But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 8:12). Paul wrote, "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord" (Romans 6:23). John then said, "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever" (Revelation 20:10).

Christ told the story of the rich man and the poor man, and what happened to them, to help us understand the difference in heaven and hell. We read, "There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day: And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, which was laid at his gate full of sores, And desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table: moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was

buried; And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torment, and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue: for I am tormented in this flame. But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted, and thou art tormented. And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed: so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence. Then he said, I pray thee therefore, father, that thou wouldest send him to my father's house: For I have five brethren; that he may testify unto them, lest they also come into this place of torment. Abraham saith unto him, They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them. And he said, Nay, father Abraham: but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent. And he said unto him, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead" (Luke 16:19-31). Hell is therefore real and we must therefore take every precaution so that we will not go there.

There are some who try to say that when a soul is cast into hell, that it is annihilated or destroyed immediately, and that is the end of it. As we have seen, however, when one goes to hell he will be punished and tormented forever and forever. In other words, hell will last just as long as heaven will last. Both are eternal.

Let us now draw some final conclusions from the

scriptures we have read. The devil and his angels will be in hell. The wicked, the ungodly, the hypocrite, those who have been deceived in religion, those who have engaged in the works of the flesh, the unfaithful, and so on, will all have their part in hell.

My friends, we have been warned, told of the salvation that Christ provides, and every effort has been put forth to keep us from going to hell, and to prepare us for heaven. But the Lord will not force you to obey him. The decision is yours. Our prayer is that you will accept the salvation that Christ offers. Paul says, "*Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation*" (2 Corinthians 6:2). Christ invites us to come to him that we might have rest (Matthew 11:28-30). The Hebrew writer exhorts us not to neglect our salvation (Hebrews 2:3).

Are you saved? Are you preparing to go to Heaven? If not, you are lost and hell awaits you. My friend, hear the Lord while there is time. Believe in him, repent of your sins, confess Christ as the Son of God, and be baptized to wash away your sins. If you will, Christ will save you and add you to his church (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38,47). Then you can live for the Lord, remain faithful to him, and heaven will be your home one day. Whatever you do, please don't go to hell.



Lesson 17

Why We Believe In The Judgment Day

The Bible clearly teaches that there will be a judgment day. That means that we will have to give an account of ourselves, that we will be held accountable for all that we have said and done in this life. Most people don't like the thought of having to be responsible to anyone for what they have done. They don't like to have to answer to the police when they do wrong, and to be responsible to the government for their taxes. But it is a fact of life nevertheless. Those who earn a living must answer to their employer; those who go to school or college must face examination day; those who are in the military must report to their superior officer, etc., and so on with all of us in our different walks of life. There is hardly any way to escape those responsibilities unless we are the boss, we are wealthy, or we are dead. But even the rich, the heads of the nations, and all living and dead must one day appear before the judgment bar of God.

The Hebrew writer says, *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"*

(Hebrews 9:27). But who will be there? Paul tells us. Hear these words: *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10). Not only will there be a judgment, but all will be there, and all will have to appear before the righteous judge, Jesus Christ, and all will be judged according to their deeds whether they be good or bad.

Paul wrote the Roman Christians, *"For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and the living. But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God"* (Romans 14:7-12).

In speaking to the people of Athens, Paul said, *"And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent: Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto*

all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead" (Acts 17:30,31). Please notice that God has appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness. That means that God will judge all, and that the judgment will be right. It will not be done in an unfair manner, and neither will he show partiality, or favour one over another. We do not know when that day will be, but God knows. It is the same with the Lord's return. Christ tells us of that day that even the angels do not know, but only the Father in heaven. If the angels do not know, and only the Father knows, how would man know? Certainly man does not know when Christ will come again and neither does he know when the judgment will take place. Furthermore, we are told that God will judge the world through that man whom he hath ordained, and he has given his assurance of this to all men in that he hath raised him from the dead, and of course that would be his son, Jesus Christ.

We are told that when Paul stood before Felix, he preached to him. Felix and Drucilla were living in adultery, and the record says, "*And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee*" (Acts 24:25). Knowing the kind of life that Felix was living, Paul had the courage to warn him of the price that he would have to pay, that he would have to answer to God for all his deeds. No wonder then that Felix trembled. It frightened him. It is sad, however, that he did not take heed, but sent Paul away with the promise that he would

call for him, if he should have a more convenient season. As far as we know, he never did call, and therefore, died in that condition. How sad!

On speaking to the religious people of his day, Jesus said, *"O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned"* (Matthew 12:34-37). That means that one must not only be aware of what he does, but he also must be conscious of his thoughts and what he says. All of these things are tied together and indicate the kind of person one is. But regardless of what one does or says, he should keep in mind that one day he will be held accountable for all of that. Just knowing that should make one more serious, and cause him to think twice before he acts or speaks.

The Apostle Paul says that the day will come in which God will judge even the secrets of men by Jesus Christ (Romans 2:16). The Hebrew writer reminds us that *"the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened*

unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do" (Hebrews 4:12,13). Paul said, *"But with me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you, or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self. For I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified: but he that judgeth me is the Lord. Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God"* (1 Corinthians 4:3-5). Again Paul said, *"I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom"* (2 Timothy 4:1). Paul went on to say concerning himself, *"Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing"* (2 Timothy 4:8). Notice that Paul speaks of the Lord being the righteous judge and the one who will give him a crown of righteousness at that day, meaning the judgment day, and he says that not only would he be given such a reward, but also it would be for all others who love his appearing or who have prepared for his coming.

The Hebrew writer speaks of God as being the Judge of all (Hebrews 12:23) and then in Hebrews 13:4 he says that *"Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge."*

In Matthew 25 we have Christ saying, *"When the*

Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory; And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:31-33). Here the Lord is picturing the judgment as it will take place some day. It will be at his coming and all nations and all people will be gathered before him. At that time he will separate the good from the bad as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. The sheep on his right hand will represent the righteous, Christians, the church. The goats on his left hand will represent the wicked, the deceived, and unfaithful Christians. And after the judgment has taken place, the record says that the wicked *"shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal"* (Matthew 25:46).

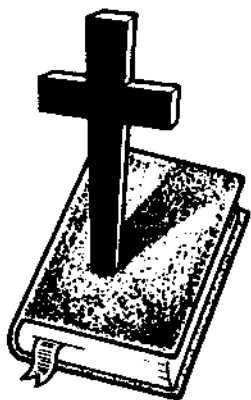
Now in summing all of this up, please notice what we have found:

1. The judgment of God is coming some day, but it will be after death, or on the return of the Lord.
2. All will be there on that great day. Imagine all of the people who have ever lived, or who will ever live, being there on that day. No one will be able to hide or escape. No one will be overlooked. This will include the young and old, the good and bad, the rich and poor, the king and the servant.
3. God will judge through his Son, Jesus Christ.

4. It will be an impartial judgment in that all will be judged by their works, whether they be good or bad.
5. Every idle word, every deed, and every secret thought will be judged on that great day.
6. This judgment will be final. There will be no second chances. It will be a righteous judgment.
7. On that day the righteous will be given eternal life and the wicked will be sentenced to everlasting destruction in a Devil's Hell.

Are you prepared to meet the Lord at the judgment? Remember that Christ said, *"He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day"* (John 12:48). Christ also said, *"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God; and they that hear shall live. For as the Father hath life in himself; so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself; And hath given him authority to execute judgment also, because he is the Son of man. Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation. I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me"* (John 5:25-30).

My friends, you can prepare for this great judgment day by believing in Jesus, repenting of your sins, confessing your faith in Christ, and by being baptized in water for the remission of your sins. On doing that, the Lord will save you and add you to his church. Then as a Christian, if you will serve the Lord and remain faithful to him unto death, when you stand before him one day, you will be able to hear him say to you, "*Well done, thou good and faithful servant. Enter into the joys of thy Lord.*" Wouldn't that be wonderful? Think about it, and prepare while you still have the time and the opportunity. We pray that you will.



Lesson 18

Why Christianity Is So Different

Christianity is to be found around the world. Believers in Christ number in the millions and millions. As its members carry forth its message, its numbers

continue to grow.

Christianity is based on belief in Christ — not being just another man, another holy man, or even another prophet, but as being the Son of God, the one who died for the sins of the world, and the one who came forth from the grave to live forevermore. Peter and the Apostles confessed Christ as being the Son of God (Matthew 16:16-18). Even God from heaven acknowledged Christ as being his Son (Matthew 17:5).

Christianity is the only religion in the world today that has a living leader. The leaders of all of the other religions have died, not to come forth again. Christ said that he would come forth again, and he did (John 11:25; Matthew 28:1-6). Had he not kept his promise, he would have been a liar and a deceiver. Had he not come forth, Christianity would have never developed. But Christianity lives, and the church lives, and the hope of

a general resurrection lives, all because Christ lives.

Christianity is a very popular religion. It has done more to change the world for good than any other religion or belief. The international calendars of the world base their dating system on the life and death of Christ. The laws of the nations have been mainly influenced by the moral teachings of Christ. Most countries recognize the Sunday weekend, and this of course is from Christianity, that is, based on the fact that Christ came forth from the grave on the first day of the week, and that the Lord has commanded his people to meet on the first day of the week to remember him, and to worship God (Matthew 28:1-6; Acts 20:7).

Christianity advocates the highest moral principles known to man. It teaches honesty, paying one's debts, giving a day's work for a day's pay, and respect for one another. It stands for moral purity, promotes the family system, upholds marriage with one husband and one wife, and with them being faithful to each other unto death. It recognizes God as head of all, with man head of his wife, but with both man and woman having their own responsibilities, and bringing up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

Christianity is a religion and religion means service that is rendered to God and man. James said, *"Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world"* (James 1:27). To visit the fatherless and the widows here means more than just paying a social visit. It means to care for the

needs of these people. Christians then have the obligation, as they are able, to see after the needs of others. Paul said, "*Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ*" (Galatians 6:2).

Those who represent Christianity believe in God as the creator of all things (Genesis 1:1), and they believe that Christ is God's Son who was sent into this world to live among men, and to die on the cross for the sins of the world. Christ said, "*I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins*" (John 8:24). Christians believe that the Holy Spirit inspired numerous ones over hundreds of years to pen down God's word, and therefore all scripture is given by the inspiration of God, and is therefore the word of God (2 Peter 1:21; 2 Timothy 3:16,17; Matthew 24:35). We believe that Christ established his church, and only one church, and that all the saved have been added to it (Matthew 16:18; Ephesians 4:4-6; Acts 2:47). We believe in the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ and that this good news is to be preached throughout the whole world. Christ said, "*Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned*" (Mark 16:15,16). We believe that those who obey the Lord are saved, become Christians only, worship God on the first day of the week, and are to live daily for Christ (Matthew 7:21; 1 Peter 4:16; John 4:24; Acts 20:7, Luke 9:23).

Christianity advocates unity of all believers in Christ

(1 Corinthians 1:10), and that all are one in Christ. Paul wrote, *"For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Galatians 3:26-28).

One cannot be physically born into the Lord's family. Christianity does not grow therefore through physical birth but through spiritual birth (John 3:3-5). In other words, the Lord sends his disciples forth to teach people about him, to reason with them, and to convince them that they need to believe in Christ, to obey him, so that Christ can save them, and make them his children. Paul reminds us that faith comes by hearing the word of God (Romans 10:17), and the Hebrew writer says that without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). Again, the Hebrew writer said concerning Christ and those who would be his, *"Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him"* (Hebrews 5:8,9). That means that infants or children cannot be Christians or members of the church. They must grow up to know right from wrong, to hear the teachings of Christ, and to decide for themselves whether they will believe and obey Christ or not.

Christianity teaches that all will eventually be resurrected, that there will be a judgment for all, and that all will spend eternity either in heaven or hell. Christ said,

"marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation" (John 5:28,29). We also read this: *"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment"* (Hebrews 9:27). Paul declares, *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad* (2 Corinthians 5:10). After the judgment takes place, the wicked will be delivered into everlasting punishment but the righteous will be rewarded with life eternal (Matthew 25:46).

There are also things that Christianity opposes. It opposed Satan, the world, and the works of the flesh (1 John 2:15-17; Galatians 5:19-21). More specifically, it stands in opposition to war, bribery, smoking, gambling, drinking, the illicit use of drugs, abortion, homosexuality, and all other such things. It rejects the caste system, idolatry, and all false religions, and those who would exalt themselves as gods before men. It does not believe in reincarnation and neither does it forbid its members from eating meats. Paul says that some people forbid to marry and command to abstain from meats *"which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving; For it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer"* (1 Timothy 4:3-5).

As those who follow Christ, we oppose all forms of Christianity that are not set forth in God's word. In

other words, much of that which the world looks upon as Christianity is false Christianity. Because of this true Christianity gets a bad name. We hear about Christians fighting, Christians doing this and Christian doing that, all of which is bad and wrong. Again, this does not represent true Christianity. The Christianity of the Bible, and those who would practice such, are known only for the good that they do and thus making the world a better place in which to live. God's word, therefore, teaches against man-made Christianity, denominations, and sects.

We do not believe in the religions of the world, or the sects of men that claim to follow Christ, but we believe in the freedom of religion. God himself does not authorize the false religions of the world, but he leaves it up to every person to decide whether he will serve him or oppose him. No man has the right to force his religion on others. Man is not really free until he has the freedom to do with his soul as he would want to do. True freedom comes through God's word (John 8:32) as it introduces man to God and how he can be set free from his sins.

What religion do you practice? Why do you practice it? Were you born into it physically? Or did you accept it as a result of teaching, and coming to believe that this represented the one true way?

Does your religion make sense? Is it as modern as the world is today or does it take you back to live in the past? Does it require things of you that makes sense or does it lead you to do things that are illogical and makes

you look stupid?

Christianity has nothing to fear as long as people have the opportunity to read, study, and make their own decisions. We believe that Christianity is logical and sensible. Furthermore, look at those who believe in Christ and those who do not, and see what religion is doing for them. You will surely be able to see that Christianity, when practiced, by far changes its people for the better, and leads them to a better life physically and spiritually. They are also a happier people because they have more to live for, and they have everything to look forward to.

If you are not a believer in Christ, then let me encourage you to consider Christianity. Read about it in the New Testament portion of the Bible. I believe that if you will, you'll want to become a Christian. Furthermore, you can become one by believing in God and Christ as the Son of God, by repenting of your sins, by confessing Christ with the mouth that he is the Son of God, and by being baptized for the remission of your sins (Hebrews 11:6; John 14:1-3; Acts 17:30; Romans 10:10; Acts 2:38). When you do that, the Lord will save you and add you to his church and as such you'll be a Christian and a part of Christianity (Acts 2:47; 1 Peter 4:16). Isn't that simple? It is so easy and uncomplicated. Please don't stumble over it.

