



The Enquirer's Handbook

A Study Guide for Believers

"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened." -Jesus

The Enquirer's Handbook

© Copyright 2006 PromiseLand Church, a ministry of the World of Pentecost

The PromiseLand

1504 E. 51st Street
Austin, Texas 78723

All scripture quoted is from the King James Version. Italicized words appearing in scriptures throughout represent the authors' added emphasis.

Other Web Resources:

www.promiselandchurch.net

www.theexperience238.com

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form, by photostat, microfilm, xerography, or any other means, or incorporated into any information retrieval system, either electronic or mechanical, without the written permission of the copyright owner.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1 The Bible.....	5
<i>The Bible's History</i>	5
<i>The Inspired Word of God</i>	5
<i>The Bible – Review Questions.....</i>	7
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study.....</i>	8
Chapter 2 The Purpose of the Bible	9
<i>Makes Us Wise Unto Salvation.....</i>	9
<i>Equips Us for Every Good Work</i>	9
<i>The Sword of the Spirit</i>	9
<i>The Purpose of the Bible – Review Questions</i>	11
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study.....</i>	12
Chapter 3 Understanding the Bible.....	13
<i>The Spirit as a Teacher</i>	13
<i>God's Every Word.....</i>	14
<i>Pastors and Teachers.....</i>	14
<i>Prayer</i>	14
<i>Meditation.....</i>	14
<i>Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth</i>	15
<i>The Divisions</i>	15
<i>Old Testament</i>	16
<i>New Testament.....</i>	17
<i>Divisions of the Bible</i>	20
<i>Understanding the Bible – Review Questions.....</i>	21
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study.....</i>	23
Chapter 4 Born Again	25
<i>God's Gift to the Sinner.....</i>	25
<i>Birth of the Water and Spirit.....</i>	26

Table of Contents

<i>Born Into the Body</i>	27
<i>The Apostolic Doctrine</i>	27
<i>Born Again – Review Questions</i>	29
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	30
Chapter 5 Repentance	31
<i>Essential to Salvation</i>	31
<i>Is a Change of Direction</i>	31
<i>Is Death to Sin</i>	32
<i>Originates With the Love of God</i>	32
<i>Repentance – Review Questions</i>	33
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	34
Chapter 6 Water Baptism	35
<i>Should Follow Repentance</i>	35
<i>Is an Act of Righteousness</i>	35
<i>Results from True Belief</i>	35
<i>Washes Us from Sins</i>	36
<i>As a Part of the Gospel</i>	36
<i>The Proper Way to Be Baptized</i>	37
<i>Water Baptism – Review Questions</i>	41
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	43
Chapter 7 Holy Ghost Baptism	45
<i>What Is the Holy Ghost?</i>	45
<i>The Meaning of Holy Ghost Baptism</i>	45
<i>How to Receive the Holy Ghost</i>	46
<i>Why Is It Necessary?</i>	49
<i>Speaking With Other Tongues</i>	52
<i>Holy Ghost Baptism – Review Questions</i>	55
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	57
Chapter 8 One God in Christ	59
<i>Its Importance</i>	59
<i>Three in One</i>	60

Table of Contents

<i>From Jehovah to Jesus</i>	61
<i>The Dual Nature of Jesus</i>	62
<i>Jesus Christ Our Mediator</i>	64
<i>Helpful Scriptures</i>	64
<i>Frequent Misconceptions</i>	68
<i>One God in Christ – Review Questions</i>	75
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	77
Chapter 9 Christian Living	79
<i>Good Works</i>	79
<i>Prayer</i>	79
<i>Fasting</i>	80
<i>Worship</i>	81
<i>Studying the Word</i>	81
<i>Tithing</i>	82
<i>Submission to a Pastor</i>	82
<i>Witnessing</i>	83
<i>Holiness</i>	83
<i>Marriage and the Home</i>	84
<i>Christian Living – Review Questions</i>	87
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	89
Chapter 10 The Gifts of the Spirit	93
<i>The Nine Spiritual Gifts</i>	93
<i>For the Edifying of the Church</i>	96
<i>In the Church Today</i>	97
<i>The Gifts of the Spirit – Review Questions</i>	98
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	99
Chapter 11 Angels	101
<i>Angels and Their Purpose</i>	101
<i>Holy Angels</i>	101
<i>Demons</i>	102
<i>Spiritual Warfare</i>	103

Table of Contents

<i>Angels – Review Questions</i>	106
<i>Reference Questions for Further Study</i>	107
Chapter 12 Daily Bread	109
<i>Applying to Your Life</i>	109
<i>It's Daily</i>	109
<i>Freedom in Christ</i>	115

Chapter 1

The Bible

The Bible's History

The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand forever.
Isaiah 40:8

Heaven and earth shall pass away but my words shall not pass away.
Matthew 24:35

The Word of God is eternal; it has always and will always exist in some form. It has not always been bold black print on fine paper as we know it today. Centuries ago, the Word of God was written by hand on scrolls made of leather (parchment) or papyrus (a material made of reeds). The apostle Paul was referring to certain scrolls when he urged Timothy to bring the parchments with him on his trip to Rome (II Timothy 4:13). Similar ancient manuscripts have been discovered recently in caves throughout Israel -- some of them dating back to the 7th and 8th century B.C.

The first real attempt to combine the books of the Bible into a single unit took place in about A.D. 400. This was a Latin translation called the Vulgate, and it remained the standard Catholic Bible for about a thousand years.

Throughout the dark ages, the Bible was confined almost completely to the Latin language. Any attempt by anyone to translate the Word of God into English meant arrest and certain death. It was not until about 1385 that the Bible was translated into the English language by an English Bible scholar named John Wycliffe. William Tyndale's English translation and mass production of English Bibles makes him the man most responsible for Bible reform. Tyndale eventually died a cruel martyr's death because of his pioneer work in Bible reformation.

The most commonly accepted translation among religious circles today is the King James Version. This particular translation took place in the year 1611 and was the work of 54 scholars under the leadership of King James I. Their translation, taken from both the Hebrew and Greek manuscripts with some help from the Bishop's Bible, has remained the most preferred version for over 350 years.

The Inspired Word of God

The Greek word for Bible is *biblia*, which interpreted means "the writings." The Bible contains 66 books, which are actually "the writings" of 44 different men. The Scriptures teach that these were not ordinary men, but that they were ". . . Holy men of God" (II Peter 1:21) who were moved and inspired by God to record His eternal word (II Timothy 3:16). First Thessalonians 2:13 states, ". . . ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth, the word of God" (I Thessalonians 2:13).

Chapter 1 – The Bible

One of the most accurate descriptions of the way God used man to record His word is found in II Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . .”

The word “*inspiration*” as it is used in this scripture means “to divinely breathe.” God actually breathed into the minds of the 44 writers the very thoughts and words which they wrote. Although man physically wrote the Bible, it was actually penned by the divine hand of God.

The Bible took approximately 1,600 years to write, from its first author Moses in 1500 B.C. to its final penman, the apostle John in A.D. 96. Amazingly enough, the basic writing style of each of the 44 writers never changes, but flows from book to book so that the Bible is clearly seen to be the product of only one mastermind. This is a feat that no mortal could possibly accomplish but could only be done by God Himself.

For thousands of years, enemies of the Bible have sought to disprove and to destroy its validity, and yet more Bibles exist in the world today than any other book. Often, atheists in their attempts to overthrow the Word of God, find themselves captivated by its beauty and power and soon become Christians themselves. The Bible easily stands as the Book above all books, and its position cannot be destroyed.

The Bible – Review Questions

The Bible's History

- a. The Word of God is _____. (Isaiah 40:8)
- b. The first effort to combine the books of the Bible took place about A.D. _____.
- c. This was a _____ translation called the _____.
- d. In 1382, the Bible was translated into _____ by a scholar named _____.
- e. William Tyndale is responsible for _____ of the English Bible.
- f. The most common translation is the _____.
- g. The King James Version was put together in the year _____ under the leadership of King James I.

The Inspired Word of God

- a. The Greek word for Bible is *biblia* which means _____.
- b. The Bible contains _____ books, which are the writings of _____ men.
- c. The Bible is not the word of men but the Word of _____. (II Thessalonians 2:13)
- d. All scripture is given by _____ of the Holy Ghost. (II Timothy 3:16)
- e. The Bible took approximately _____ years to write.
- f. Its first writer was _____ in 1500 B.C., and its final penman was _____ in A.D. 96.

Chapter 1 – The Bible

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. Who actually wrote the Bible?
II Peter 1:21
2. How is it possible for the Bible to be the Word of God even though it was written by men?
I Corinthians 2:13
I Thessalonians 2:13
Galatians 1:11—12
II Timothy 3:16
Ephesians 3:3—5
3. Why is the Bible the only book needed to know God's will?
II Samuel 22:31
Proverbs 30:5
Psalm 19:7—8
Isaiah 8:16,20
Psalm 111:7
I Thessalonians 2:13
4. What does the Bible say about those who do not follow its teachings?
Proverbs 13:13
Matthew 15:3 II Timothy 4:3
Isaiah 8:20
Mark 7:9
Jeremiah 23:36
II Timothy 3:8
5. What does the Bible say about adding to or taking away from the Word of God?
Deuteronomy 4:2
II Corinthians 2:17
Proverbs 30:5
I Timothy 6:3
6. What is the penalty for adding to or taking away from God's Word as it is revealed in the Bible?
Galatians 1:8
Revelation 22:19

Chapter 2

The Purpose of the Bible

Makes Us Wise Unto Salvation

And that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures which are able to make thee *wise unto salvation* . . . II Timothy 3:15

One of the primary purposes of the Bible as we are told in this scripture is to make man *wise unto salvation*. This simply means that the Bible supplies the knowledge of salvation by giving clear and concise directions on how to be saved. Without this knowledge of salvation man is ultimately lost and bound for destruction.

God said, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6).

It is not the will of God for anyone to be lost or destroyed (II Peter 3:9), so the Bible is one of the many ways in which God is attempting to save mankind.

Since the days of Moses, with the Ten Commandments, God’s written word has played a major role in man’s salvation (Exodus 20:1-17).

Equips Us for Every Good Work

All scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished *in all good works*. II Timothy 3:16-17

Not only does the Bible supply the information that is needed in order for us to be saved, but it also supplies the needs of a person *after* he is saved; it equips or furnishes the Christian for his every good work. It is from the Bible that we obtain our doctrine, our point of reference for right and wrong and accurate instruction in righteousness. The psalmist David most appropriately wrote, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). Every Christian should strive to become skillful with the Word of God and to apply it to his every day life.

The Sword of the Spirit

When the apostle Paul describes the spiritual suit of armor (Ephesians 6:12-17) that every Christian must wear, he concludes by saying, “And take the helmet of salvation, and *the sword of the spirit which is the word of God*” (Ephesians 6:17).

The Bible is the most powerful and major weapon of any active Christian. Most of us are familiar with the great power of the name of the Lord, but amazingly enough we find that His *Word* is placed even above His name (Psalm 138:2). So powerful is *the Word of God* that it is described as being, “. . . sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit . . .”

Chapter 2 – The Purpose of the Bible

(Hebrews 4:12). The Word of God is *truth* (John 17:17), and it can cut very deep into a man's conscience -- convicting him from within. The Word of God is used to save souls (Romans 1:16); Jesus used it to combat Satan (Matthew 4); and David described it as, “. . . a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105).

As a spiritual weapon, the Bible can be used in almost every situation and is vital to the service of all Christians.

The Purpose of the Bible – Review Questions

Makes Us Wise unto Salvation

- a. One of the primary purposes of the Bible is to make us _____.
- b. Without this knowledge of salvation, man is lost and bound for _____.
- c. My people are _____ for lack of _____. (Hosea 4:6)
- d. It is not the _____ of God for anyone to be _____. (II Peter 3:9)

Equips Us for Every Good Work

- a. The scripture is profitable for _____, for _____, for _____, for _____ in righteousness.
- b. It is from the Bible that we obtain our _____.
- c. Thy _____ have I hid in my, that I might not _____ against thee. (Psalm 119:11)
- d. Every Christian should strive to become _____ with the Word of God.

The Sword of the Spirit

- a. And take the _____ of salvation, and the _____ of the Spirit, which is the _____ of God. (Ephesians 6:17)
- b. We find that His _____ is placed even above His name. (Psalm 138:2)
- c. The Word of God is _____ than any two edged sword. (Hebrews 4:12)
- d. The Word of God is _____. (John 17:17)
- e. The Word of God is used to _____. (Romans 1:16)
- f. David saw the Word of God as “a _____ unto my feet, and a _____ unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105)

Chapter 2 – The Purpose of the Bible

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What was God's purpose for giving us the Bible?
Psalm 107:19-20
John 6:63
II Timothy 3:15-17
Psalm 119:130
John 20:31
2. How can the scriptures be a Christian's spiritual weapon?
II Corinthians 10:4
Ephesians 6:11-17
3. Why is it so vitally important that Christians base their beliefs on the complete truth of God found in the Bible?
Deuteronomy 4:2
Matthew 4:4
Proverbs 30:5
II Timothy 3:16
4. How will the Bible be used in the judgment of man?
Jeremiah 23:39
Hebrews 4:12
John 12:48
Revelation 19:13-15
5. What do the Scriptures say about interpreting the Bible?
II Peter 1:20

Chapter 3

Understanding the Bible

The Spirit as a Teacher

When he, the Spirit of truth [Holy Ghost], is come, he will guide you into all truth . . .
John 16:13

. . . The Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost . . . he shall teach you all things . . .
John 14:26

When we enroll in a school of some kind, the first two things we have assigned to us are a teacher and a textbook. God has made the same provision for His church. Our teacher is the Holy Ghost, and our textbook is the Bible. This is one of the countless reasons that we need the Holy Ghost; without it, we have no teacher.

It stands to reason that the best teacher of the Bible would be the author of the Bible - whom the Scriptures prove is the Holy Ghost (II Peter 1:21; II Timothy 3:16). When the Spirit begins to teach, scriptures you may have read time after time suddenly become clear and meaningful. There are millions of people who will testify that they did not understand the Bible until after they were filled with the Spirit of its author. The apostle Paul was taught almost exclusively by the Holy Ghost and then went on to write fourteen books of the Bible (Galatians 1:12).

If not for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, there would be a great void in our scriptural understanding. If a person has not been filled with the *Spirit of truth* (John 16:13), he should seek it as a promise from God (Acts 2:39).

Testimony of the Spirit as a Teacher. I can't tell you the number of times I have heard explained the difference between conviction and condemnation. Yet when I asked God to teach me the difference, He answered! He used my own daughter to teach me. One afternoon, my daughter was berating herself for having had bad behavior earlier that day. As I listened to her, I understood that she was condemning herself because I tend to do the same thing myself when I make a mistake. I immediately spoke to her that she should not do that. It is the enemy wanting her to feel bad about herself. I further explained that God wants you to feel sorry (*or convicted*) about what you did wrong, not feel bad (*or condemned*) about yourself! As I helped my daughter, God helped His daughter -- me -- understand the difference, and He brought to mind a scripture I had read only days before, "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust" (Psalm 103:14). God does not expect us to be perfect, so we shouldn't expect it of ourselves. Wow!

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

God's Every Word

. . . man shall not live by bread alone, but by *every word* that proceeded from the mouth of God. Matthew 4:4

Because the Bible is actually God speaking to man, a person should never neglect even the smallest portion of the Scriptures. The only way to achieve a proper understanding of the Bible is to allow *every* scripture to work in harmony with the others.

As a road map to heaven, the Bible is complete and concise, giving to all men an equal chance to eternal life. But it is up to the individual to read and to follow its every word.

Pastors and Teachers

In conjunction with the Holy Ghost, God has provided for His church pastors and teachers to lead us into greater depths of understanding. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers: For the perfecting of the saints” (Ephesians 4:11-12).

For the perfecting of every saint, there must be a God-ordained pastor and teacher. In most instances, a pastor will also be a teacher and will guide his congregation as a shepherd leading a flock. The word *pastor* comes from the Greek word *poimen* (poy-mane) which means “shepherd.” For a proper understanding of the Scriptures, a person should be subject to his pastor-teacher and follow him as he follows Christ (I Corinthians 11:1; Romans 13:1-6; Hebrews 13:7,17).

Prayer

For God to begin instructing and teaching you, you must first ask to be taught. The Bible says, “. . . ye have not, because ye ask not” (James 4:2). With an honest desire to learn, seek God diligently in prayer and allow Him to guide you into truth.

And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22

Ask and it shall be given you; seek, and you shall find . . . Matthew 7:7

To be diligent in prayer is one key to receiving answers from God; this includes the receiving of knowledge. The word *diligent* means “constant or tireless effort.” “. . . He that cometh to God must first believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him” (Hebrews 11:6). Only by diligently praying and seeking God can anyone expect Him to move in his life (James 1:6-7).

Meditation

But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in his law doth he meditate day and night. Psalm 1:2

I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways Psalm 119:15

My hands will I lift up unto thy commandments, which I have loved, and I will meditate in thy statutes. Psalm 119:48

After studying the Word of God and seeking Him in prayer, a person should then meditate on the things that he has read. Do not be misled by the word *meditate*. It still means “to ponder.” While in

an automobile, at work, or at any other opportunity, one should ponder God's Word over and over. This helps to create an atmosphere enabling the Holy Ghost to instruct.

Even with the Holy Ghost, prayer and meditation, the Bible teaches that the "spirit of error" (I John 4:6) can still mislead and misguide us. The only absolute way to know that an idea is correct is if it is consistent with *every* scripture in the Bible.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

This is one of the most important and one of the most overlooked scriptures in the Bible: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God . . . rightly dividing the word of truth" (II Timothy 2:15).

First, we are told what to do -- to study. Then we are told why we should study -- to show ourselves approved unto God; not to man, but unto God. Thirdly, we are told how to become approved -- by rightly dividing the Word of Truth.

It should be the desire of every believer to show himself approved unto God, and here he is given the key -- by rightly dividing the Word of Truth. This means that the Bible, the Word of Truth (John 17:17), must be properly divided so that the Scriptures are used in their proper context.

If you were to study a geography book would you go to the chapter on mountains for information about oceans? Would you go to the section on deserts to learn about the North Pole? You would not and neither should the Bible be studied in that way. The Word of Truth, as any other book, is arranged in an organized manner and contains divisions that make it easier to understand. There are chapters telling how to be saved, scriptures which speak to the church and scriptures which speak to sinners. Knowing where to go for what we need is vitally important and can mean the difference between our understanding and our confusion. Only by rightly dividing the Word of Truth can each scripture be read in its proper context.

The Divisions

Fundamentally, the Bible is divided into two Testaments -- the Old and the New. By looking at the true meaning of the word testament, it becomes evident why the division is made. The Greek word for testament as it is used in the Bible is *diatheke* (dee-ath-ay'-kay) which means "a covenant" or "a contract." The Old Testament is in essence a history of the *old contract* between God and man. Likewise the New Testament is written about the *new contract* between God and man. God's people have lived according to the new contract (covenant) since it replaced the old one nearly two thousand years ago.

There are, however, some very important and very distinct divisions found within both the Old and the New Testaments. The Old Testament consists of three major divisions: *historical*, *poetical* and *prophetical*. The New Testament contains four major divisions within itself: - the *Gospels*, the *Acts*, the *epistles*, and *Revelation*.

A basic understanding of these divisions can greatly simplify the reading of God's Word.

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Old Testament

Historical

The seventeen historical books, Genesis through Esther, are devoted primarily to the history of the Jewish nation of Israel. It is in this division that God makes His covenant with Abraham, the Father of the Jews (Genesis 12:2). Four hundred thirty years later, He gives the Tables of Law to Moses upon Mount Sinai (Exodus 31:18).

In the historical division, the Law of Moses is written about in greater detail than in any other place in the Bible. It describes the sacrificing of animals to God, the sprinkling of blood and water, the burning of incense, special feasts and ceremonies and even certain foods that could or could not be eaten. These are only a few of the many *works of the law* that the Jews were required by God to perform. Only by the *works of the law* could a man be saved according to the old covenant or contract.

Since the crucifixion and ascension of Jesus Christ, man is no longer saved by *works*; but instead he is saved through faith in Jesus Christ. Consequently, if a man adheres to the old law of Moses and its *works* he will actually fall from the grace of God (Galatians 5:4). The Jews of that time found it difficult to make the transition from Judaism or works to Christianity or faith. For this reason, the New Testament frequently speaks of *works* and *works of the law* in relation to faith in scriptures such as Ephesians 2:8-9.

Be keenly aware that these scriptures are speaking of the *works of the law* and not of our works as Christians.

The historical division of the Bible is special in many ways and can easily be identified as the backbone of the Old Testament. It makes very interesting reading, and as the history of our spiritual heritage, it is irreplaceable in God's recorded Word.

Poetical

Job through Song of Solomon are five books which beautifully record the reflections and experiences of some unique men in the Kingdom of God. They are mixed with many valuable lessons and profound truths. They include the story of Job's patience and devotion toward God; the intimate prayer and worship of David, a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22); and the writings of Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived (I Kings 3:12). These books occupy a very special place in the Word of God.

Prophetical

Covering a span of time from approximately 860 B.C. to 396 B.C. are seventeen books of prophecy, Isaiah through Malachi.

The five books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel and Daniel are known as the Major Prophets. The remaining twelve are called the Minor Prophets. This does not mean that any book is more important than another, but simply that some are shorter in length. A prophet was a type of preacher who brought the anointed Word of God to the people.

Recorded in these books are prophetic scriptures which foretold the birth of Jesus (Isaiah 7:14) and His suffering (Isaiah 53:2-12). These prophecies helped the early Christians prove that Jesus was the Messiah or Christ. They also provide important information regarding the end of time.

On a number of occasions recorded in this division, the Jewish nation turned from the Law, transgressed God's commandments and even went so far as to worship idols. Consequently, many of these writings are the result of God trying to bring the Jews back to obedience.

New Testament

Gospels

The Gospels, Matthew through John, are the first four books of the New Testament. In these books are recorded in detail the life, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. The word *gospel* means "good news." The Gospels bring the good news of Jesus Christ to man.

It is important to realize that the church as we know it today did not begin in the gospels. Nowhere in these four books will you find anyone who was born again and converted as we are today. Jesus spoke often of the church age and the birth of water and Spirit, but it was always in *future tense*. He emphasized very strongly that *no one* would receive the Holy Spirit and be born again until He first ascended into heaven.

Nevertheless, I tell you the truth; it is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter [Holy Ghost] will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. John 16:7

Jesus did not depart into heaven until the first chapter of the book of Acts, the next division of the Bible. As long as He remained on the earth, the Holy Spirit could not be given and the church could not begin.

Even the apostle Peter, after traveling and living with Jesus for three and one half years, was not converted to Christianity until after Jesus rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. On the day before the Lord's crucifixion, He spoke to Peter of his conversion, or birth of water and Spirit, that was shortly to come.

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren. Luke 22:31-32

You will find Peter's conversion taking place after the Lord's ascension, when he is born again in the next division – the book of Acts. It was in Acts, not the Gospels that Christianity began, and God first poured out His Spirit. People in the Gospels such as Zaccheus (Luke 19:9) and the thief on the cross (Luke 23:43) were not born again but were saved because they were Jews and Jesus had power on earth to forgive their sins (Matthew 9:6).

The Gospels make some of the most enjoyable and profitable reading found anywhere in the Bible. Always bear in mind, however, that this was a different era. There was no Holy Ghost given and no blood to wash away sins. Our church and our salvation are found in the next division – the book of Acts.

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Acts

The Acts of the Apostles is probably the most unique book of the Bible. It is the only place in the Bible that shows a panoramic view of anyone being *born again*. Its twenty-eight chapters frequently speak of miraculous healings, speaking with tongues and many other works of the Holy Ghost.

The book of Acts records the birth of the New Testament Church (Acts 2). The apostle Peter preached its very first sermon and over 3,000 people were converted in a single day (Acts 2:41). When the crowd responded to Peter's preaching and asked him how to be saved (Acts 2:37), he replied, ". . . 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" (Acts 2:38).

These are the most clear and precise instructions found anywhere in the Bible on how to be saved: to first repent, to be baptized in water and to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The book of Acts is the only book of the Bible where these instructions are given in such detail, and for this reason, it is called "The Book of Salvation." Anyone wanting to know how to be saved or tell others how to be saved should go immediately to the book of Acts.

There are four particular places in this division that a Christian should be very familiar with: Acts 2:1-4, 38; 8:15-17; 10:44-48; 19:2-6.

In all four instances, the people closely follow Peter's instructions and are baptized in water and filled with the Holy Spirit. A person will also notice in these scriptures that speaking with tongues can always be associated with the receiving of the Holy Ghost.

The book of Acts is also significant in that it shows tremendous unity and soul-winning in the church (Acts 8:18-24; 17:6; 15:26; 16:5). A study of the Acts of the Apostles is a must for every believer.

Epistles

The epistles consist of the twenty-one books from Romans through Jude. The word *epistle* comes from the Greek *epistole* which means "a letter" or "a message." The epistles are actually letters that were written over 1900 years ago. A very important factor to remember when reading the epistles is that each of them is a letter written to people *who were already saved*. *In other words, they were written to Christians*.

For example, the Book of Romans was written by Paul to the church at Rome: "To all that be in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Romans 1:7).

The Book of Corinthians was written to the church at Corinth: "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (I Corinthians 1:2).

The Book of Philippians was written to the church at Philippi (Philippians 1:1), and so on.

The apostle John also strengthens this point as he addresses his epistle to people who were already saved: "I [John] have not written unto you [Christians] because you know not the truth, *but because you know it . . .*" (I John 2:21).

The purpose of the epistles is to instruct the Christian in holy living and to teach the things that keep him saved. *Never* do they explain to anyone how to be saved because they were addressed to people who were already saved.

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Scriptures such as Romans 10:9 and Ephesians 2:8 touch slightly on conversion but do not go into detail.

The primary theme of the epistles is “walk in the Spirit not in the flesh.” We learn that it is the power of the Holy Ghost dwelling in us that keeps us sanctified and justified (I Corinthians 6:11). The epistles enable us to reach greater heights in our walk with God and encourage us to live more disciplined lives. For the sake of understanding, remember always that they were written to *Christians*, not to sinners, and teach how to stay saved, not how to be saved.

Revelation

Revelation is the final book of the Bible. It was written by the apostle John while in exile on the isle of Patmos. The Book of Revelation speaks of the rapture (Revelation 4:1), gives man a brief look into heaven (Revelation 4) and records the ending of all things.

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Divisions of the Bible

Old Testament (Law)

Historical (Genesis through Esther: history of the Jewish nation)

Poetical (Job through Song of Solomon: wisdom, worship and valuable lessons)

Prophetical (Isaiah through Malachi: writings and predictions of the prophets)

New Testament (Grace)

Gospels (Matthew through John: preparation for birth of church and life of Jesus)

Acts (Acts of Apostles: birth of church; only book of Bible that gives plan of salvation)

Epistles (Romans through Jude: instructions to the church; letters to Christians teaching how to stay saved, not how to be saved)

Revelation (Revelation: rapture of the church and the end of all things)

Understanding the Bible – Review Questions

The Spirit as a Teacher

- Our textbook is the _____, and our teacher is the _____.
- The Apostle _____ was taught almost exclusively by the Holy Ghost. (Galatians 1:12)
- If not for the teaching of the Holy Ghost, there would be a great void in our _____.

God’s Every Word

- Man shall not live by bread alone, but by _____ that proceedeth from the mouth of _____. (Matthew 4:4)
- It must be by _____ of God that we build our beliefs and base our _____.
- As a road map to _____, the _____ is complete and concise.

Pastors and Teachers

- “And He gave some, _____; and some _____; and some, _____; and some, _____ and _____ for the perfecting of the saints . . .” (Ephesians. 4:11-12).
- The word *pastor* comes from the Greek word *poimen* which means _____.

Prayer

- With an honest desire to learn, seek God diligently in _____.
- To be diligent in prayer is one key to receiving answers from God, and this includes the receiving of _____.
- Only by diligently _____ and _____ God, can anyone expect Him to move in his life. (James 1:6-7)

Meditation

- “But his delight is in the _____ of the Lord, and in his law doth he _____ day and night” (Psalm 1:2).
- After studying the _____ of God and seeking Him in prayer, a person should then _____ on the things that he has read.
- The word *meditate* simply means _____.

Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth

- “Study to shew thyself approved unto God . . . _____ the word of truth” (II Timothy 2:15).
- The Bible, the Word of Truth (John 17:17), must be properly _____.
- Knowing where to go in the Bible for what we need is vitally important and can mean the difference between our _____ and our _____.

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Divisions of the Bible

- a. The Bible is divided into two Testaments; the word *testament* means “a _____” or “a _____.”
- b. The Old Testament consists of three major divisions: _____, _____ and _____.
- c. The New Testament contains four divisions: the _____, the _____, the _____, and _____.
- d. The epistles were written to people who were _____.
- e. The Old Testament is built on the _____, and the New Testament is founded on _____.
- f. The Book of Revelation records the _____ of all things.

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What are some of the benefits of reading the Bible?
Romans 15:4
II Timothy 3:15-17
2. What mystery does the Bible reveal to us?
Romans 16:25-26
Ephesians 3:3-6
3. What is the Gospel of Christ and its importance?
Romans 1:16
I John 4:9
II Corinthians 5:19
4. How does a person become spiritually minded, and why is this important?
John 6:63
Romans 8:6-8
5. How important is prayer in understanding the Word of God?
Psalm 145:18
Ephesians 6:18-19
Jeremiah 33:3
Philippians 4:6
Matthew 7:7
James 1:5; 5:16

Chapter 3 – Understanding the Bible

Chapter 4

Born Again

God's Gift to the Sinner

There is none righteous, no, not one.

Romans 3:10

Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me.

Psalm 51:5

Without any choice, man is born a sinner. A person does not have to speak a word or even make a single decision to be a sinner; he accomplishes this just by being born. This, of course, was not God's original plan; but, as a result of the fall of Adam and Eve to temptation, sin entered into the human race and now every man is born a sinner.

We know that in the beginning man was created holy and sinless, without even the knowledge of sin (Genesis 2:17). He was made in the image of a pure and righteous God (Genesis 1:27), so man himself was originally pure and righteous. He was given complete dominion over the earth and nature (Genesis 1:28) and enjoyed free and open fellowship with God. *Sin disrupted everything*. Man must now strive with great effort in order to eat and to live (Genesis 3:19), woman must experience sorrow and suffering in childbirth (Genesis 3:16) and because of sin, man must ultimately die and return to the earth.

For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

Genesis 3:19

For the wages of sin is death.

Romans 6:23

Therefore as by one man sin entered into the world and death by sin. . .

Romans 5:12

But the most saddening and devastating result of sin is *separation from God* (Isaiah 59:1, 2). Man lost the free and open communion that he had with his creator because God cannot fellowship with sin (II Corinthians 6:14). Not only is man separated from God during his life on earth, but any man dying in sin is alienated from God *for eternity* (Revelation 21:27).

Obviously, man needed a *savior*. He needed a savior who could once again make him righteous and restore the fellowship he originally had with God. It was for this reason that Jesus Christ came into the world. Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of all mankind so that people everywhere could have the choice of being saved.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

Chapter 4 – Born Again

And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin

I John 3:5

Jesus has paid the full price for man's salvation (I Corinthians 6:20) and so fellowship with God can ultimately be restored. Man can now escape from the bondage of sin and the curse that it brought upon the world. This is because a man can be *born again*. Through our natural birth we inherit from Adam, our earthly father, sin, suffering and death. But when a man is born again it is a spiritual birth. We then inherit from our Heavenly Father righteousness, joy and eternal life. The born again experience is God's gift to the sinner (Romans 5:15).

By being born again, a person is made a new creature and is given a chance to start his life all over again (II Corinthians 5:17). Not only are his sins washed away and forgotten (Hebrews 8:12), but he is filled with the Spirit of God to help him in his resistance to sin (Galatians 5:16). Being *born again* is the very *heart* of the gospel of Christ, and it still comes in the same glorious and powerful way that it came when the church began (Hebrews 13:8; Acts 2:39). As you will see from the following pages, the Bible gives very detailed directions on how to be born again. The eternal destiny of a person's soul is determined by his obedience to the Word of God (Romans 6:17), so all of these scriptures will be explained in the most clear and simple way possible.

Birth of the Water and Spirit

There is no way to overemphasize the need of every individual to understand and receive the born again experience because without it Jesus said we could not enter into the kingdom of God: “. . . verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God” (John 3:3).

Jesus went on to say that this new birth was of both *water and Spirit*: “. . . 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” (John 3:5).

It is interesting to note that water and spirit are two elements that were also important to our natural birth. The water cushioned us in our mother's womb and made our natural birth possible and only because we are born with a human spirit within us can we have life (James 2:26).

But, Jesus said, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit” (John 3:6).

Just as the two elements, water and spirit, are vital to the natural birth, the Bible teaches that they are also vital to the Spiritual birth. The only scriptural way to be born again is to be properly baptized in water and to be baptized, or filled, with the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38).

In the following scripture, Paul refers to the born again experience as the “*doctrine of baptisms*,” and he lists it among the doctrines of Christ (Hebrews 6:1): “Of the *doctrine of baptisms*, and of laying on of hands, and resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment . . .” (Hebrews 6:2).

Baptisms, as it is used here in its plural form, is referring to the baptism of water and the baptism of the Holy Ghost which represent, of course, the birth of water and Spirit.

The baptism of water is necessary for every person's sins to be washed away (Acts 22:16), and the baptism of the Holy Ghost is man's vital link with God. Throughout the Word of God you will find that water always represents a type of cleansing (Exodus 30:18-21) and a type of salvation (I

Corinthians 10:1-6; I Peter 3:20, 21). The Spirit always represents power and holiness (Micah 3:8; Zechariah 4:6; Hebrews 9:1-9).

Neither the baptism or birth, of the water nor of the Spirit should ever be treated lightly or neglected (Hebrews 2:3).

Born Into the Body

Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular. I Corinthians 12:27

So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.
Romans 12:5

The Bible often refers to God's church as the body of Christ. A person does not become a member of this body by joining a particular church or signing a membership card; he must be *born* into it. The born again experience of water and Spirit is the only door leading into the church body of Jesus Christ (John 10:9).

Found in the first letter of the apostle John is a scripture that refers to a very interesting parallel between the church body of Christ and the physical body of Christ: "And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one" (I John 5:8).

The three elements mentioned in this scripture, water, blood, and Spirit, are the three elements which came from the physical body of Jesus at His death, and they are also the same three elements which are required for entering into His church body.

At Calvary, when the spear was thrust into His side, there came out blood and water (John 19:34), and at the point of death His spirit departed from His physical body (Luke 23:46). The water and the blood signify the necessity of repentance and water baptism for entering the body (Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5; I Corinthians 6:11), and the Spirit represents the necessity of being baptized with the Holy Ghost (Romans 8:9-11; I Corinthians 6:11). Only by repentance (blood) and by water baptism (water) and by Holy Ghost baptism (Spirit) can a person be born into the body of Christ (Acts 2:38; 19:2-6).

The Scriptures state that three agents, water, blood and Spirit, *bear witness on earth* whether we are or are not a part of the body (I John 5:8).

The Apostolic Doctrine

And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself
being the chief corner stone. Ephesians 2:20

To be built upon the foundation of the apostles, a person must believe in, as well as receive, the apostolic born again experience.

The chief apostle to whom we look to determine exactly what the apostolic doctrine consists of is the apostle Peter. Peter was given "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" and whatsoever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven and whatsoever he loosed on earth would be loosed in heaven (Matthew 16:19). He can be viewed as the key man.

Because Peter held the keys to the kingdom, it was his responsibility to stand up on the day of Pentecost and preach the "plan of salvation." By instructing the people to repent, to be baptized and to receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:38), Peter used his keys to open the door of salvation to the Jews.

Chapter 4 – Born Again

He also used the same keys to open up salvation to the Samaritans (Acts 8:15-17) and to the Gentiles (Acts 10:44-48). In each instance, Peter was responsible for teaching them about the born again experience -- repentance, water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism. This is the apostolic doctrine of the new birth, and it is the foundation on which the church is built (Ephesians 2:20).

The apostle Paul, chief apostle to the Gentiles, was taught the very same doctrine by the Lord Himself (Galatians 1:12). To ensure that his doctrine was the same as Peter's with no flaws or contradictions, he met with Peter in Jerusalem. For fifteen days Paul confirmed his teaching with the "key man," Peter, and then took his doctrine to the Gentiles (Acts 19:1-6).

There is only one apostolic doctrine of salvation -- repentance, water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism -- and as a word of warning regarding this, Paul wrote, "But though we [Paul and Peter] or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that you have received, let him be accursed" (Galatians 1:8).

The born again experience of repentance, water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism will be covered in detail in the following three chapters.

Born Again – Review Questions

God’s Gift to the Sinner

- a. “There is none _____, no, not one” (Romans 3:10).
- b. Without any choice, man is born a _____.
- c. In the beginning man was made in the image of a pure and _____ God. (Genesis 1:27)
- d. Man enjoyed free and open fellowship with God, but _____ disrupted everything.
- e. “For the wages of sin is _____” (Psalm 6:23).
- f. God cannot fellowship with _____. (Corinthians 6:14)
- g. Any man dying in sin is alienated from God for _____. (Revelation 21:27)
- h. “And ye know that Jesus Christ was manifested to take away our _____; and in him is no _____” (I John 3:5).
- i. By being _____ _____, a person is made a new creature.
- j. The _____ destiny of a person’s soul is determined by his _____ to the word of God. (Romans 6:17)

Birth of the Water and Spirit

- a. “Except a man be born of _____ and of the _____ he cannot _____ into the kingdom of God” (John 3:5).
- b. The only scriptural way to be born again is to be properly baptized in _____ and to be baptized (filled) with the _____. (Acts 2:38)
- c. The baptism of _____ is necessary for every person’s sins to be _____ away. (Acts 22:16)

Born Into the Body

- a. The Bible often refers to God’s church as the _____ of Christ. A person must be _____ into it.
- b. The born again experience of _____ and _____ is the only door leading into the church body of Jesus Christ. (John 10:9)

The Apostolic Doctrine

- a. “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, _____ himself the chief _____” (Ephesians 2:20).
- b. The chief apostle to whom we look to is the apostle _____.
- c. Peter was given “the _____ of the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 16:19).
- d. Peter used his “keys” to open the door to the _____, to the _____ and to the _____. (Acts 2, 8, 10)
- e. The apostle _____, chief apostle to the Gentiles, was taught the very same _____ by the Lord Himself. (Galatians 1:12)

Chapter 4 – Born Again

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What is sin?
Romans 3:19-20
I John 3:4
2. How did man inherit a sinful nature through Adam?
Genesis 3:2-6
Romans 3:23
Genesis 3:16-19
Romans 5:12
3. What is the punishment for sin?
Daniel 12:2
John 5:29
Matthew 25:41, 46
4. Is it possible to be reunited with God?
II Corinthians 5:20-21
Ephesians 2:13
Ephesians 1:6-7
5. What is meant by justification?
Romans 5:1-2
I John 1:9
II Corinthians 5:19
6. How does a person receive justification?
Proverbs 28:13
Galatians 2:16
Romans 3:25-26
Galatians 3:24-27
Romans 5:9
7. Why is justification necessary?
Psalm 51:4-5
Romans 3:23
Romans 3:12
8. Is faith necessary for us to accept justification?
Romans 4:25
I Corinthians 15:17
I Corinthians 15:3-4
9. How closely should we heed the words of the apostles?
Matthew 16:17-19
I Thessalonians 2:13
Romans 2:16

Chapter 5

Repentance

Essential to Salvation

When John the Baptist came from the wilderness preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, he made *repentance* a major part of his message. “In those days came John the Baptist preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and saying, *repent* ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 3:1, 2).

Jesus also preached repentance and stressed its importance to salvation.

From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, *repent*: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. Matthew 4:17

I tell you, nay: but except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise perish. Luke 13:5

The apostle Peter preached the very first sermon of the New Testament church, and he stressed repentance before he spoke of conversion. “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” (Acts 2:38).

The apostle Paul preached *repentance* throughout Europe and Asia. “And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent” (Acts 17:30).

When the gospel is preached, the message *must* include repentance, because it is the basis for the birth of water and Spirit. Repentance is always essential to one’s salvation, and it must take place before anyone can be born again. The first step toward repenting is recognizing that we are all sinners and without the grace of God, hopelessly lost. A person should then be sorry for his sins and confess them to God, because then and only then can God forgive them (I John 1:9).

Repentance qualifies a person for water baptism, and as an act of obedience baptism should immediately follow after repentance. Darkness has no communion with light, and neither can a man partake of the saving grace of God until he has repented (II Corinthians 6:14).

Is a Change of Direction

Being sorry for our sins and confessing them to God is not enough; a person must also *turn from his sins* (II Corinthians 6:17). “Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord and he will have mercy upon him” (Isaiah 55:7).

The definition of *repentance* is “to turn around and begin in a new direction.” Since man is actually born in sin and with his back toward God, there must come a point in his life when he changes his direction -- repentance is that point.

Chapter 5 - Repentance

When a man is fully repentant he begins a new journey with his face toward God and his back toward sin (Philippians 3:14; I Peter 2:9).

Is Death to Sin

In order for there to be a rebirth there must first be the death of a man's sinful nature -- repentance is that death. By repenting, a person dies out to sin and leaves the ways of the world behind. "How shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" (Romans 6:2).

Only by crucifying our old sinful nature can we expect to obtain a *new nature* of godliness and holiness. Paul speaks often of crucifying his flesh, or sinful nature, which simply means that he is dead to sin and alive to Christ (Romans 6:6; Galatians 2:20). "And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5:24).

Repentance in this context is a lifetime undertaking. Even after a person has been born again, he continually has to repent and crucify the sinful nature of the flesh. As long as a man lives he will be confronted by the weakness of his flesh, and only by dying out to sin every day can a person expect to remain saved (I Corinthians 15:31; Romans 12:2).

Since it is appointed unto a man once to die (Hebrews 9:27), we have the choice of *dying out to sin* to obtain salvation, or to *die in sin* and be eternally lost.

Note: Oftentimes people confuse temptation with sin; it is not a sin to be tempted. Temptation is a natural part of our Christian walk, and Jesus himself was tempted (Matthew 4). We are not dead to temptation but dead to the fulfillment of temptation, which is sin.

Originates With the Love of God

A person is drawn to repentance by the love of God. The pure and tender feeling that often results in tears is the luring of God that causes a person to repent:

. . . the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance. Romans 2:4

For godly sorrow [shame] worketh repentance to salvation. II Corinthians 7:10

This special feeling of love is actually the Spirit of God drawing a person to repentance. A person cannot generate this within himself; it can happen only if the Spirit *draws* him (John 6:44). We should never "hold back" or quench this feeling (I Thessalonians 5:19) but instead submit to the Spirit and allow it to cleanse and purify our hearts (I Corinthians 6:11).

It is not the will of God "that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance" (II Peter 3:9), so God undoubtedly deals with everyone at one time or another. It is important that a person respond when he feels God drawing him to repentance.

Repentance – Review Questions

Essential to Salvation

- a. When John the Baptist came, he made _____ a major part of his message.
- b. “I tell you, nay: but except ye _____, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:5).
- c. Darkness has no communion with _____, and neither can a man partake of the saving grace of God until he has _____. (II Corinthians 6:14)

Is a Change of Direction

- a. Being sorry for our sins and confessing them to God is not enough; a person must also _____ from his _____.
- b. The definition of *repentance* is “to _____ and begin in a _____.”
- c. When a man has fully repented, he begins a new journey with his _____ toward God and his _____ toward sin.

Is Death to Sin

- a. Only by crucifying our old sinful nature can we expect to obtain a _____ of godliness and holiness.
- b. As long as a man lives he will be afflicted by the _____ of his flesh, and only by dying out to sin every day can a person expect to remain _____.

Originates with the Love of God

- a. “. . . that _____ leadeth thee to repentance” (Romans 2:4).
- b. “For godly sorrow [shame] worketh repentance to _____” (II Corinthians 7:10).
- c. This special feeling of love is actually the _____ drawing a person to repentance.
- d. It is not the _____ “that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” (II Peter 3:9).

Chapter 5 - Repentance

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What is repentance?
 - I Kings 8:33-40
 - Ezekiel 14:6
 - Job 33:26-27
 - II Corinthians 7:9-10
 - Psalms 34:14
 - II Timothy 2:25-26
2. What part does repentance play in the forgiving of sins?
 - Psalms 32:6
 - Luke 18:13
 - Psalms 41:4
 - James 4:8
 - Joel 2:12
 - I John 1:9
3. Is it possible to know that we have truly repented?
 - Psalms 51:17
 - James 2:17, 20
 - Acts 2:37-38
4. How does God respond when man repents?
 - II Chronicles 7:14
 - Luke 15:7
 - Psalms 147:3
 - James 4:8
 - Zechariah 1:3
 - I John 1:9
5. What happens to a person who does not repent?
 - Psalms 81:11-12
 - Hebrews 10:29-31
 - Luke 13:3, 5
6. How important was repentance in the ministry of Jesus?
 - Matthew 4:17
 - Luke 5:32
 - Matthew 9:13
 - Luke 24:47
 - Mark 2:17
 - Acts 17:30

Chapter 6

Water Baptism

Should Follow Repentance

Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ . . . Acts 2:38

The main prerequisite for water baptism is complete repentance (Acts 3:19). The Bible says that once a man has put his hand to the plow he must not look back; otherwise, he is unworthy for the kingdom of God (Luke 9:62). Following repentance a person should immediately be baptized in water and continue in his new direction.

Water baptism is a very sacred and spiritual event and should only be entered into with a repented heart. For this reason, infants should not be baptized. Only when a child has reached an age when he can fully repent should he then be baptized. Infant baptism is found nowhere in the Bible, so there is no biblical precedent.

Is an Act of Righteousness

When Jesus officially began His ministry, one of the first things He did was go to John the Baptist to be baptized. But John, knowing Jesus to be perfect and without sin, requested that Jesus baptize him instead. Then Jesus replied, “. . . Suffer [permit] it to be so now for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness . . .” (Matthew 3:15).

Jesus stated in this scripture that baptism was an act of righteousness. Even though He was sinless, Jesus walked approximately forty miles to be baptized just to set an example. As a part of fulfilling all righteousness we must follow Jesus’ example and be baptized.

To emphasize the importance of fulfilling righteousness, Revelation 19 tells us that clean and white robes will be worn in heaven. Revelation 19:8 says that these robes are the *robes of righteousness*. Without the robe of righteousness upon him, a person will be bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness (Matthew 22:13). Obviously, baptism as an act of righteousness is very important -- our salvation depends upon it.

Results from True Belief

As an act of righteousness, water baptism should be the result of a heartfelt belief, “For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation . . .” (Romans 10:10). When Jesus confronted the Pharisees, He told them that their worship and their works were in vain because they were not done from the heart (Matthew 15:8-9). Outwardly they appeared to be righteous, but inwardly they were full of sin (Matthew 23:27-28).

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

Water baptism is the outward evidence of an inward desire to obey and follow the gospel of Jesus Christ. When the Ethiopian eunuch desired Philip to baptize him, Philip’s reply was, “. . . If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest . . .” (Acts 8:37).

This is one of the reasons that the Bible frequently states that we must believe in order to be saved. *But only from the heart can man believe unto righteousness and be saved* (Romans 10:10).

Note: Belief alone cannot save; it must have results. For example, Romans 8:24 says we are saved by hope. Does hope alone save us? No, but its results do. The results of true belief are water baptism and Holy Ghost baptism; by these we are saved. Belief *must* have results.

Washes Us from Sins

When a person is baptized, he is washed from his sins by the blood of Jesus (Revelation 1:5). “Arise and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord” (Acts 22:16). This is also what the apostle Peter meant when he said, “. . . Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins . . .” (Acts 2:38).

At the Passover in Egypt, Moses and the Israelites were commanded to kill a lamb and apply the blood to the door posts of their houses. This was done so that when the death angel passed over and saw the blood they would be saved (Exodus 12). In a very similar way, we are saved today by the application of blood. Jesus Christ is our sacrificial lamb, and His blood must *be applied* to our hearts in order that we may be saved. “Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things. . . but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot” (I Peter 1:18, 19).

Even though the lamb was slain, the Israelites would not have been saved had the blood not been applied to the door post. Likewise, the blood of Jesus is ineffective to us unless it is properly applied. A person must repent and be baptized in water to apply the blood of Jesus to his heart. There is no other way to be washed from our sins.

Testimony of Baptism. I was baptized at eight years old. After graduating from high school, I rebelled and walked away from my relationship with God. But thanks to the prayers of my family and friends, I later turned my life back to God. For several more years, when watching the baptisms of other people, I would wonder how it must feel to be baptized and cleansed from your past. I felt a longing each time I heard a minister explain why baptism is important. I decided I wanted to be baptized again because I now understood the purpose of baptism and what it would mean for me. I’ll never forget the night I went down in the waters of baptism as an adult and fully understood that my past was forever washed away -- that I had become one with my heavenly Father and I was now a new creature in Christ. It was then that I felt my past was truly erased and that my sins were under the blood of Jesus. There is nothing special about the water or about the minister who baptizes you -- it has to do with obedience and being born again with your heavenly Father in the waters of baptism.

As a Part of the Gospel

. . . whether of sin unto death, or of *obedience* unto righteousness. Romans 6:16

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that *obey* not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. II Thessalonians 1:8

A person's salvation is contingent upon complete obedience to the gospel of Christ. The gospel of Jesus Christ requires that a person follow His example of death, burial and resurrection. It was necessary that Jesus die, be buried and rise again for our salvation (John 11:50, 51; Romans 5:8). If we are to be saved, we must be "in Christ" (I Corinthians 15:22) which means we must likewise experience death, burial and resurrection.

This is the true essence of the gospel. A man *dies* to sin through repentance (Romans 6:2), is *buried* with Christ in baptism (Colossians 2:12), and is *resurrected* a new man full of the Holy Ghost (Romans 8:11). This represents obedience to the gospel of Christ (Romans 6:1-9).

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus gave the commandment to go into all parts of the world and preach the gospel:

Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you . . . Matthew 28:19-20

And he said unto them, 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

This is universally known as the "Great Commission." Notice that Jesus instructed them to do three things: to preach, teach and *baptize*. Not only is it required of man to obey the gospel by being baptized, but it is also man's responsibility to spread this truth to all parts of the world.

Approximately ten days after the Great Commission was given, the apostle Peter responded to it by preaching the gospel on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). His sermon included death (repentance), burial (water baptism) and resurrection (Holy Ghost): "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" (Acts 2:38).

Peter preached the *full gospel* that day and continued to preach it for the duration of his ministry (Acts 3:19; 8:13-17; 10:44-48). It was also evident in his epistle, written some thirty years later, that baptism was a vital part of the gospel. Peter wrote, "The like figure, whereunto even baptism doth also now save us . . ." (I Peter 3:21).

Jesus has not changed since that time (Hebrews 13:8) nor has His gospel (Galatians 1:6-9). Water baptism is still an inseparable part of the gospel and cannot be ignored.

The Proper Way to Be Baptized

By Immersion

There are presently more than 400 different baptisms practiced in our world today; and yet the Scriptures teach that there is only one proper baptism: "One Lord, one faith, *one baptism*" (Ephesians 4:5).

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

To be baptized as the Scriptures teach is a very crucial matter -- our salvation depends on it. We must be “born again” of both water and Spirit; therefore, it is vitally important that we be baptized properly.

Baptism comes from the Greek word *baptizo* which means “to dip, plunge or immerse.” This original Greek definition (to immerse) is consistent with every water baptism found in the Bible.

When Jesus was baptized, the Scriptures state that He came straightway *out of the water* (Matthew 3:16). This strongly implies that He was submerged or immersed in the water. When Philip baptized the eunuch, the Bible declares that “they went down both into the water” (Acts 8:38) and then speaks of their coming out of the water (Acts 8:39). This also gives the impression of baptism by complete immersion just as the Greek *baptizo* conveys.

When the apostle Paul writes concerning the symbolic aspect of water baptism, he speaks of it as a burial which also implies complete immersion:

Therefore we are buried with him by baptism . . . Romans 6:4

Buried with him in baptism . . . Colossians 2:12

By every indication, the Word of God teaches water baptism by immersion alone.

In Jesus’ Name

For there is none other *name* under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved. Acts 4:12

Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the *name of the Lord Jesus* . . . Colossians 3:17

The *name of Jesus* is the name that is above all other names. Philippians 2:9

There are five places in the Bible where water baptism is described in detail. Each instance contains *the name of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5; 22:16), and it is absolutely vital that the *name of Jesus* be said when a person is baptized.

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus commanded the apostles to go into all nations and baptize them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 28:19). *Jesus* is the *name* of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. He was teaching the apostles when He said this, opening their understanding of His word (Luke 24:45). As they were commanded, the apostles went everywhere baptizing in the name of Jesus. Nowhere in the Bible are converts baptized in any other way than in the *name of Jesus*.

There can be a certain amount of confusion connected with the scripture Matthew 28:19 in which Jesus said to go everywhere baptizing in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A careful examination of the Scriptures reveals that apostolic baptism in the name of Jesus fulfills Matthew 28:19.

One of the most conclusive scriptures in the Bible supporting this is found in Corinthians; Paul said, “. . . was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?” (I Corinthians 1:13). According to this particular scripture, baptism is to be done in the name of the one who was crucified for us. No other name but Jesus can fill that requirement.

Furthermore, notice that in Matthew 28:19 Jesus explicitly said *name* and not *names*. “Name” is used here in its singular form and can only be referring to *one name*. The one name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost is Jesus. This is one of the most beautiful concepts found anywhere in the Bible, and it is vitally important that a person be baptized as Jesus commanded -- in the *name* of Jesus.

Name of the Father

Jesus, the Son of God, inherited His name from the Heavenly Father as we are told in Hebrews 1:4. He also spoke to the Jews at Jerusalem telling them, “I am come in my Father’s name” (John 5:43). The prophet Isaiah also spoke of the name of Jesus about 750 years before His birth:

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his *name* [Jesus] shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The Everlasting *Father*, The Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

According to these scriptures, the name that was given to Mary’s child that night in Bethlehem was actually the name of the everlasting Father. Jesus is not only the name of the Son (Matthew 1:21) but the Father as well. This is consistent with all scriptures in the Bible.

Name of the Holy Ghost

The apostles understood that the name of the Father and of the Son was Jesus, and they also understood Jesus to be the name of the Holy Ghost. The Lord Himself told them that when the Holy Ghost came from heaven it would come in Jesus’ name (John 14:26). The apostle Paul understood this as well and wrote to the church at Corinth saying, “Now, the Lord is that Spirit . . .” (II Corinthians 3:17). The Holy Ghost is actually the Spirit of the Lord (Romans 8:9) and always bears His name -- Jesus.

Being Re-Baptized in the Name of Jesus

Many people who have been improperly baptized feel that it would be a lack of faith to be baptized a second time. But in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, twelve men were *re-baptized*. These men were former disciples of John the Baptist and had been baptized according to John’s baptism. When the apostle Paul discovered this, he immediately baptized them a second time -- *in the name of Jesus*. The twelve men did not consider their second baptism a lack of faith, but instead they were being obedient to the gospel of Jesus Christ. The Bible explains that the apostle Paul told them about Jesus Christ (Acts 19:4) and, “When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus” (Acts 19:5). The twelve men’s obedience immediately resulted in their being filled with the Holy Ghost (Acts 19:6).

Words of Jesus vs. Words of the Apostles

Occasionally a person will comment that they would rather accept the words of Jesus in Matthew 28:19 than the words of the apostles in Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5 and 22:16. The Word of God reminds us, however, that “*all scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine . . .*” (II Timothy 3:16).

Every scripture in the Bible is to be accepted as the Word of God, not as the word of man. Every word of the Bible is equally important to the gospel because God cannot lie, and the Scriptures cannot contradict themselves. We are also taught that the words and actions of the apostles are extremely important because we as Christians “are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets” (Ephesians 2:20).

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

The proper baptism is far too important to be taken lightly. A person should carefully examine his baptism to see if he is following the narrow way “which leadeth unto life” (Matthew 7:14).

Water Baptism – Review Questions

Should Follow Repentance

- a. The main prerequisite for _____ is complete repentance. (Acts 3:19)
- b. Water baptism should only be entered into with a repented heart. For this reason, _____ should not be baptized.

Is an Act of Righteousness

- a. When Jesus officially began His ministry, He was _____.
- b. Jesus stated in Matthew 3:15 that baptism was an act of _____.

Results from True Belief

- a. Jesus told the Pharisees that their worship and their works were in vain because they were not done from the _____. (Matthew 15:8-9)
- b. Water baptism is the _____ of an inward desire to obey and follow the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Washes Us from Sins

- a. When a person is properly baptized, he is _____ from his _____ by the blood of Jesus.
- b. Jesus Christ is our sacrificial lamb, and His blood must be _____ to our _____ in order that we may be saved.

As a Part of the Gospel

- a. A person's _____ is contingent upon complete obedience to the gospel of Christ.
- b. The gospel of Jesus Christ requires that a person follow His example of _____, _____ and _____.

The Proper Way to Be Baptized

- a. There are presently more than _____ different baptisms practiced in our world today.
- b. The Scriptures teach that there is “_____ Lord, _____ faith, _____ baptism” (Ephesians 4:5).
- c. Baptism comes from the Greek word _____, which means “to dip, plunge or _____.”
- d. When Paul writes of water baptism, he speaks of it as a burial, “Therefore we are _____ with Him by baptism . . .” (Romans 6:4).
- e. “Whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the _____ of the _____ . . .” (Colossians 3:17).
- f. There are five places in the Bible where water baptism is described. In each instance the baptism contains the _____ of the _____.
- g. According to I Corinthians 1:13, _____ is to be done in the name of the one who was _____ for us.

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

h. To obey the gospel, in the nineteenth chapter of Acts, you will find that a total of twelve men were _____-_____ in the name of Jesus.

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. How are we baptized into Christ?
Romans 6:3
Galatians 3:27
I Corinthians 12:13
2. How do we know that water baptism is absolutely necessary?
Mark 16:16
Acts 22:16
Titus 3:5
John 3:5
Romans 6:5
I Peter 3:20-21
Acts 2:38
I Corinthians 6:11
3. How can we know we are eligible for baptism?
Acts 8:36-37
4. Are water baptism and the Holy Ghost baptism connected?
Acts 2:38
Acts 19:1-7
5. Is it imperative that water baptism precede the Holy Ghost baptism?
Acts 10:44-47
6. If a believer receives the Holy Ghost baptism first, is it still necessary for him to be water baptized?
Acts 10:47-48
7. Jesus instructed His disciples to baptize “in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” Why did they baptize in the name of Jesus Christ?
Acts 4:12
Colossians 3:17
Colossians 2:9-10
8. What is the difference between the baptism of John and the baptism of Jesus Christ?
Acts 19:3-4
9. What did people do who had received only John’s baptism?
Acts 19:5
10. How can we use the Old Testament to verify our need for baptism?
I Corinthians 10:1-6

Chapter 6 – Water Baptism

Chapter 7

Holy Ghost Baptism

What Is the Holy Ghost?

The Holy Ghost, also referred to as the Holy Spirit, is actually the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus no longer walks the earth as a man, He is present with us today by means of His Spirit, the Holy Ghost. Shortly before His departure into heaven the Lord spoke saying, “. . . lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20).

Jesus is indeed with us always, not in bodily presence, but by way of His Holy Spirit. He reassured His disciples shortly before His crucifixion and said, “I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you” (John 14:18).

Jesus was promising His followers that His ascension into heaven would not be the end of their relationship; but instead He would return to them as a heavenly comforter, the Holy Ghost (John 14:26). There is no other way for Jesus to be everywhere at one time (omnipresent) except through His Spirit.

Oftentimes the Bible will speak of the Holy Ghost as the Spirit of the Lord, “Now the Lord [Jesus] is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty” (II Corinthians 3:17).

It is also explicitly referred to as the Spirit of Jesus Christ, “. . . and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:19).

These phrases, “Spirit of the Lord” and “Spirit of Jesus Christ,” are used interchangeably throughout the Bible with Holy Ghost and Holy Spirit. The Word of God firmly teaches that there is only *one* Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4), the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Meaning of Holy Ghost Baptism

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is one of the greatest gifts that God has ever offered to man. The prophets of old inquired about it (I Peter 1:10); the angels of heaven desire to look into it (I Peter 1:12); but we can actually have the privilege of receiving it. It was in the year A.D. 29 that God first poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost (Acts 2) just as it was spoken centuries before 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 . . .*” (Joel 2:28; Acts 2:17).

Almost 2,000 years later, God is still pouring out His Spirit upon the people of every race and creed just as the Bible promised (Acts 2:39). The gift of the Holy Ghost is offered to you and to me and to anyone who is willing to repent and seek it in faith; the Word of God promises it:

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

. . . *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. Acts 2:38-39

To be baptized with the Holy Ghost means “to be born of the Spirit” and is sometimes referred to as “receiving the Holy Ghost” (Acts 19:2; 8:17). When a person is truly baptized with the Holy Ghost he is completely filled with the Spirit of Jesus Christ. This is when the Holy Ghost takes residence within our bodies, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is *in you . . .*” (I Corinthians 6:19).

The baptism of the Holy Ghost is a vital part of the born again experience which Jesus spoke of in John 3:5. The Lord said that it was necessary to be born of water and Spirit; so a person must not only be baptized in water but with the Holy Ghost as well.

It was John the Baptist who first used the phrase “baptize with the Holy Ghost.” While preaching a sermon on the banks of the Jordan River, he spoke of Jesus saying, “. . . he [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matthew 3:11).

John spoke not only of the birth of the Spirit in this scripture; he also said that it was Jesus who would baptize with the Holy Ghost. Since it is Jesus who gives the Holy Ghost, a person must call on His name to be filled with His Spirit and be saved (Acts 2:21).

Jesus promised His apostles that He would baptize them with the Holy Ghost about six weeks before their baptism actually took place. He made this promise, however, in a very puzzling but interesting way.

It was shortly after He arose from the dead when Jesus appeared unto His disciples; and the Scriptures say that, “he *breathed on them*, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost” (John 20:22). The apostles did not receive the Holy Ghost at that time so what did Jesus mean? Why did He breathe on them? The original Greek word for “Ghost” is *pneuma* (pnyoo-mah), and it means *breath of air* or current of air. Jesus was teaching His disciples exactly what the Greek *pneuma* implies. When a person is baptized with the Holy Ghost, Jesus is actually breathing into him His Spirit. That is why the Bible says that when the Holy Ghost first came, it was with the sound of a rushing mighty wind (Acts 2:2). That wind was the breath of Jesus as it came to baptize His followers with the Holy Ghost. It was God who breathed life into the first man Adam (Genesis 2:7) and God who breathes *new* life into His people; it is called “the baptism of the Holy Ghost.”

How to Receive the Holy Ghost

The first prerequisite for receiving the Holy Ghost is *belief*. A person must believe, without reservation, that Jesus Christ is Lord and that He desires to fill him with the Holy Spirit (Hebrews 11:6). “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved . . .” (Acts 16:31).

Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, however, is only the beginning of one’s journey. Belief *must* bring about obedience to the Word of God. Jesus said that belief according to the Scriptures is vital to anyone wishing to be filled with His Spirit.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. (But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive . . .) John 7:38-39

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

Belief without obedience cannot result in salvation. The devils themselves believe in the Lord Jesus Christ (James 2:19) and confess Him as the Son of God (Mark 5:7); so obviously belief alone is not enough. A person must “believe to the saving of the soul” as the Scriptures instruct (Hebrews 10:39).

The reason that everyone is not immediately filled with the Spirit upon belief is because they do not seek God with all their hearts:

Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with *all your heart*.
Jeremiah 29:12-13

To seek God with all of your heart is not always an easy task; as a result, some people seek the Holy Ghost for weeks before they receive it. But God is faithful in keeping His promises, and His desire is to fill everyone with His Spirit (II Peter 3:9).

Jesus also spoke of the commandment, “And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment” (Mark 12:30)

This is the kind of belief that a person must have. A man must believe on the Lord with all of his heart, soul, mind, and strength. A shallow, half-hearted belief can never result in salvation; only a deep, heartfelt belief can result in the baptism of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 5:6).

Another vitally important ingredient for the baptism of the Holy Ghost is *faith* -- a person cannot receive anything from God without faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6). One must ask of God in faith because without it he can receive nothing (James 1:6-7), neither the Holy Ghost nor anything else.

The apostle Paul wrote to the church at Galatia explaining to them that it was through faith that they had received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, “. . . that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through *faith* . . . For ye are all the children of God by *faith* in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:14, 26).

It is important to realize that all believers do not automatically receive the Holy Ghost. The seventh chapter of John, verses 38 and 39, says that a believer *should* receive the Holy Spirit; not that they instantly will, but that they should. A person must completely yield himself to God in faith to be filled with His Spirit.

There are four places in the Bible, discussed in the next three sections, where examples of the baptism of the Holy Ghost are found, and faith is a common element in each of them. In every instance, the faith of the believer was brought about in a very important and unique manner.

Prayer and Fasting

The first example is in the second chapter of Acts which tells of 120 people being baptized with God’s Spirit. Among these 120 were the twelve apostles and Mary the mother of Jesus (Acts 1:14-15) who witnessed Jesus being taken up to heaven on a cloud (Acts 1:9). These people began to seek for the baptism of the Holy Ghost approximately ten days before they actually received it. We learn from their experience that it is scriptural to wait upon or to tarry for the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

It was by *praying and fasting* that they built up their faith to a level where they could receive the Holy Ghost (Acts 1:14). Prayer and fasting are vital to everyone’s spiritual growth (Matthew 17:20-

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

21), whether they are seeking to be baptized with the Holy Ghost or to receive anything from God. Prayer and fasting will *always* assist in the building of faith.

Laying on of Hands

The second accounting of a Holy Ghost baptism is found in the eighth chapter of the book of Acts. The apostle Philip had brought the Gospel of Christ to a region called Samaria, and his preaching resulted in a great revival among the people (Acts 8:12). Many believed in the Lord; and, as a result of that belief, they were baptized in water (Acts 8:16). It is greatly significant to notice that even though they believed and were baptized *they had not received the Holy Ghost*:

(For as yet he [Holy Ghost] was fallen upon none of them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they [the apostles] their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost. Acts 8:16-17

These scriptures show conclusively that there can be *belief* without the baptism of the Spirit. The apostles did not leave these people simply with belief and water baptism, but were very careful in seeing that they received the Holy Spirit as well. In so doing the Samaritans were truly born again of water and Spirit just as Jesus had instructed (John 3:3-5).

It was through faith that the Samaritans received the baptism of the Holy Ghost, but their experience differed somewhat from that of the 120 people in Acts chapter 2. Prayer and fasting resulted in the 120 being filled, but it was by the *laying on of hands* that the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost. The Bible says that the apostles, “. . . *laid . . . their hands on them*, and they received the Holy Ghost” (Acts 8:17).

It was not their faith alone that brought them the Spirit; it was also due to the faith of the men who laid their hands on them.

The act of “laying on of hands” is a biblical practice that *Jesus used* (Matthew 8:3) and that *Jesus said to use* (Mark 16:18)! Its significance is displayed here as it resulted in the birth of the Spirit for a group of believers (Acts 8:17). The laying on of hands should never be neglected because it brings about a transfer of faith and power. If the apostles had not offered their faith by the laying on of their hands, it could have been weeks or months before the Samaritans received the Holy Ghost. The faith of the apostles combined with the faith of the people brought about their infilling of the Spirit.

Preaching of the Word

The third example of faith in relation to the baptism of the Holy Ghost is located in Acts chapter 10. Verse 34 of this chapter finds the apostle Peter preaching to a large group of people assembled at the house of Cornelius (Acts 10:24-27). Up until this time, Peter had not been allowed to go to these people because they were Gentiles, and the Jews considered the Gentiles to be heathens. Although Peter was a Jew, he learned from a vision that Gentiles were no longer to be considered heathen, and that he should take to them the Gospel of Jesus Christ (Acts 11:3-18). According to the Scriptures, as he was preaching the people received the baptism of the Holy Ghost: “While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word” (Acts 10:44).

The faith of Cornelius was generated not by prayer and fasting as the 120, nor by the laying on of hands as the Samaritans, but by the *preaching of the Word*. The Scriptures teach that the preaching of the Word of God is a tremendous faith builder, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17).

We know that when a preacher speaks the true words of God, it results in power and faith (Romans 10:14-17; Hebrews 4:12). Peter's preaching brought a measure of faith great enough for the Gentiles to receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The fourth and final occurrence is recorded in Acts 19 and is very similar to the Holy Ghost baptism of the Samaritans. The apostle Paul found a group of twelve men (Acts 19:1, 7) who believed that Jesus was Lord but had not yet been filled with His Spirit. "He said unto them, Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? And they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost" (Acts 19:2).

This scripture adds validity to the fact that a person can believe in God without being immediately baptized with the Holy Ghost. The apostle Paul offered his faith to them by laying his hands upon them, and they were filled with the Spirit, "And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied" (Acts 19:6).

The four specific instances which we have just covered are the most detailed accounts of Holy Ghost baptism found anywhere in the Bible. Faith was a common denominator to each of them and ultimately resulted in conversion (birth of water and Spirit).

A person is saved by faith when his faith produces obedience (Acts 5:32; Romans 6:16). *Saving faith* is more than just a mental consent to the gospel; it is a solid heartfelt belief which brings about obedience (James 1:6-7). In each of the four instances of conversion, the people's faith resulted in obedience to the gospel when they were baptized in water and received the Holy Ghost.

If questions ever arise about how to be saved, the four places in the Word of God, which we have just discussed, can produce clear and concise answers.

Why Is It Necessary?

We have seen in our study thus far that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is a good gift from God (Luke 11:13). We have also seen that the Bible promises this gift to anyone who believes and seeks God in faith (Acts 2:38-39).

The baptism of the Holy Ghost goes much further, however, than just being a promised gift; a careful study of the Scriptures will reveal that it is an absolute necessity. A complete list of reasons for needing the Holy Ghost would be endless; nevertheless, there are several very important and pertinent points made clear in the Bible about the gift of the Holy Ghost. The next several pages will be devoted to some of these points, showing that the baptism of the Holy Ghost is necessary for salvation.

Spirit of Adoption

Through the birth of the Spirit a person is adopted into the family of God and actually becomes a child of God:

For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, *they are the sons of God*. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, *Abba, Father*.
Romans 8:14-15

The birth of the water provides for us Christ's name and His blood (Ephesians 3:15; Acts 22:16; Revelation 1:5), but only by the birth of the Spirit can we be adopted into or baptized into His body, "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body . . ." (I Corinthians 12:13).

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

This is why the Bible so frequently speaks of us as Christians being *one in Christ* and *one with Christ*. Through the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of adoption, we all become one family and one body bonded in unity with Jesus Himself (Romans 12:5; Galatians 3:8; Ephesians 5:23). There is no other way to enter into the family of God (John 10:7), and the Scriptures teach that without the Spirit of Christ we are separated from Him and cannot be considered His. “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. *Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*” (Romans 8:9).

Only through the Spirit of adoption can we join the family, the children of God, and become joint heirs to eternal life with Jesus (Romans 8:16-17).

Sanctified by the Spirit

. . . but ye are washed, but ye are *sanctified*, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, *and* by the Spirit of our God. I Corinthians 6:11

The word “sanctify” comes from the Greek *hagiazō* (hag-ee-ad’-zō) and it means “to purify” or “to make holy.” Because the Spirit of God is pure and holy, it is able to *sanctify* and cleanse us of our impurities. As a result of the sin of Adam, we as his descendants are born with a sinful nature and a wicked heart (Psalm 51:5; Jeremiah 17:9). The only hope for *sanctifying our hearts* and changing our sinful nature is through the baptism of the Holy Ghost.

The sanctification of the Holy Ghost acts very much like an alarm system. It serves to warn us when we are in danger of sinning, as well as “convicting” us when we have sinned. The Holy Ghost causes a person to be sensitive to sin.

There is no other way to obtain this “sensitivity to sin” except through the baptism of the Holy Ghost. It is required of God’s people to live a life of purity and holiness (Hebrews 12:14), and without the sanctifying effect of the Holy Ghost this cannot be accomplished. The Bible firmly teaches that, “. . . God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit . . .” (II Thessalonians 2:13).

Spirit of Power, Love and a Sound Mind

For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. II Timothy 1:7

Through the baptism of the Holy Ghost, a person has direct access to these attributes: power, love, and soundness of mind. Each of these is vital to our spiritual maturity and our ability to adequately serve God. However, only by the baptism of the Holy Ghost and consistent submission to the Spirit can these qualities become dominate in our lives.

The power that we receive when we are filled with God’s Spirit is actually the power needed to become and remain the children of God. “But as many as received him [Holy Ghost], to them gave he *power* to become the sons of God . . .” (John 1:12).

We are able to become the sons of God because the Spirit supplies us with the power to be “Christ-like” and holy. It gives to us *all of the things* that are needed for a life of godliness and righteousness. “According as his divine *power* hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness . . .” (II Peter 1:3).

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

According to the Scriptures, this power of godliness is promised to every individual upon receiving the Holy Ghost. Jesus stated this very emphatically shortly before His departure into heaven. “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you . . .” (Acts 1:8).

The *power of godliness* can come only by the *Spirit of godliness*, the Holy Ghost.

The Holy Ghost is also the power that we Christians must have in order to be caught away in the rapture of the church. The Holy Ghost will be the resurrection power that enables us to go up:

But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead [Holy Ghost] dwell in you, he [Holy Ghost] that raised up Christ from the dead shall also *quicken* your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth *in you*.
Romans 8:11

The Holy Ghost could be considered our *fuel*, which we will need to journey from earth to heaven; it is our *resurrecting power*.

The second attribute which is listed in II Timothy 1:7 is *love*. When a person receives the Spirit of God he is actually receiving love, because God is love; that is His basic nature. “He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love” (I John 4:8).

The love which a person receives when he is filled with the Holy Ghost is somewhat different than the love which we have for our mothers and fathers and immediate family. The Biblical love to which we are referring is the Greek word *agape* (ag-ah’ -pay), and it means divine, godly love or charity. *Agape* love is what motivated Jesus in everything that He did. It causes a person to love people whom he does not know, to love those who may do him wrong, and to return good for evil. A person without the Holy Ghost would find it impossible to love to this degree because only through God’s Spirit can such a love be felt.

The love of God is the true sign of discipleship. It is obvious when Christians are following God in obedience and holiness by the love which they display: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

A body of believers who have truly been born again will be unified by God’s love. They will be united with one ultimate purpose: to share the love of God with others. This unity comes from the genuine *agape* love which the Bible states is the *bond of perfectness* (Colossians 3:14).

Only the Holy Ghost can create such a love within a man. The Holy Ghost sheds the love of God abroad in our hearts (Romans 5:5). It can empty a heart of hatred and envy and fill it with the pure and perfect love of God. The offer of as great a gift as *agape love* should motivate every person to seek and receive the baptism of the Holy Ghost. Love is greater than all spiritual gifts (I Corinthians 13). Note: I Corinthians 13:1-13 is probably the greatest discourse on love found in the Bible. (Charity means love.)

The third and final promise made to us in II Timothy 1:7 is soundness of mind. When we are filled with the Holy Ghost, we receive the spirit of a sound mind. “Sound mind” is defined in the Greek as self-control or self-discipline. The Bible teaches that our very thoughts become subject to the discipline of God when we are baptized with His Spirit:

(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and *bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ*.
II Corinthians 10:4-5

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

This is made possible because, in receiving the Spirit of Christ, we receive the *mind of Christ*, “. . . but we have the mind of Christ” (I Corinthians 2:16).

To have the “mind of Christ” is to live a life of self-control and godliness.

Controlling our mind and thoughts is vitally important to us as Christians. To understand the importance of “thoughts” simply look around; *everything* you see was once a *thought*. When we are filled with God’s Spirit, we do not become immune to unclean and uninvited thoughts; but through the Holy Ghost, we can capture those thoughts and bring them into captivity and control. This is an important quality because we are ultimately *products of our thoughts*.

A great percentage of the Bible is written in direct relationship to either power, love, or soundness of mind. These last few pages have merely touched on the high points of their importance. The baptism of the Holy Ghost is an open door through which we can obtain (without limit) these three spiritual attributes.

The Holy Ghost is actually an endless supply of promises and blessings. Not only is it necessary for the reasons just covered, but we all need the Holy Ghost as a teacher (John 16:13) and as a comforter (John 14:26). Everyone needs the rest and the refreshing which the Holy Spirit provides (Isaiah 28:12), and there is no substitute for the anointing of the Holy Ghost (Matthew 10:20). All of these things are promised to us in the Word of God and are easily within our reach -- through the Holy Ghost.

Speaking With Other Tongues

When John the Baptist saw Jesus on the banks of the Jordan River he said, “. . . he [Jesus] shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire” (Matthew 3:11). What did John mean by this? We know that Jesus baptizes with the Holy Ghost, but what did he mean by the baptism of fire? There is only one place in the entire New Testament where fire is used in relation to the Holy Ghost. It is found in Acts chapter 2:

And there appeared unto them cloven *tongues* like as of *fire*, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other *tongues*, as the Spirit gave them utterance. Acts 2:3-4

These two scriptures describe the outpouring of the Holy Ghost and help clarify what John the Baptist meant by Holy Ghost and fire. When Jesus poured out His Spirit, He did indeed send the *fire* and *it caused them all to speak with other tongues*, but this was only the beginning. When the people in Acts chapter 10 received the Holy Ghost, they, too, spoke with tongues, “For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God...” (Acts 10:46).

The men in the Acts 19 received the baptism of the Holy Ghost and fire and also spoke with tongues. “And when Paul had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them; and they spake with tongues, and prophesied” (Acts 19:6).

In the eighth chapter of Acts, the apostles laid their hands on the people of Samaria, and they, too, received the Holy Ghost (Acts 8:17). Simon, a magician, witnessed this and offered the apostles money for their power (Acts 8:19). He wanted this power because of what he saw and heard -- he saw and heard the people speaking in other tongues.

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

Almost 2,000 years later, in our present day, people are still receiving the Holy Ghost and speaking with tongues. Millions of people throughout the world have received this experience.

The word “tongues” comes from the Greek word *glossa* and is defined as “a naturally un-acquired language.” This means that someone may speak in Hebrew, French, German, or any number of languages even though they have never learned them. There is nothing spooky or mystical about this; it is simply a spontaneous and natural part of the born again experience.

One of the primary purposes for tongues is to allow a person to know when he has been filled with the Holy Ghost. The Scriptures instruct you “to make your calling and election sure” (II Peter 1:10). God has given man the evidence of speaking with tongues so that he might be sure of his Holy Ghost baptism. Jesus strengthened this when He said that tongues would be a sign of the believer. “And these *signs* shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; *they shall speak with new tongues*” (Mark 16:17).

As we learn from the book of Acts, the sign of speaking with tongues did follow believers just as Jesus said. Centuries later, we as believers are still saved by the same gospel and are still governed by the same signs. From the years of the early church until our present hour, speaking in tongues has remained the undeniable evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost.

Speaking with tongues as the evidence of receiving the Holy Ghost should always be distinguished from the gift of tongues. The gift of tongues has a completely separate function from the *evidence of tongues*. The gift of tongues, as we are told in I Corinthians 11, is one of the gifts of the Spirit, which is used for the benefit of the church (I Corinthians 14:22-23). On the other hand, the *evidence of tongues* is for the benefit of the *individual* to assure him of his Holy Ghost baptism. The Scriptures make this distinction quite clear by instructing us that the gift of tongues must be followed by an interpretation. “But if there be no interpreter, let him keep silence in the church; and let him speak to himself, and to God” (I Corinthians 14:28).

In every place in the Bible in which someone received the Holy Ghost and spoke with tongues, it was done *without an interpretation!* (Acts 2:4; 8:17; 10:46; 19:6). This is because the *evidence of tongues* differs from the *gift of tongues* and does not require an interpretation. It is important to distinguish between these two functions of tongues. A person who has been filled with God’s Spirit and has spoken with tongues can then pray for the gift of tongues as well as other gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 12:31).

With so much emphasis placed on speaking with tongues, a person might ask why God would institute such a thing as tongues and make it necessary for every believer. The answer to this question is found in the book of James.

In the third chapter of James, we find a short discourse written on the *human tongue*. James speaks of the tongue as “an unruly evil, full of deadly poison” (James 3:8); so evil in fact that it defiles the whole body (James 3:6). He also writes that “the tongue can no man tame” (James 3:8); it is unruly and impossible for us to control. The human tongue is the most wicked and rebellious member of the entire body; that is why *God wants your tongue*.

Giving God our hearts and minds and devoting our lives to Him *is only a part of submission*. To be completely submitted, God demands that we give to Him our most uncontrollable member -- the tongue. When a person begins to speak with other tongues, he has given to God the final and most

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

difficult part of his body to tame. Only by allowing God to take control of our tongues can we fully be submitted to Him and be filled with His Spirit.

Millions all over the world will testify that their lives took a new and exciting direction when they yielded to God their most disobedient member, the tongue.

It is important to note that never in the Bible does it imply that tongues are not for the modern day church. The gospel has not changed, Jesus has not changed and conversion has not changed. Speaking in tongues has always been an integral part of conversion and should not be spoken against. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, boldly charged that speaking with tongues should not be forbidden. If we accept any of Paul's writings we must accept them all, including his commandment, “. . . forbid not to speak with tongues” (I Corinthians 14:39).

Testimony of Receiving the Holy Ghost. I was raised in a denomination that did not understand the truth of Holy Ghost baptism with the evidence of speaking with tongues. When I learned about it, I thought it was very mysterious, other-worldly and wondered how such a thing could possibly happen to me. But here was the kicker: my husband and his mother had both received the experience several years prior! I knew they weren't a couple of kooks, so it must be real; I began to seek the Holy Ghost.

My search took four months! I prayed, and whined, and moaned, and cried, and begged, and participated in uncountable altar calls, but still no speaking in a language I didn't know. Then one bleak, grey, cold December day, during my lunch hour, it happened. It had become my routine to go to church to pray in the sanctuary during my lunch hour. This day was no different *except* that I decided to pray in a very different way. You see, I always prayed in such a way that no one could see or hear me, usually on my knees between the pews. This day, I decided to walk and pray. Don't laugh – this was quite a bold move for me. About twenty steps later, I was surrounded by the incredible presence of God. I began to weep, I lifted my arms to God in worship, and the only English words I could speak were, “I love you, Jesus.” The rest was a language I didn't know.

I walked around the sanctuary for forty-five minutes speaking in tongues and basking in the glory of God. It felt like a mighty river that started somewhere deep in my belly and flowed up and out through my lips. Now, twenty-five years later, I can truly say that was the day I was filled with the Spirit. That was the day I fell irrevocably in love with God. That was the day I became a new creature living life abundant. Seek the baptism of the Holy Ghost – it is a real experience that will change your life in amazing ways you cannot imagine.

Holy Ghost Baptism – Review Questions

What Is the Holy Ghost?

- The Holy Ghost is actually the _____ of _____.
- The Word of God firmly teaches that there is only _____ Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:4), the Spirit of the _____.

The Meaning of Holy Ghost Baptism

- The prophets of old _____ about it, the angels of heaven _____ to look into it, but we _____ have the privilege of _____ it.
- A person must not only be baptized in water but with the _____ as well.

How to Receive the Holy Ghost

- “He that _____ on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water” (John 7:38).
- Belief without _____ cannot result in salvation.
- “... that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through _____” (Galatians 3:14).
- _____ and _____ are vital to everyone’s spiritual growth. (Matthew 17:20-21)
- The second accounting of a Holy Ghost baptism is found in the region called _____. (Acts 8:12)
- The third example of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is located in _____ chapter _____ at the house of _____.
- The Scriptures teach that the _____ of the Word of God is a tremendous _____ builder. (Romans 10:17)
- The fourth occurrence of the baptism of the Holy Ghost is recorded in _____ chapter _____.

Why Is It Necessary?

- A careful study of the Scriptures will reveal that the _____ is an absolute necessity.
- The birth of the water provides for us Christ’s name and His blood, but only by the birth of the _____ can we be adopted into or _____ into His body. (I Corinthians 12:13)
- As a result of the sin of Adam, we as his descendants are born with a _____ and a _____ heart. (Psalm 51:5)
- The only hope for _____ our hearts and _____ our sinful nature is through the baptism of the Holy Ghost.
- Through the baptism of the Holy Ghost a person has direct access to these attributes: _____, _____, and a _____. (II Timothy 1:7)
- “But ye shall receive _____ after that the _____ is come upon you . . .” (Acts 1:8).

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

- g. In receiving the Spirit of Christ, we receive the _____ of _____. (I Corinthians 2:16)
- h. The Holy Ghost is actually an endless supply of _____ and _____.

Speaking With Other Tongues

- a. “They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other _____, as the _____ gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3-4).
- b. The word “tongues” comes from the Greek word _____ and is defined as a _____.
- c. “And these signs shall follow them that believe; . . . they shall speak with _____” (Mark 16:17).
- d. To be completely submitted, God demands that we give to Him our most uncontrollable member, the _____.
- e. The apostle Paul, in his letter to the Corinthians, boldly charged that _____ in _____ should not be forbidden. (I Corinthians 14:39)

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. Who is the Holy Ghost?

Genesis 1:2-3
Job 33:4
Psalm 104:29-30
Acts 5:3-4
Romans 8:9
I Corinthians 3:16
Hebrews 9:14
I Peter 4:14
I John 3:24
I John 5:6

2. What is the function of the Holy Ghost in the life of a believer?

John 14:16
John 16:13
Acts 8:2
Romans 5:5
Romans 8:11,23
Romans 8:16
I Corinthians 2:12,14
I Corinthians 2:13
I Corinthians 3:16
Galatians 5:22-23
Ephesians 3:16
Philippians 3:3
I Thessalonians 1:5

3. What is the only unforgivable sin?

Matthew 12:31-32
Acts 5:1-10
Mark 3:28-30
I John 5:16
Luke 12:10

4. What is the purpose of the baptism in the Holy Ghost?

Luke 24:49
John 3:5
Romans 8:9

5. How does a person receive the baptism in the Holy Ghost?

Luke 11:13
Acts 5:32
Acts 2:38
Galatians 3:14

Chapter 7 – Holy Ghost Baptism

6. Do the Scriptures show that a person's baptism in the Holy Ghost is evidenced by the speaking in tongues?
Acts 2:4
Acts 19:6
Acts 10:44-46
7. Is the baptism in the Holy Ghost necessary for salvation?
John 3:5
Titus 3:5
Romans 8:9
8. What are some things a person can do to aid someone in receiving the Holy Ghost?
Psalm 24:35
Psalm 34:18
Psalm 51:17
Psalm 84:2
Psalm 100:4
Psalm 134:2
Isaiah 28:11
James 4:8

Chapter 8

One God in Christ

Its Importance

Never in the history of time has there been a topic which demanded more emphasis than the subject of *one God*. Wars have been fought because of it; lives have been shaped around it; and when Lucifer reached for equality with God, he was expelled from heaven, because only *one God* will ever rule this universe in which we live (Isaiah 14:12-15). Interwoven throughout the Old and the New Testament is a definite pattern of scriptures that speaks boldly and emphatically of a single, sovereign, and almighty God. In the Old Testament are found passages such as, “. . . the Lord he is God; there is none else beside him” (Deuteronomy 4:35); and “I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God” (Isaiah 44:6).

In the New Testament are scriptures such as, “To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power” (Jude 25); and “Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).

These are only a few of the many scriptures which testify of the oneness of our great God and the majesty which He alone commands.

Almost 2,000 years ago, the question was asked of Jesus, “. . . Which is the first commandment of all?” (Mark 12:28). Jesus answered him saying, “The first of all the commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29).

He stated unmistakably that the first and greatest commandment ever given (Matthew 22:36) is to believe that God is absolutely, positively *one*; and to that *one* we are to submit our very being (Mark 12:30). None of the other commandments could possibly take precedence over the singleness and oneness of almighty God.

The Lord has expressed in His Word that He is a jealous God (Exodus 20:5), and that He will under no circumstances share His glory with another. “I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8).

Any attempt to divide God or to create multiple Gods can only be interpreted as disobedience to God’s greatest commandment, and certainly the consequences would be most grave. The following pages deal with the subject of *one God* and the confusion that often accompanies it.

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

Three in One

If we were to suddenly appear in heaven at the very place where God rules and reigns, would we see three Gods sitting upon three thrones, or would we see one God sitting upon one throne? Are there three persons, all of whom claim to be God, or is there only one?

Virtually everyone who has ever made an attempt to live for God and to study His Word has had to ask themselves these questions. They can see how rigidly the Bible teaches that there is only one God, and yet they read scripture after scripture which speaks of a Father, a Son or a Holy Ghost. For lack of understanding, some people have simply labeled this subject a mystery and reconciled themselves to the idea that it cannot be understood; but that need not be.

When the apostle John was taken to heaven and given a view of the throne room of God, he saw only *one* throne, and he saw only *one* sitting upon that throne; and the twenty-four elders and the four beasts bowed before the *one* on the throne saying, “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come” (Revelation 4:8).

Jesus spoke these same words in Revelation when He said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending . . . *which is, and which was, and which is to come*” (Revelation 1:8). It was the Lord Jesus Christ whom John saw sitting upon the throne, and He alone received the worship of the elders and the beasts.

The Bible does indeed speak of a Father, a Son and a Holy Spirit; but a closer look at the Scriptures will reveal that the *fullness* of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost dwells totally and completely in the person of Jesus Christ (John 14:10-11). “For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9); and “Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *all* power is given unto me in heaven and in earth” (Matthew 28:18).

This is the reason that John saw only *one* person on one throne and not three persons. In Jesus dwells the fullness of God, and all the power of heaven and earth is resting in Him.

Since the death of John and the other eleven original apostles, many concepts and teachings have arisen that do not necessarily coincide with the “one God” teaching of the early church. In the year A.D. 180, Tertullian began using the term “trinity” from which was born the Catholic doctrine of three Gods, co-equal, co-existent and co-eternal. The Roman Emperor Constantine in the year A.D. 325 incorporated the “doctrine of the trinity” into the Catholic Church where it has remained ever since, and most Protestant churches have accepted this doctrine without thorough examination. The “trinity”, however, generates confusion and is not in total harmony with the Scriptures. To say that there are three separate persons who somehow comprise “one God” is like trying to connect opposing sides of two magnets. When you add 1+1+1, it must equal three; and there cannot, under any circumstances, be more than *one God*.

One of the primary sources of confusion in this matter is related to the word “persons.” The doctrine of the trinity states that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three “persons” who make up one God. In actuality, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three *manifestations* of one God. This word *manifestation* means “to appear”, and it is quite scriptural. The Bible tells us that, “God was *manifest* in the flesh . . .” (I Timothy 3:16). In other words, God appeared in the flesh (as a son).

John also writes of Jesus manifesting Himself to those that love Him. “. . . and I will love him, and will *manifest* myself to him” (John 14:21). This manifestation is the Holy Ghost (John 14:18-24). The Father, Son and Holy Ghost are simply three manifestations of one God. You, yourself, may be

manifested as a son to your father, a husband to your wife, and a father to your children. As an individual person, you may be manifested in various ways; and likewise the Almighty God is manifested as a Father, a Son and a Holy Ghost while He remains indisputably, undeniably, *one*.

From Jehovah to Jesus

God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.

John 4:24

It is important to remember always that God is a Spirit. He is an invisible *force* (I Timothy 1:17) that blankets our entire universe. David said, “If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there” (Psalm 139:8). David was speaking in this scripture of the omnipresence of God: the fact that God is everywhere at once. God can exist at one corner of the galaxy, and simultaneously He is present at the opposite corner of the galaxy. He is a universal Spirit or a universal, omnipresent force.

As a Spirit being, God does not have flesh and bones. Luke 24:39 says that “a spirit hath not flesh and bones”; so, obviously, God does not have hands and feet as you and I do. It is a common tendency for us to envision God in our minds as a white-haired old man with blazing eyes and a booming voice when, in reality, God is a Spirit without any of these features. He is a Spirit which never weakens nor changes (Malachi 3:6).

It was this Spirit that was present in the beginning when the earth was dark and without form. The Bible says that, “. . . darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters” (Genesis 1:2).

It was this Spirit that created all things, brought about the great flood in the days of Noah and established the covenant with Abraham. Approximately 2,500 years after creation, God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai and gave him the tables of Law (Exodus, chapters 19-23); and for the very first time the Spirit revealed His name to a man. God identified Himself to Moses as *Jehovah*, which means “self-existent” or “eternal.”

And God spake unto Moses, and said unto him, I am the LORD: And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob, by the name of God Almighty, but by my name *Jehovah* was I not known to them.

Exodus 6:2-3

In the days of the law, Jehovah sometimes seemed to be a God of wrath and vengeance. Even though it was difficult for anyone to remain obedient to the Law of Moses (Romans 8:3; James 2:10), God would frequently execute fiery, fearful judgment upon the earth. When David sinned by a single act of disobedience, 70,000 men lost their lives as a result (II Samuel 24:10-15); when a group of children jokingly spoke of Elisha’s bald head, forty-two of them were mauled to death by wild bears (II Kings 2:24). When the Spirit Jehovah sent the Hebrew armies into enemy cities, He would sometimes command them to slaughter every man, woman, child and the animals leaving nothing alive (I Samuel 15:3). It is no wonder that the Scriptures say, “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God” (Hebrews 10:31).

But wrath and violence have never been the basic nature of God. He is essentially a God of love (I John 4:8). Jehovah did indeed love man, and He saw the helpless and declining state that man was in. So, as the ultimate expression of His love, Jehovah the Spirit became a man. He created for Himself a body (Hebrews 10:5), a body in which He was pleased to dwell (Colossians 1:19) and He

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

called that body “His son” (Hebrews 1:5). In Jesus Christ, God Himself walked upon the earth which He created, walked and talked with men whom He created, and eventually died on a cross fashioned from a tree which He created (John 1:10). The Bible says that God laid down His life for us; and it was God’s own blood that was shed on Calvary.

Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us . . .

I John 3:16

. . . feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.

Acts 20:28

Jehovah did not come as a boastful, arrogant king but instead came as a meek and humble man who lived an exemplary life of love and compassion.

Before the Son (flesh) of God was born, Joseph was instructed in a dream to name Him Jesus (Matthew 1:21). The significance of naming Him Jesus is easily understood when we see what the name really means. *Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua. In the original Hebrew, *Joshua* means “Jehovah - saves”! Even the name conveys that Jehovah of the Old Testament became the man Jesus of the New Testament in order to save us from our sins.

It is because Jehovah fashioned Himself as a man and sacrificed His life (Philippians 2:8) that we can so freely enjoy this age of grace. No longer are His judgments executed hastily. The extraordinary difference between God as He was known in the Old Testament and God as we know Him today is that He now rules the world through the eyes of a man (John 5:27; 14:6). Sitting on the throne of God is the meek and compassionate Christ Jesus, and in Him dwells all the fullness of God (Colossians 2:9). Consequently, when we go to God with problems of fleshly weaknesses, He can say, “Child, I’ve been there” because Jesus was tempted in all points as we are but was without sin (Hebrews 4:15). Jesus Christ is the human expression of the Spirit (Hebrews 1:3) who loves us dearly. God did not send anyone else to die in His place, but loved us enough that He Himself took the form of a man and became our Savior.

The Dual Nature of Jesus

In the section entitled “Three in One”, we explained briefly that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are three manifestations of one God. The One Almighty God manifested Himself as a Father in creation, as a Son in redemption and as the Holy Ghost in regeneration. If Jehovah had not manifested Himself as a Son, there would be no age of grace and no free gift of salvation (Romans 5:15-21).

Likewise, if God were not manifested as the Holy Ghost, we would be without the heavenly power of sanctification (Acts 1:8; Romans 14:17; I Corinthians 6:11). The idea of three “manifestations” as opposed to three “persons” is the most scriptural way that one God can be explained.

To make this study even more comprehensive and complete, the dual nature of Jesus must be understood. Jesus did indeed possess two natures. From His mother, Mary, He inherited His human nature, and from the Holy Ghost which overshadowed Mary (Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35), He was born with a divine nature. “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us” (Matthew 1:23). He is in essence a God-man. Jesus Christ was a complete man, and at the same time He was filled with the completeness of God (John 20:28; Romans 8:3; Colossians 2:10).

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

We must never forget that God is a Spirit, and for the entire time that Jesus was on earth this Spirit still existed throughout the universe. The Spirit never changes in any way; it never grows stronger or weaker because it is omnipotent and omnipresent (Proverbs 15:3). However, the “fullness of this Spirit” or the “fullness of the Father” was wrapped up in the body of Jesus Christ. This is His divine nature, and this nature prompted Him to say such things as, “. . . he that hath seen me hath seen the Father . . .” (John 14:9); and “I and my Father are one” (John 10:30).

On the other hand, it was His human nature which required Him to eat, to sleep and to pray. As a human being (flesh), Jesus Christ was basically weak. Jesus made this clear when He spoke to Peter saying: “. . . The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh [human nature] is weak” (Mark 14:38).

And the apostle Paul, despite his extraordinary relationship with God, wrote:

For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing . . . Romans 7:18

For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

Galatians 5:17

The flesh, as a result of its sinful tendencies, is constantly warring with and resisting the Spirit. But despite these facts, Jesus came “. . . in the likeness of sinful flesh . . .” (Romans 8:3). He did not create a super body, so to speak, that would protect Him from sin and weakness; He was human flesh just as you and I are.

It was for this reason that Jesus had to pray. If this is confusing, remember that it was the flesh (human nature) praying to the omnipresent Spirit. In one incident, Jesus had to lay His hands upon a man the second time in order for the man to be healed (Mark 8:23-25). This was due to the weakness of the flesh; otherwise, one time would have been sufficient. Without prayer and fasting, His flesh, His human nature, would never have remained sinless and pure or have been strong enough to die on Calvary (Hebrews 5:7). His need for prayer was made evident in the garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32-42; Luke 22:44-46).

The dual nature of Jesus is puzzling to some because they view the two natures as two persons. As a man, Jesus was the Son of God; He was flesh. But as God Almighty, Jesus was Spirit robed in flesh and existing everywhere else at once. There are two natures and not two persons. For example, you possess a human nature (your body) and a spiritual nature (your spirit). Whether your flesh and spirit remain intact or are separated, you are still only one person. The same is true of God.

A guideline to simplify this is the Son of God refers to the flesh of God; and God, or the Father, refers to the Spirit. You may make this substitution in your mind as you read certain scriptures: flesh for Son, and Spirit for God (Father). For example:

For God [*the Spirit*] so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son [*flesh*], that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

John 3:16

But when the fulness of the time was come, God [*the Spirit*] sent forth his Son [*flesh*], made of a woman, made under the law.

Galatians 4:4

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

. . . Ye neither know me [*flesh*], nor my Father [*Spirit*]: if ye had known me [*flesh*], ye should have known my Father [*Spirit*] also.

John 8:19

As God Almighty, Jesus knew people's thoughts, forgave them of their sins, and rose from the dead (John 2:25; Luke 5:23-24; John 2:19-20). As a Son, Jesus cried, He hungered and He died. Knowing and understanding the dual nature of Jesus can answer virtually any question a person might have regarding one God. It is certainly a beautiful thing to realize that God is one, and He alone is our Savior.

Jesus Christ Our Mediator

During the days of the law, there was a place in the temple called "the holy of holies", or "the most holy place" (Exodus 26:33-34). It was here that the Ark of the Covenant was kept and the *fullness* of the Spirit of the Lord dwelt. This holy place was concealed behind a curtain which was called "the veil" (Exodus 26:31-37). Once each year the high priest went behind the veil with the blood of a sacrificed animal to make atonement for the sins of the people (Hebrews 9:7).

When Jesus was crucified, this veil was mysteriously torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). This signified that "the most holy place" was no longer contained there. Hebrews 10:20 says that there is a new veil; it is the *flesh* of Jesus. Behind the flesh of Jesus Christ lies the holy of holies where the fullness of God now dwells.

Now, everyone has access to the most holy place -- *through Jesus*. This is what Jesus meant when He said, ". . . I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me" (John 14:6).

The only way to approach the Father is through the flesh of Jesus Christ (Hebrews 10:19-20) because within His body resides the wholeness of almighty God (Colossians 2:9; John 14:10; Hebrews 10:5). In this respect, Jesus is the mediator between God and man. "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the *man* Christ Jesus" (I Timothy 2:5). Notice in this scripture that the mediator is referred to as the *man*, Christ Jesus. The mediator is actually the humanity, the flesh of God; and this flesh, having been tempted in all points (Hebrews 4:15), makes intercession for us.

However, this intercession does not take place between two persons; it takes place between the man Jesus and the Spirit within Him (Ephesians 2:18). Jesus said, "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter . . ." (John 14:16). This is a perfect example of Jesus Christ as our mediator. When we pray in Jesus' name, our prayers are heard by God. The flesh (Son) of God acts as a mediator and makes intercession for us with the Father (Spirit) dwelling in Him. This is the essence of the age of grace: God ruling the world through the eyes of a man.

Helpful Scriptures

We have thus far covered the basic concept of One God. We have seen that God is an omnipresent Spirit manifested as a Father, a Son and a Holy Ghost, and that the fullness of God dwells in Christ Jesus. Jesus Christ alone is seated upon the throne; and because He has walked the earth and shed His blood, we live in a marvelous age of grace and mercy. The flesh (Son) of God now acts as the mediator between God and man. There are many scriptures which have not been used so far;

however, they are of great importance to the subject. This section will cover those particular scriptures along with a brief explanation of each of them.

Isaiah 9:6

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would come not only as a Son but as “The mighty God, and the *everlasting Father*.”

Matthew 4:10

Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

Jesus told Satan that the Lord God alone is worthy of worship; and yet, at the end of the book of Matthew (28:9), you will find people worshipping at the feet of *Jesus*.

John 1:1, 14

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us . . .

The Greek word for “Word” as it is used here is *logos* which means “the expression of thought.”

Before anything was ever created, God could picture in His mind everything that would ever come to pass on planet earth. He could look beyond the law and beyond the prophets, and He could imagine vividly how He would appear when He became a man. God’s thoughts were actually foreknowledge of things as they would become in time (Acts 2:23). Etched very deeply in His mind was the image of Jesus Christ thousands of years before He was made flesh and walked the earth. When Jesus finally did appear, it was literally the expression of God’s thoughts, His foreknowledge, just as the Greek *logos* implies: “The *word* was made *flesh*.”

Jesus said that He “. . . proceeded forth and came from God. . .” (John 8:42). By this He was referring to that Spiritual image, the Word, which came forth and was made flesh.

Jesus also prayed the prayer, “. . . O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was” (John 17:5). By this He was expressing His desire to be quickened back into the Spirit from which He originally came. The Word came out from the Spirit and was made flesh; then it returned to Spirit at the ascension of Jesus Christ (John 16:25-28).

John 3:34

For he whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God: for God giveth not the Spirit by measure unto him.

This is another scripture which speaks of the fullness of God in Jesus. You and I can be filled to capacity with the Spirit, but Jesus possessed a limitless capacity. He was given the fullness of the Spirit without measure.

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

John 5:30

I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge.

This scripture shows the inability of the flesh to do things on its own. Jesus was saying that as a man (as the Son), He was powerless, but it was the Spirit (Father) which performed the works through Him. This is also evident in John 14:10 when Jesus said that it was the Father who dwelt in Him that did the works.

John 8:24

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.

For a better understanding of what He meant by “I am he”, read Isaiah 43:10. Jehovah of the Old Testament said “I am he”, and yet Jesus said the very same thing. Jesus obviously determined that our salvation depended upon our belief that He was Jehovah.

John 8:58

Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.

When Jesus spoke these words the Jews picked up rocks to stone Him because they realized fully what He was saying to them. In Exodus 3:14, Jehovah God spoke to Moses saying “*I am that I am*”, and here Jesus claimed to be that same “I am” who existed before Abraham.

John 12:44

Jesus cried and said, He that believeth on me, believeth not on me, but on him that sent me.

By believing on Jesus, we are going much further than just believing in a Son; we are believing in the Father which dwelt in Him (John 14:9). In this context, the Scriptures also say, “. . . he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also” (I John 2:23).

John 14:18

I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you.

This scripture is referring to the return of Jesus as the Holy Ghost (a manifestation not a person).

John 20:28

And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.

Thomas, after three and one-half years with Jesus, had come to the full realization that this was his God.

Matthew 28:18

And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, *All* power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

This scripture verifies that even though He was man, Jesus still possessed all the fullness and power of God.

Matthew 28:20

. . . lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Even though Jesus was preparing to leave, He promised that He would always be with them. The only way in which this can be possible is if He manifests Himself as the Holy Ghost.

Luke 11:20

But if I with the finger of God cast out devils, no doubt the kingdom of God is come upon you.

Since God is a Spirit (John 4:24) and does not have flesh and bones (Luke 24:39), only Jesus Christ, the flesh of God, can claim to have the finger of God.

Romans 8:9

But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

In this scripture the phrase “Spirit of Christ” is used interchangeably with “Spirit of God.” Also, the next verse (v.10) says, “And if Christ be in you . . .” which is a reference to Jesus being the Holy Ghost.

II Corinthians 3:17

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.

Paul makes reference here to the fact that Jesus is manifested as the Holy Ghost.

II Corinthians 5:19

To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . .

The word *reconcile* means “to restore to union.” Notice that God was *in* Christ bringing the world back to a union with Himself.

Colossians 2:9-10

For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

These are very important verses. In Jesus dwells the fullness and no one could be complete in Him if He Himself were not complete. He is completely God.

John 10:30

I and my Father are *one*.

The manifestation of the Father and the Son are *one*. They are inseparable in the single person of the Almighty God.

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

John 2:19, 21

Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up . . . But he spake of the temple of his body.

We are told in Acts 4:10 that God raised Christ from the dead; yet, in this scripture, Jesus was saying that He would raise Himself from the dead. This is a perfect example of the dual nature of Jesus. As a man He would die; as God He would rise from the dead.

I Timothy 1:17

Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honour and glory for ever and ever. Amen.

In this scripture Paul refers to the *only* wise God as our *King*. In I Timothy 6:14-15, he distinguishes Jesus Christ as the “King of kings.” There can be no mistake that Jesus, the only wise God, is our King.

Jude 25

To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

This scripture emphatically says that God alone is our Savior. In the small book of Titus (3:6), we are told that Jesus Christ is our Savior. This is consistent with the explanation of Jehovah becoming our Savior in the man, Jesus.

Psalms 23:1

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

King David wrote these famous words almost 3,000 years ago and spoke of the Lord Jehovah being his shepherd. Jesus, as Jehovah made flesh, taught His people that He was their shepherd (John 10:14). As God, He was the good shepherd; as man, He was the Lamb of God who was slain for our salvation (John 1:29).

Frequent Misconceptions

There are a few areas in the Word of God which seem confusing to a great number of people. With the help of Greek and Hebrew texts, many of these passages can be explained. On the other hand, some scriptures need only be put into their proper context and used in harmony with other scriptures in order to be understood. This section reviews and explains some of these confusing passages and words.

Remember that the Word of God is spiritual (John 6:63), and we must always endeavor to understand it spiritually. This involves more than our intellect and knowledge; it is a matter of allowing the Holy Ghost to open our understanding (Luke 24:45) and reveal the answers to us (John 16:13; 14:26).

Genesis 1:26

And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

Oftentimes, people interpret “let us make man” as one person of the Godhead speaking to another person of the Godhead. However, the Scriptures go to great lengths to emphasize the fact that there is only one God. One God cannot say to another God, “Let us make man” because it would be in direct contradiction to the Scriptures. Notice that the next verse (v. 27) says that God made man in His own image; here the pronoun is singular. This is the most common manner in which God speaks in the Bible. The fact that the Lord used “us” in verse 26 should lead us to believe that He had a specific purpose in mind.

It is not improper for the Bible to use “us” or “we” in the imperial sense. Royalty, such as kings and queens, often use “us” and “we” in the first person plural; for example, Ezra 4:18. It is possible that God used “us” in this context. God could also be speaking to the angels who surround Him when He says “us.” But in this particular instance, the use of “us” has a special significance.

John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” Verse 14 of the same chapter tells us that the Word “*was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . .*” Jesus existed in the beginning as the “Word.” He was simply a thought in the mind of the eternal Spirit; He would not become flesh for another 4,000 years. With the foreknowledge of everything that was to come, God simply looked into the future and saw the way He would look when He became a man. When God said, “Let us make man”, it was the Spirit speaking about the flesh which was yet to be born. If the Scripture had not said “us”, we would all be spirits floating around without bodies because God is a Spirit, and it was imperative that He make man in His fleshly image. That is why the Scriptures say that Jesus was the second Adam (I Corinthians 15:45). Adam was made in the image of the man Jesus who would not be born for another 4,000 years (Romans 5:14). For this reason, it is probable that Adam and Jesus looked identical to each other.

Matthew 3:16-17

And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him: And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

These verses are sometimes thought to represent the three persons of the trinity. Some say that if Jesus contained the fullness of God, who was it that spoke from heaven, and what about the dove? This is putting restrictions and limitations on God. It is like saying that when God appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai, He left the rest of the world unattended; or that if God appeared to a man in Texas, He could not simultaneously appear to someone in China. God is a Spirit, and He is present every where at once (Psalm 139:8). It was a simple task for the fullness of God to dwell in Jesus and at the same time speak from heaven.

The baptism of Jesus at the river Jordan had a very definite and important purpose. John the Baptist was the forerunner of Jesus Christ, and it was his responsibility to prepare the way for the coming Messiah (Matthew 3:3; Mark 1:2-3). John had never seen the Messiah and could not feel content that he had fulfilled his ministry until he could positively identify him. God told John that he would

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

know that Jesus was the Messiah because upon Him the Spirit would descend and remain (John 1:33). Thus, by means of a dove and an audible voice from heaven, God gave him this confirmation.

A similar incident took place on the Mount of Transfiguration when once again God spoke from heaven in the presence of Peter, James, and John (Matthew 17:5). This also had a definite purpose as it served to strengthen the ministry of these three men. In following years, the apostle Peter wrote of it in one of his epistles and obviously used it in messages that he preached (II Peter 1:16-18).

Note: God said, “This is my beloved Son *in* whom I am well pleased.” It pleased God for His fullness to dwell *in* Christ Jesus (Colossians 1:19).

Mark 13:32; Matthew 24:36

But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.

But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only.

These scriptures are actually the words of two different men recording their exact same experiences with Jesus Christ. The key words in both of them are *no man*.

The reason that the Son of God did not know the hour that the heavens and earth would pass away is because as a Son, He was human (Matthew 24:36). As a Son, He was man; and the Scriptures say that *no man* knows that day or that hour.

It was in this context that Jesus said, “The Son can do nothing of himself . . .”, and “I can of mine own self do nothing . . .” (John 5:19, 30). As the Son of God, as a man, He could do nothing and knew only what the Spirit revealed unto Him. As the Lord God, Jesus could do all things and knew all things (John 21:17).

I John 5:7

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

This scripture makes reference to three *manifestations* of God, and does not convey the idea of three persons. The Bible never refers to God as three persons, but it does speak frequently of the different ways in which God manifests Himself.

Acts 7:54-55

When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, [Stephen] being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up stedfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God.

One of the key factors to understanding these scriptures is an explanation of the term “right hand.” The expression *right hand* is a Jewish figure of speech, which means “power and authority” or “place of honor and majesty.” Any thorough Bible dictionary or lexicon will support this definition.

The use of figures of speech is not a rare characteristic of the Bible; for instance, the word *straightway* is used nineteen times in the book of Mark alone and does not mean “a straight path” or

“to go directly ahead.” *Straightway* is an expression that means “immediately”, even though the word itself does not convey that meaning.

When the Scriptures speak of Jesus at the right hand of God, they are actually saying that Jesus is at the place of authority or power of God. Jesus ascended to the throne of God where, as God in the flesh, He rightfully belongs (Revelation 12:5). It was Jesus whom John saw sitting upon the throne (Revelation 4:2, 8). This is what is meant by Jesus at the right hand of God: He is at the center of all authority and command.

Contrary to some beliefs, when Stephen saw Jesus standing at the right hand of God, he did not literally see God and beside Him Jesus Christ. This would be contradictory to the Scriptures. The Bible states that no man has seen God at any time because God is invisible (I Timothy 1:17; I John 4:12). What Stephen saw was Jesus standing at the place of authority or in the place of Almighty God. This is exemplified in Stephen’s prayer when he spoke to God calling Him Lord Jesus (Acts 7:59).

Right hand, as it is used in this context, is found many times throughout the Word of God. These scriptures represent a few places where this expression can be found: Exodus 15:6; Psalm 89:13; 98:1; 118:16; Mark 14:62.

I Corinthians 1:3

Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.

There are several instances in the Bible where the word “and” is used to separate God the Father from Jesus Christ. This cannot, however, be interpreted to mean that they are two separate and distinct persons. If the word “and” were used to distinguish God and Jesus as two individual beings, then we would have to say that God and the Father were also two separate beings. For instance, in I Thessalonians 1:3, Colossians 1:3 and Galatians 1:4, the word “and” is used to separate God and the Father!

The word “and” as it is used in the New Testament comes from the Greek word *kai*. The word *kai* is ambiguous in that it can mean “and”, “also” or “even.” Any one of these words could have been used in the translation from Greek to English. If we took the word “even” and inserted it in the place of “and”, it would change the implication considerably. For example, instead of, “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, *and* from the Lord Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 1:2), we could substitute “even.” It would then read, “Grace be to you and peace from God our Father, *even* from the Lord Jesus Christ” (II Corinthians 1:2).

This is a natural rendering of the Greek; a study of the Greek and Hebrew texts offers an excellent opportunity to expand our understanding of God’s Word.

Note: There was no punctuation in the original Greek; commas were added during the translation into English. The word “from” used in the greeting of some epistles was also not in the original Greek; e.g., “God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ.” It was added in the translation from Greek to English.

Revelation 5:6-7

And I beheld, and, lo, in the midst of the throne and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns and seven

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God sent forth into all the earth. And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

Here we obviously have someone sitting upon the throne of God and in His hand is a book. A lamb steps up and takes the book from Him. Like much of the book of Revelation, the lamb must be viewed as symbolic.

In the fourth chapter of Revelation, it has been firmly established that Jesus Christ is sitting upon the throne. The second verse says that *one* sat on the throne, and in verses 8 and 11 that one is referred to as the Lord. So it was the one Lord Jesus Christ who sat upon the throne for this was His rightful place as God.

When the lamb stepped up to take the book, it symbolized God's own sacrifice and the blood that He shed (Acts 20:28). The lamb represented the perfect, unblemished sacrifice that was needed in order for the book to be opened and God's kingdom to be established on earth (Isaiah 9:7; I Peter 1:19). As God, Jesus remained on the throne while His sacrifice, the symbolic lamb, enabled the seals to be broken. The Passover lamb in the land of Egypt was a type of Jesus' sacrifice (Exodus 12).

John 12:45; Romans 8:3

And he that seeth me seeth him that sent me.

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

These are only two of several scriptures that speak of Jesus having been *sent* from God. Did the Son of God always exist in heaven, and was He sent from there to earth?

The answer is no. The Son of God was *begotten* which eliminates any possibility of His having existed in heaven beforehand. The word *begotten* denotes "a birth"; so, the Son of God could not have existed until such time as He was born. His existence in heaven was only as a thought or a plan in the mind of God (John 1:1, 14).

According to the Greek, the word *sent* is used here in the context of "fulfilling a mission." Jesus was born to fulfill a mission, and in this sense He was sent. In like manner, the scripture states that John the Baptist was sent from God (John 1:6). Obviously, John did not exist in heaven beforehand, but he, too, was born to fulfill a mission -- he was sent from God.

Mark 12:35-37

And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The LORD said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he then his son?

The first thing to be considered when viewing these scriptures is that Jesus was asking a question! The Pharisees and scriptural experts had come to test Jesus by asking Him questions hoping to ensnare Him in His answers (Matthew 22:15, 35), but Jesus turned the situation around by asking them a question which they could not answer. By a simple paraphrasing of these scriptures, we see the basic question that Jesus was asking, "If Christ is actually the Lord of heaven and earth, then how can He simultaneously be a man, the son of David?" This question confounded the Jews as the

scripture states, “And no man was able to answer him a word, neither durst any man from that day forth ask him any more questions” (Matthew 22:46).

Only moments before, Jesus had established the greatest commandment as “. . . the Lord our God is one Lord” (Mark 12:29). To then confront them with “The LORD said to my Lord . . .” was simply more than they could handle. They could not understand the reference to the two Lords, and neither could they understand how Christ could be both God and man.

The reference to two Lords is done in a figurative sense. The first is the *Heavenly Lordship*, the eternal throne of God. The second Lord to which He makes reference represents the *Earthly Lordship*, the throne of David. The Messiah is heir to *both* of these thrones. As God, the heavenly throne belongs to Jesus; and as man, the son of David, the throne of David belongs to Jesus (Isaiah 9:7; Revelation 4:10, 11; 17:14).

Because we have knowledge of the virgin birth and the dual nature of Jesus, we do not find this difficult to understand. But many of the Jews were blind to this truth, and they failed to comprehend the Lord’s teachings (Romans 11:25; John 5:37-42).

John 14:16

And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever . . .

In this scripture Jesus refers to the Father and the Holy Ghost as “he.” It is not uncommon for Jesus to make references to the Father and Holy Ghost as “he” or “him.” We know that the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are manifestations of Jesus Christ, and that He alone is God. The use of “he” and “him” and “me” is simply the way in which the Scriptures sometime refer to these manifestations.

The best example of the way God uses these words so freely is found in Zechariah 12:10. Here Jehovah makes reference to Himself hanging on the cross, “. . . they shall look upon *me* . . .” Then He immediately makes reference to Himself with the word *him*, “. . . and they shall mourn for *him*.” With both the words “me” and “him”, He was speaking of Himself. In like manner, Jesus uses the same words freely.

Elohim

Elohim (el-o-heem’) means “gods” in the ordinary sense; but specifically, it is used (in the plural form) in reference to the *Supreme God*, and this is the definition of *Elohim* that is translated in the Old Testament as God.

The word *Elohim* has aroused a lot of attention throughout the past few centuries because it is used in the plural form. Students of the trinitarian belief have attributed its plurality to the persons of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. However, one must understand the uniqueness of the Hebrew language. Even the Hebrew words for water, life, face and heaven are all used in their plural forms; yet, in their meanings, they are absolutely singular. *Elohim* is used in precisely the same fashion.

John Calvin, the famous sixteenth century Bible scholar, publicly rejected the use of the word *Elohim* as evidence of a trinity. He took this stand even though he was a follower of the trinitarian belief!

Many scriptures in the Bible relate to the plurality of the word *Elohim*. Even though God is undeniably one, there are seven distinct functions of His Spirit as recorded in Revelation 1:4. These

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

seven Spirits can be found in Isaiah 11:2 and are clearly seen as characteristics of God. I Timothy 3:16 and John 14:21 speak of some of the different ways in which God manifests Himself. These many characteristics and manifestations of God make it easy to recognize the appropriateness of the plural *Elohim*.

One God in Christ – Review Questions

Its Importance

- “Thou believest that there is _____; thou doest well: the _____ also believe, and tremble” (James 2:19).
- The first and greatest commandment ever given (Mark 12:29) is to believe that God is absolutely, positively _____.
- The Lord has expressed in His Word that He is a _____ God. (Exodus 20:5)

Three in One

- When the apostle John was taken to heaven, he saw the twenty-four _____ and the four _____ bowed before the One on the throne.
- A closer look at the Scriptures will reveal that the _____ of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost dwells in the person of Jesus Christ. (Colossians 2:9)
- In the year A.D. 180, _____ began using the term _____ from which was born the Catholic doctrine of three Gods.
- The Roman Emperor _____ in the year _____ incorporated the “doctrine of the trinity” into the Catholic Church.
- In actuality, the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are _____ of one God.
- The word *manifestation* means _____. (I Timothy 3:16)

From Jehovah to Jesus

- “God is a _____: and they that worship him must worship him in _____ and in _____” (John 4:24).
- As a Spirit being, God does not have _____ and _____. (Luke 24:39)
- God identified Himself to Moses as JEHOVAH, which means _____ or _____.
- Even though it was difficult for anyone to remain _____ to the Law of Moses, God would frequently execute _____ upon the earth.
- But wrath and violence have never been the basic nature of God. He is essentially a God of _____. (I John 4:8)
- As the ultimate expression of His love, _____ the _____ became a man.
- Jesus* is the Greek form of the Hebrew name _____. In the original Hebrew, Joshua means _____ - _____!
- Jesus Christ is the human _____ of the _____. (Hebrews 1:3)

The Dual Nature of Jesus

- Jesus possessed two natures. From His mother, Mary, He inherited His _____ nature, and from the Holy Ghost, He was born with a _____ nature.

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

b. Jesus Christ was a complete _____, and at the same time He was filled with the _____ of God.

c. Jesus was Spirit _____ in _____ and existing everywhere else at once.

Jesus Christ Our Mediator

a. During the days of the law, there was a place in the temple called “the _____ of _____” (Exodus 26:33-34).

b. It was in “the holy of holies” that the _____ of the _____ was kept and the _____ of the Spirit of the Lord dwelt.

c. Behind the _____ of Jesus Christ lies the _____ of _____ where the fullness of God now dwells.

d. Jesus said, “I am the _____, the _____, and the _____: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me” (John 14:6).

e. “For there is one God, and one _____ between God and men, the _____ Christ Jesus” (I Timothy 2:5).

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What is God?
John 4:24
2. What is meant by the preexistence of God?
Psalm 90:1-4
Psalm 102:12, 24-27
Proverbs 8:23-25
Isaiah 41:4
Romans 1:20
Revelation 4:8
3. What are some of God's characteristics?
Exodus 15:11
Exodus 34:67
Leviticus 19:2
Deuteronomy 32:4
Job 28:23
Psalm 62:11
Psalm 119:64
Psalm 139:1-4
Psalm 145:9
Jeremiah 23:24
Malachi 3:6
Matthew 19:26
I Corinthians 10:13
II Timothy 2:13
4. What is the name of the Father?
Isaiah 9:6
John 14:9
5. What is the name of the Son?
Matthew 1:21
Mark 1:1
6. What is the name of the Holy Ghost?
Romans 8:9
II Corinthians 3:17
Philippians 1:19
7. If we could see into heaven, would we see three persons or one?
Revelation 4:2
8. Has anyone ever seen God?
John 1:18
I John 4:12

Chapter 8 – One God in Christ

9. What are some of the forms in which God has manifested Himself to man?

Genesis 16:7-11

Exodus 3:2-4

Exodus 13:21-22

Exodus 17:6

Judges 2:1

I Corinthians 10:4

II Corinthians 6:16

I Timothy 3:16

10. How can we know that Jesus Christ is actually God?

Matthew 9:1-8

John 1:1-5, 14

John 20:26-28

Matthew 17:5

John 2:1-11

Romans 9:5

Matthew 28:6-7

John 5:23

Hebrews 1:1-6

Matthew 28:18, 20

John 8:56-58

Hebrews 13:8

Luke 8:22-25

John 11:38-44

I John 5:20

Chapter 9

Christian Living

Good Works

Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of *good works*. Titus 2:14

The word *peculiar* as it is used in this scripture means “beyond the usual” or “special.” Paul was referring to God’s people as special people who have dedicated themselves to good works. The good works of a Christian are actually the demonstration of his faith. As James wrote, “. . . I will shew thee my faith by my works” (James 2:18).

Christian works should not be confused with the works of the law. Under the law of Moses, works such as the sacrificing of animals, the burning of incense and special ceremonies were required in order for a person to be saved. But, we are no longer saved by the works of the law but of faith in Jesus Christ. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast” (Ephesians 2:8-9).

The works of the law are obsolete, but the works of faith are essential. Christian faith must produce Christian works! “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also” (James 2:26).

God’s people are the light of the world and the salt of the earth, and by their good works they enhance the lives of everyone around them (Matthew 5:13-16).

In this section we will cover some of the fundamentals of Christian living and the basic works of faith such as prayer, fasting, witnessing, worship, studying the Word, holiness and many other things which characterize God’s “peculiar people.”

Prayer

When the disciples of the Lord tried and failed to cast a devil out of a child, they came to Jesus privately and asked, “Why could not we cast him out?” (Mark 9:28). He answered them saying that “. . . This kind can come forth by nothing, but by *prayer* and fasting” (Mark 9:29).

Prayer is to our spiritual lives as food is to our natural lives. There is no substitute for prayer; without it a person will be spiritually weak and powerless.

One of the first things a person must do when he begins serving the Lord is to establish a strict and consistent prayer life. There must be a time set aside every day that is devoted entirely to the Lord. This time of prayer should include praising and worshipping God, making requests known, asking

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

forgiveness for sins and making intercession for others. This is illustrated in the “Lord’s Prayer” which is a model prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4).

The life of Jesus best exemplifies the necessity of prayer. It was not uncommon for Him to rise up before dawn or to slip away to a private place in order to pray (Mark 1:35). Jesus prayed all night before He chose His twelve disciples (Luke 6:12-13), and He spent the last few hours before His crucifixion in earnest prayer (Luke 22:44-46). The prayer life of Jesus Christ is a perfect example to all Christians (I Peter 2:21).

Praying should be done primarily aloud. Virtually all of Jesus’ prayers were audible, and He taught His disciples to do likewise (Luke 11:1; John 17:1). Expressions in the Scriptures such as “praying in the Holy Ghost” (Jude 20), “. . . pray in an unknown tongue” (I Corinthians 14:14), and “. . . praise . . . is the fruit of our lips” (Hebrews 13:15) all make reference to praying aloud.

A person should seek a quiet and private place in which to pray (Mark 1:35). Praying during worship services or in special prayer meetings is necessary, but everyone has need of a private place where he can be alone with God. Jesus said to, “. . . enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly” (Matthew 6:6). This was also a warning against hypocrites who pray merely to be seen or recognized.

The Bible exhorts us to “pray without ceasing” (I Thessalonians 5:17) and speaks of our being “renewed day by day” in prayer (Romans 12:2; II Corinthians 4:16). It also makes several references to fervent prayer (Colossians 4:12). James 5:16 says, “. . . The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.” Thus, a fervent and disciplined prayer life is essential to anyone who wishes to serve God.

Testimony of Prayer. I’ve learned that my prayer life is one of the many forms of *communication* with God, and God has revealed many truths to me during prayer. Here is one important lesson God taught me while praying. Praying is having a conversation with God, and the rules of conversation apply. When only one person does all the talking, what kind of conversation is that? If I had a friend that never allowed me to engage in conversation, but always monopolized every conversation with all their needs and wants, I would not look forward to talking with them. Let God speak! The other rule of conversation is not all conversations must be the same. Some conversations are full of joy, others are somber reflections while others are simple quiet times of pondering and enjoying the presence of each another. When I learned to converse with God in a two-way conversation and feel comfortable with the many variations of these conversations, I found God was closer than I had ever known before.

Prayer is not just about what I want God to do for me, but it is about what I can do for God.

Fasting

Fasting simply means “to abstain from food.” The most common form of fasting is to refrain from eating anything having food value and to drink only water. Medically speaking, fasting can be very healthful.

Jesus began His public ministry with a forty-day fast (Matthew 4:2); Moses fasted forty days on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:28); Elijah fasted forty days (I Kings 19:8); and Daniel fasted for three weeks (Daniel 10:3). Fasting also played a part in the conversion of Paul when he went for three days without food or drink (Acts 9:9).

Fasting combined with prayer produces incredible results. When a person fasts, he is not only presenting a sacrifice to God, he is also “crucifying” his flesh. By denying the flesh one of its most natural desires, a person strengthens his inner man (Romans 8:13; II Corinthians 4:16; I Corinthians 9:27). Jesus emphasized the importance of fasting when He said that miracles, “. . . can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and *fasting*” (Mark 9:29). David said, “. . . I humbled my soul with fasting . . .” (Psalm 35:13). Paul spoke of “fastings often” (II Corinthians 11:27), and the leaders of the church at Antioch united themselves in fasting (Acts 13:2). Fasting is a valuable supplement to prayer, and every Christian should fast on a regular basis (except when medical reasons prevent it).

Testimony of Fasting. I’ve learned the importance of making fasting a consistent part of my relationship with God. Each time I make the sacrifice of fasting, He rewards me in many different ways. I see my prayers answered, I hear His voice more clearly and I know He is helping me put the flesh under subjection so I can receive what He has for me spiritually. I’ve often heard people say that when we fast, God can hear us better, so our prayers get answered faster. But that is not true -- God always hears us. His hearing ability is not in question, but rather fasting improves our ability to hear Him.

Worship

And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together. . .* Hebrews 10:24-25

From this passage we know that it is scriptural to attend church. A church service is a time when Christians unite in worship and adoration of God. This is a vitally important aspect of our lives. Through worship and praise we are spiritually nourished, strengthened and drawn nearer to God (Psalm 100:4; Hebrews 2:12).

Worship can be a time of tears or exuberance, silence or shouting, or moving in any direction which the Spirit might choose (II Corinthians 3:17; Romans 8:4; I Thessalonians 5:19). Oftentimes man-made restrictions are placed upon church services which inhibit the worship and prevent it from flowing freely (Matthew 15:8-9; Romans 8:7).

David worshipped God “in the dance” (Psalm 149:3) and with musical instruments (Psalm 150:3-4). The multitude on the Mount of Olives worshipped the Lord with “a loud voice” (Luke 19:37). The Scriptures also speak of “lifting up holy hands” as a part of worship (I Timothy 2:8).

Non-scriptural restraints should never be placed upon a worship service as they will result in a dead and lifeless church. We must worship God “in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24) and with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (Mark 12:30).

Studying the Word

. . . for thou hast magnified thy *word* above all thy name. Psalm 138:2

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

The *Word* of God is placed even above His name! It is an inexhaustible source of strength, knowledge and understanding. When Satan came to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus used the Word of God to combat him (Matthew 4:1-10). David wrote, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11); and “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path” (Psalm 119:105). The Bible is a marvelous gift from God that every Christian should seek to utilize.

In regard to reading the Bible, Paul wrote that a person should, “Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed . . .” (II Timothy 2:15). Knowledge of the Word of God is essential to God’s people as supported in Hosea 4:6, “My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . .”

Every believer should strive to read at least one chapter from the Bible daily. By becoming familiar with the Word of God, a person can know the answer to virtually any question that he might be asked in regard to Christianity. “Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man” (Colossians 4:6). Scriptures will become a natural and spontaneous part of our conversation only through consistent study.

Tithing

Dekattoo (dek-at-o’-o) is the Greek word for “tithes.” It comes from the word *deka* meaning “ten.” Tithing simply means “to give a tenth.” Paying tithes began about 4,000 years ago when Abraham gave a tenth of all he had to Melchizedek, king of Salem. “And blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand. *And he gave him tithes of all*” (Genesis 14:20).

When Abraham gave a tenth to Melchizedek, it was hundreds of years before the law of Moses was given. Tithing continued, however, throughout the days of the law and has never been abolished (Malachi 3:8). Paying tithes is a basic operation of the kingdom of God which helps the church to function.

A person is blessed when he pays his tithes. Jesus said, “Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over . . .” (Luke 6:38).

Likewise a person is cursed by his failure to pay tithes.

Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse: for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation. Malachi 3:8-9

A tenth of our earnings belongs to God. Anything given above this is considered an offering.

Submission to a Pastor

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, *pastors* and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints . . . for the edifying of the body of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-12

Pastors are a vital part of the five-fold ministry which serves to edify the church. The word *pastor* means “shepherd”; and when a pastor is truly called of God, he leads and cares for his congregation as a shepherd for his flock (Romans 10:15; Hebrews 13:17). A pastor is responsible for the souls of his people and will go to great extremes in order to keep them saved. “Obey them that have the rule

over you [pastors], and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account . . .” (Hebrews 13:17).

A saint should follow his pastor as his pastor follows Christ (I Corinthians 11:1). If a man fails to heed his pastor, it is interpreted as disobedience to the ordinances of God:

Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation. For he is the minister of God to thee for good . . .
Romans 13:2-4

It is crucial that a believer be submitted to a pastor, and the Scriptures teach to “esteem them very highly” (I Thessalonians 5:13).

Witnessing

Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.
Matthew 10:32-33

It is imperative that Christians witness to others about Jesus Christ. The Scriptures speak of overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of testimonies (Revelation 12:11). Our testimonies should be shared with others any time the opportunity arises.

Witnessing is an act of love. Anyone who loves people and cares about the eternal destiny of their souls will make an effort to witness to them. The apostle Paul, one of the greatest soul winners of all time, wrote:

And unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak: I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.
I Corinthians 9:20, 22

Witnessing requires love, wisdom and patience. Jesus emphasized this when He said, “. . . be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves” (Matthew 10:16). If you will exercise love, wisdom and patience when witnessing, you can become a successful soul winner.

Holiness

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, *holy*, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.
Romans 12:1

Follow peace with all men, and *holiness*, without which no man shall see the Lord.
Hebrews 12:14

Because it is written, Be ye *holy*; for I am holy.
I Peter 1:16

Holiness is absolutely essential to one’s salvation. God is a holy God (Leviticus 20:26; I Peter 1:15), and it is required of His people that they also be holy.

The root meaning of the word *holiness* is “to separate.” God’s people must separate themselves from the unclean and unholy things of the world and live a pure and holy life. “Wherefore come out from

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (II Corinthians 6:17).

True holiness is brought about by the sanctifying effect of the Holy Ghost (I Corinthians 6:11; Romans 15:16). As the Spirit of God cleanses and purifies the inner man, it will naturally affect the appearance of the outer man (Luke 6:45). Inner holiness always manifests itself outwardly; our clothing, our speech and even our daily habits are affected by holiness. The Holy Ghost makes new creatures of us spiritually and physically as well (Romans 12:1; II Corinthians 5:17).

The Bible supplies us with the necessary guidelines for holiness. In regard to clothing, the Word of God teaches:

. . . that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety [moderation, temperance]; not with broided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array.
I Timothy 2:9

Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.
I Peter 3:3-4

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman’s garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the LORD thy God.
Deuteronomy 22:5

Regarding holiness in our daily activities, the Bible says to “Abstain from all appearance of evil,” to not “set [any] wicked thing before mine eyes” and to redeem “the time, because the days are evil” (I Thessalonians 5:22; Psalm 101:3; Ephesians 5:16).

In respect to our conversation, the Word of God tells us:

. . . 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 12:36-37

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ . . .
Philippians 1:27

A person should strive to keep his conversation pleasant, wholesome, graceful and continually seasoned with salt (Colossians 4:6).

The Bible is a complete instruction book for Christian holiness. There are many scriptures other than those just covered that speak of holy living. Every Christian should be familiar with what the Bible says in regard to holiness and then strive to follow its directions.

Marriage and the Home

The Life Long Union

Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but

one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Matthew 19:4-6

In the early days of man's existence, God instituted marriage. He established this union of man and woman as a means of companionship and for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family (Genesis 1:28; 2:18). God takes a vital interest in every marriage, and the Scriptures say that marriages receive favor from the Lord (Proverbs 18:22).

Marriage is a threefold covenant existing between the husband, the wife and God. This covenant is established at marriage and can only be dissolved by death or unfaithfulness.

And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Matthew 19:9

Fornication is the act of having sexual relations with anyone other than the marriage partner. This is the *only* Biblical ground for divorce. If a person divorces and marries someone else for any reason other than fornication, that person commits adultery. Marriage is a lifelong commitment that is to be taken very seriously (Leviticus 20:10; I Corinthians 6:9-10, 18).

The Scriptures also admonish the Christian who is married to an unbeliever to remain with the unsaved spouse. The influence of one believer in a home should lead to the conversion of the entire family. For this reason, a believer should not separate from an unbelieving mate (I Corinthians 7:12-16).

Guidelines for the Home

The husband is the "high priest" or the head of the household (Ephesians 5:22-23). This does not mean that he is to rule as a dictator, and certainly does not imply that he is superior to his wife. The husband and wife are equal as persons but differ in their responsibilities. As the head of the home, the husband must be willing to sacrifice for his wife and family and give himself as Christ gave Himself for the church (Ephesians 5:25). He should also love his wife as Christ loved the church and conduct himself in a loving and gentle manner (Ephesians 5:25-31; I Peter 3:7-10).

The role of a wife is that of a help meet to her husband (Genesis 2:18). She is her husband's counterpart and should offer him support and encouragement in his endeavors to provide a home and lead his family (Proverbs 31:27). The Bible admonishes her to be modest, godly, meek and to love her husband and children (I Peter 3:1-6; I Timothy 2:9-10; Titus 2:4).

A marriage must be centered on God. It is vital that a couple share a "oneness" with each other as well as a "oneness" with God (Galatians 3:28; Genesis 2:24). A husband and wife cannot follow two separate paths and achieve the close relationship which is essential in a marriage. We learn from the Scriptures that couples can share ministries as well as sharing their lives (Acts 18:2, 26; Romans 16:3-5).

Children

Lo, children are an heritage of the LORD: and the fruit of the womb is his reward.

Psalms 127:3

Children are very special in the sight of the Lord. Jesus loved the blessed innocence and trusting nature of children. He used it as an example of how He would like each of us to be (Mark 10:14-15).

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

Children are the responsibility of the parents. A child's upbringing will almost always determine what manner of man or woman they will grow up to be. Parents who love and care for their children will always discipline and correct them whenever it is necessary. "He that spareth his rod hateth his son: but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes" (Proverbs 13:24).

The Scriptures also say that discipline can ultimately make the difference between a child being saved or lost (Proverbs 23:13-14).

Parents are to train their children in the ways of righteousness and bring them up in the nurture (teachings) and admonition of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4). The influence of a Christian home will go with a child throughout life.

Faithfulness

Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things . . . Matthew 25:21

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

I Corinthians 4:2

Faithfulness is a necessary and admirable quality of Christian living. A faithful saint is one who is consistent in prayer, fasting, church attendance and who remains loyal and obedient in every aspect of his service to God. It is not always an easy task to worship, witness or to pray, but the Scriptures teach, "Let us not be weary in well doing . . ." (Galatians 6:9).

Even when circumstances make it difficult, a Christian needs to remain faithful in good works. The Bible promises, ". . . in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9).

Faithfulness requires patience. The Word of God exhorts us to ". . . run with patience the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1). Patience is mentioned forty-five times in the New Testament, and Jesus said, "In your patience possess ye your souls" (Luke 21:19).

The faithful man can be compared to the farmer who first plants the seed and then waits with patience for the harvest,

. . . Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain. James 5:7

But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with patience. Luke 8:15

A Christian must sow to the Spirit in order to reap the fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23; 6:8).

Experienced saints as well as new converts should strive to be faithful servants of God bearing in mind that spiritual maturity is a *process of time and patience*. It is the man who *endures* until the end that shall be saved (Matthew 10:22).

Christian Living – Review Questions

Good Works

- Paul, in Titus 2:14, was referring to God’s people as _____ people who have dedicated themselves to _____.
- The _____ of a Christian are actually the demonstration of his _____. (James 2:18)
- Christian works should not be _____ with the works of the law.
- The works of the law are _____, but the works of faith are_____.

Prayer

- Prayer is to our _____ as food is to our _____.
- A good illustration for knowing how to pray is found in Matthew _____, the “Lord’s Prayer.”
- A _____ and _____ prayer life is essential to anyone who wishes to serve God.

Fasting

- Fasting* simply means “to _____.”
- Jesus began His public ministry with a _____-_____ fast. (Matthew 4:2)
- When a person fasts, he is not only presenting a sacrifice to God, he is also _____ his flesh.
- Jesus emphasized the importance of fasting when He said that _____ “. . . can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.” (Mark 9:29)

Worship

- A _____ is a time when Christians unite in worship and adoration of God.
- You can worship God in many ways; four are: in the _____, with _____, with a _____ and lifting up _____.

Studying the Word

- “. . . for thou hast manifested thy _____ above all thy name.” (Psalm 138:2)
- When Satan came to tempt Jesus in the wilderness, Jesus used the _____ to combat him. (Matthew 4:1-10)
- “_____ to shew thyself approved unto God, a _____ that needeth not to be ashamed.” (II Timothy 2:15)
- “My people are _____ for lack of _____.” (Hosea 4:6)

Tithing

- Dekatoo* (dek-at-o’-o) is the Greek word for “_____.” It comes from the word *deka* meaning “_____.”
- Tithing simply means _____.

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

- c. When Abraham gave a tenth to _____, it was hundreds of years before the law of _____ was given.
- d. Tithing has continued throughout the days of the _____ and has never been _____.
- e. A person is _____ when he pays his tithes.
- f. Anything given above our tenth, or tithes, is considered an _____.

Submission to a Pastor

- a. “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the _____ of the _____ . . .” (Ephesians 4:11-12)
- b. The word *pastor* means “_____.”
- c. A pastor “is the minister of God to thee for _____” (Romans 13:4).

Witnessing

- a. The Scriptures speak of overcoming by the blood of the Lamb and by the _____ of _____. (Revelation 12:11)
- b. Paul said, “. . . I am made _____ things to _____ men, that I might by _____ means save some” (I Corinthians 9:22).
- c. Witnessing requires _____, _____ and _____.

Holiness

- a. “Follow peace with all men, and _____, without which no man shall _____ the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14).
- b. Holiness is absolutely _____ to one’s salvation.
- c. True holiness is brought about by the _____ effect of the _____ . (Romans 15:16)
- d. The Bible supplies us with the necessary guidelines for holiness in regard to _____, our daily _____ and our _____.

Faithfulness

- a. “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been _____ over a _____ things, I will make thee _____ over _____ . . .” (Matthew 25:21).
- b. Faithfulness is a necessary and admirable quality of Christian living; it is not always easy, but the Scriptures teach, “Let us not be _____ in _____ doing . . .” (Galatians 6:9).
- c. Faithfulness requires _____. (Hebrews 12:1)
- d. Faithful servants of God should bear in mind that spiritual maturity is a process of _____ and _____.

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What is the importance of worship to our lives as Christians?

Psalm 48:9
Psalm 95:6
Psalm 100:1-3
Psalm 103:1-4
Psalm 107:8
Isaiah 38:20
Isaiah 49:13
Luke 17:15
Ephesians 1:3
Ephesians 3:20
I Peter 2:9
Revelation 15:4

2. What are some of the Biblical forms of worship?

I Chronicles 16:29
Psalm 22:22
Psalm 30:4
Psalm 34:1
Psalm 35:18
Psalm 47:1, 6
Psalm 51:15
Psalm 63:3
Psalm 66:1
Psalm 95:6
Psalm 119:108
Psalm 149:1
Psalm 150:1-6
Proverbs 3:9
Isaiah 12:5-6
Ephesians 5:19-20
I Timothy 2:8
Hebrews 10:25

3. What are some of the ways in which we can pray?

I Samuel 12:23
II Chronicles 14:11
Matthew 6:6
Acts 4:23-31
Acts 12:5
I Corinthians 14:14-15
Galatians 4:19
Ephesians 6:18
I Timothy 2:1-2

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

Hebrews 5:7
James 5:15-18

4. Why is praying in tongues necessary, and what does it do for us?

Romans 8:26
I Corinthians 14:2, 4
Jude 20

5. How do we know that God will answer our prayers?

Psalm 28:6
Psalm 31:22
Psalm 116:1-2
Isaiah 65:24
Jeremiah 33:3
Matthew 7:7-11
Matthew 21:22
John 9:31
Hebrews 4:16
James 5:16

6. What are some examples of fasting found in the Bible?

Ezra 8:23
Esther 4:16
Psalm 35:13
Daniel 9:3
Daniel 10:2-3
Matthew 4:2
Matthew 17:21
Matthew 19:14-15
Acts 13:2

7. For what reasons does a person fast?

Isaiah 58:6
Zechariah 7:5
Mark 9:29

8. What are some of the benefits of fasting?

Isaiah 58:6, 8
I Corinthians 9:27

9. What are trials of faith in a Christian's life, and what is their purpose?

I Chronicles 29:17
Matthew 13:19-22
II Thessalonians 1:3-5
Hebrews 6:13-15
James 1:3, 12
I Peter 1:7
I Peter 5:10

10. What is the Lord's Supper, and why do we observe it?
Matthew 26:26-28
John 6:51, 53-56
I Corinthians 5:7-8
I Corinthians 11:23-26
11. What should we do before we partake of the Lord's Supper and why?
I Corinthians 11:27-30
12. What is foot washing, and why did Jesus say that we ought to follow His example?
John 13:2-17
13. What conditions did God institute for Christian marriage?
Romans 7:2-3
I Corinthians 7:3-5
I Corinthians 7:13-16
II Corinthians 6:14-15
Hebrews 13:4
14. What is required of a husband and a wife in a marriage?
I Corinthians 7:3-5
Ephesians 5:21-24
I Peter 3:1-6, 8

Chapter 9 – Christian Living

Chapter 10

The Gifts of the Spirit

The Nine Spiritual Gifts

Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I would not have you ignorant. For to one is given by the Spirit the word of wisdom; to another the word of knowledge by the same Spirit; to another faith by the same Spirit; to another the gifts of healing by the same Spirit; to another the working of miracles; to another prophecy; to another discerning of spirits; to another divers kinds of tongues; to another the interpretation of tongues. I Corinthians 12:1, 8-10

Paul begins his commentary on the spiritual gifts by admonishing us to learn about them. In respect to these gifts he said, “I would not have you ignorant . . .” (I Corinthians 12:1). There was confusion in the Corinthian church because of misuse of the gifts of the Spirit (I Corinthians 14:26-33). Consequently, Paul devoted three chapters to a description of them and instructed the church in regard to their use and purpose. A believer should be familiar with all nine gifts and the manner in which they operate in the church.

Word of Wisdom

This gift goes far beyond natural human ability. The *word of wisdom* is a sudden miraculous giving of wisdom by the Holy Ghost. It can provide divine guidance in a particular situation and provide the appropriate answers when one is questioned, especially when questioned about faith. Jesus said, “But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak” (Matthew 10:19). He was making reference to the word of wisdom.

The word of wisdom will often accompany the *word of knowledge*. It gives a person the wisdom to *apply* the knowledge which he has received.

The word of wisdom operated in the ministry of Stephen. The Scripture says, “And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake” (Acts 6:10).

This gift also helped Paul to become the dominant figure aboard the ship to Rome. Even though he was a prisoner, he led the ship’s passengers to safety. It was the wisdom that he displayed which prompted the officers to listen respectfully to him and to act upon his advice (Acts 27:21-44).

Word of Knowledge

This is not referring to natural human knowledge. The *word of knowledge* is a spiritual revelation of facts not obtained through the efforts of the natural mind. A good example of this is seen in Acts 5:3

Chapter 10 – The Gifts of the Spirit

when the deception of Ananias and Sapphira was revealed to Peter. The Holy Ghost also revealed to Peter by the word of knowledge that he was to go with the men who were sent by Cornelius (Acts 10:19-20). The word of knowledge can greatly aid a Christian in helping others and can strengthen prayers by showing more specifically what to pray.

Gifts of Healing

Jesus spent the greater portion of His earthly ministry healing the sick. Since His ascension into heaven, He has continued to heal the sick by the power of His Holy Spirit.

The *gifts of healing* may be manifested through *any believer at any time*. Jesus said that miraculous healings would be one of the signs which would follow a believer -- any believer (Mark 16:17-18). A Christian should not hesitate to pray for the sick whenever the situation arises.

The *laying on of hands* is an integral part of the gifts of healing. The Scripture states, “. . . they [believers] shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover” (Mark 16:18). The act of laying on of hands provides a channel for the transfer of faith and power. The laying on of hands was a common practice in the healing ministry of Jesus (Mark 6:5; Luke 4:40; 13:13). The Scriptures also speak of *anointing with oil* in conjunction with healing (James 5:14).

This gift is spoken of in the plural -- the *gifts* of healing. The reason for this is due to the many causes of sickness. An illness may be physical, mental or may be due to demonic influence (Luke 8:43-44; 13:11-13). The gifts of healing provide release for all types of illness.

The Lord paid a great price in order for these gifts of healing to be given to us: “. . . the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed” (Isaiah 53:5). Jesus received thirty-nine stripes, inflicted by a whip, so that the gifts of healing could be a part of His church.

Testimony of Healing. In 1997, I was diagnosed with cancer in four lobes of my lungs. All the time, during chemo treatment, my wonderful church fasted and prayed for God to heal me.

I had numerous miraculous divine interventions. One of the most profound occurred when a pastor called and very adamantly admonished me not to accept anything but a complete healing for my body. As he began to pray for me, a small white cloud about the size of a 50-cent piece appeared about four feet above my bed and began to descend toward me. It landed right in the center of my chest. When the cloud landed on my chest, I immediately received “the peace that passeth all understanding!” I then knew that, no matter what happened, I was going to be all right.

I later was released from the hospital and told to get my business in order and just rest. Unbeknownst to me, my doctors had already met with my three daughters and their husbands. They were told that I had only two to three weeks to live. My oldest daughter, Celeste, had redecorated their master bedroom for me and told her sisters, “I’m bringing mother home to get well.” And she did.

Around a month later, my pastor gave me the name of a nutritionist who helped me with alternative medicine and got me on a detox program. About three weeks into this program, my medical doctors looked at a new CAT scan and said, “Margie, what are you doing? All of the cancer in your lungs is going away!” My doctor then asked

me if I had been praying again. To this, I replied, “Yes, and my church is praying too!”

It has been seven years since I was given two to three weeks to live, and I have had the opportunity to witness and help hundreds of people with cancer. Many times daily, I thank God for healing me and for allowing me to see my grandchildren grow and be with them. I love God with all of my heart, and I pray He will just let me be a blessing to others.

Working of Miracles

The working of a miracle is a supernatural occurrence on a natural plane which sometimes defies the laws of science and nature. For instance, Philip was transported bodily for a distance of twenty-four miles (Acts 8:39-40) and Paul was bitten by a venomous snake and was not harmed (Acts 28:3-5). Obviously, these miracles were not the result of human ability; they happened by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Jesus performed many miracles upon the earth, and He told His church that “. . . and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father” (John 14:12). God’s church has always been enhanced by the working of miracles.

Gift of Faith

There are various types of faith. One is natural faith which is displayed in our belief that the sun will rise each day and that the seasons will continually change. The Bible speaks of the “measure of faith” which is the portion of faith that is given to every individual. Some people add to their measure of faith while others do not (II Peter 1:5). Faith is also one of the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) which indicates “faithfulness.”

The *gift of faith*, however, is a sudden, extraordinary amount of faith given to be used in a particular situation. The gift of faith is so remarkable that it will almost always result in a miracle. Peter exercised the gift of faith when he prayed for Tabitha, and she was raised from the dead (Acts 9:40-41). He also displayed extraordinary faith when he prayed for the lame man at the gate of the Temple; the man was *immediately* healed (Acts 3:6-7). Every believer has the potential for the gift of faith.

Gift of Prophecy

Prophecy is speaking directly by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in a known language. The person who prophesies does not speak his own words or thoughts; he speaks the words of God. Because the *gift of prophecy* enables the church to hear messages from God, it is greatly emphasized in Scripture (I Corinthians 14:4-5). Paul said, “. . . covet to prophesy . . .” (I Corinthians 14:39).

Agabus prophesied of Paul’s imprisonment at Jerusalem (Acts 21:11). When the men at Ephesus received the Holy Ghost, they prophesied (Acts 19:6). The Bible also speaks of women who prophesied (Acts 21:9).

Discerning of Spirits

To *discern* means to “distinguish” or to “recognize.” The gift of *discerning of spirits* enables a person to distinguish what type of spirit he may be confronted with in a given situation. A person’s

Chapter 10 – The Gifts of the Spirit

actions and words can be motivated either by a demonic spirit, the Holy Spirit or his own feelings; the discerning of spirits enables a believer to distinguish between them. This gift is vitally important to a pastor or to anyone who ministers to a group of people.

An example of this gift in operation is found in Acts 16. A woman followed Paul and his companion for several days as they ministered, and she cried continuously saying, “. . . These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation” (Acts 16:17). There was nothing wrong with what she said, but Paul discerned that she was speaking under the influence of a demonic spirit. He then commanded the spirit to come out of her, and she received deliverance (Acts 16:18).

Divers Kinds of Tongues

The word *divers* means “several.” *Divers kinds of tongues* is the gift of speaking in languages that one has never learned. This is made possible by the power of the Holy Ghost.

When a person manifests the *gift of tongues*, he will give a message in a language which he does not know; the message should be followed by an interpretation in the language which the congregation understands. The interpretation may be given by the person speaking in tongues or by someone else whom the Lord may choose to use. The purpose of the tongues is for a sign to the unbeliever (I Corinthians 14:22). The interpretation that follows is for the benefit of the entire church (I Corinthians 14:31).

The gift of tongues must be distinguished from the *evidence of tongues*. When a person is filled with the Holy Ghost, it is evidenced by his speaking in tongues (Acts 2:4; 10:46; 19:6). This is for one’s own edification and involves no interpretation. The gift of tongues is a *public* manifestation of the Spirit which should be followed by an interpretation (I Corinthians 14:28). For more information on the evidence of tongues, see the section titled “Speaking With Other Tongues” in Chapter 7.

Interpretation of Tongues

The *interpretation of tongues* is the counterpart to the gift of tongues. After a message is spoken in tongues, an interpretation follows to bring the meaning of the message to the congregation. The interpreter will not understand the tongues but will give the interpretation by the direction of the Holy Ghost.

For the Edifying of the Church

The church is a spiritual body. It is totally dependent upon the Spirit for its life, power, and unity. “For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit” (I Corinthians 12:13).

Since the church is a living, spiritual body, it must always yield to the Spirit and allow Him to work freely in its midst. This includes the working of the gifts of the Spirit. The use of the gifts is why Paul wrote, “. . . covet earnestly the best gifts . . .” (I Corinthians 12:31).

It is imperative that a person view the spiritual gifts as gifts to the church -- *not to the individual*: “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the *edifying of the church*” (I Corinthians 14:12). A man should never desire a gift to be used for his own glory or personal gain (I Corinthians 14:26). Because a man may manifest the gifts of the Spirit does not mean that he is any greater than a person who does not. The word *gifts* implies that they are not

“rewards” and are not earned; they are given freely by God. A Christian whose life is focused on the gifts of the Spirit will be lacking in other areas. A believer must bear the *fruit of the Spirit* or everything else he does will be in vain (I Corinthians 13:1-3; Galatians 5:22-23). The spiritual gifts are meant to be used in reverence, humility and with a sincere desire to edify the church.

In the Church Today

The gifts of the Spirit are as important to the church today as they were to the church almost 2,000 years ago. Some people contend that the gifts were meant only for the early church. They believe the gifts were instituted to aid the first Christians in establishing churches because the gospel of Christ was new to the world. If the gifts were needed then, *they are needed even more now!* We are living in an hour which the Bible describes as “perilous times” (II Timothy 3:1). This present age is plagued by seducing spirits, false doctrines and apostasy such as the world has never known (I Timothy 4:1-3). The task of spreading the gospel is probably more awesome today than it has ever been. Giving the gifts of the Spirit is one of the ways in which God has equipped His church, both then and now, for this vast undertaking (Acts 4:30).

The gifts will not cease until the second coming of Christ:

. . . but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. I Corinthians 13:8-10

When that which is perfect is come means the return of Jesus Christ. Some have theorized that the word “perfect” refers to the Bible.

However, “perfect” is *masculine* in gender and can only refer to Jesus. Paul said that we presently “see through a glass darkly”; but when the perfect is come, we will see and know completely (I Corinthians 13:12). Only the coming of our Redeemer will fulfill this scripture and enable us to see things as God sees them.

Chapter 10 – The Gifts of the Spirit

The Gifts of the Spirit – Review Questions

The Nine Spiritual Gifts

- a. There are _____ spiritual gifts recorded in I Corinthians 12.
- b. “Now concerning _____, brethren, I would not have you _____” (I Corinthians 12:1).
- c. The word of wisdom can provide divine _____ in a particular situation and can also provide the appropriate answers.
- d. The word of knowledge is a spiritual _____ of _____ not obtained through the efforts of the natural mind.
- e. The gifts of healing may be manifested through any _____ at any _____.
- f. The Scripture states, “. . . they [believers] shall _____ on the sick, and they shall _____” (Mark 16:18).
- g. The working of a miracle is a _____ occurrence on a natural plane which sometimes defies the laws of _____ and _____.
- h. The gift of faith is a sudden, _____ amount of faith given to be used in a particular situation.
- i. _____ is speaking directly by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost in a known language.
- j. To *discern* means to “_____” or to “_____.”
- k. The gift of discerning of spirits enables a person to _____ between types of spirits that may confront him in a given situation.
- l. The gift of tongues is giving a message in a _____ which is unknown; the message should be followed by an _____ in the language which the congregation understands.
- m. The interpretation of tongues is the _____ to the gift of tongues.

For the Edifying of the Church

- a. “Even so ye, forasmuch as ye are zealous of spiritual gifts, seek that ye may excel to the _____ of the _____” (I Corinthians 14:12).

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. What is the gift of the Spirit?

Acts 1:8

Acts 2:1-4

Acts 2:38

2. What is the difference between the gift of the Holy Ghost and the gifts of the Spirit?

Acts 2:38

Romans 12:4

I Corinthians 12:11

3. What are the nine gifts of the Spirit?

Romans 12:4-8

I Corinthians 7:7

I Corinthians 12:4-11

I Corinthians 12:28-31

4. Why were the spiritual gifts instituted in the church?

Acts 2:22

II Peter 1:3

I Corinthians 1:5

I Peter 4:10

5. Is every Christian given a spiritual gift?

Romans 12:6

I Corinthians 7:7

Ephesians 4:7

6. What significance do the gifts have to the unbeliever?

Mark 16:17-18

I Corinthians 14:22

Chapter 10 – The Gifts of the Spirit

Chapter 11

Angels

Angels and Their Purpose

The Greek word for angel is *angelos* (ang'-el-os) and it means “messenger.” Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:14) which were created by God to act as His messengers and to carry out His commandments.

Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him . . . Let them praise the name of the Lord: for he commanded, and they were created. Psalm 148:2, 5

Bless the Lord, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Psalm 103:20

There are two types of angels: good and evil. In the beginning, God created all of the angels holy, but Lucifer and one-third of them sinned and were cast down to the earth (II Peter 2:4). They became known as evil spirits or demons as they are more commonly called:

And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child as soon as it was born. And there was war in heaven: *Michael and his angels* fought against the dragon; and the *dragon fought and his angels* . . . 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 12:4, 7, 9

Holy Angels

The holy angels are great in number. The Bible says, “thousand thousands ministered unto him [God], and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him . . .” (Daniel 7:10). This passage refers to the heavenly host of angels. Hebrews 12:22 refers to them as innumerable.

The angels are also mighty (II Thessalonians 1:7). It took only one angel to slay 185,000 of Sennacherib’s army (II Kings 19:35), and a single angel will one day bind Satan and cast him into the bottomless pit (Revelation 20:1-3).

Ministering to God’s people is one of the primary ways in which angels render their service to Him.

Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation? Hebrews 1:14

The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them. Psalm 34:7

Chapter 11 – Angels

In both the Old and New Testaments, angels can be seen protecting and ministering to the saints of God. The angels of the Lord delivered Elisha and his servant from their enemies when they were surrounded by them (II Kings 6:15-17). It was an angel that saved Daniel from the lions by closing their mouths (Daniel 6:22). Angels carried Lazarus into Abraham's bosom (Luke 16:22) and set Peter free from prison (Acts 12:7-11).

There are two angels that the Bible refers to several times by name: Michael and Gabriel. Michael is called the *archangel* which means "chief angel" (Jude 9). This is evident in Revelation 12:7 where he is described as the commander of the heavenly host (armies of angels). Michael is also called "prince" three times in the book of Daniel (Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1).

Gabriel, also, is an angel of high standing. He told Zechariah, ". . . I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God . . ." (Luke 1:19). The Scriptures seem to indicate that he is closely involved in the redemptive work of God.

The Bible makes a distinction between various orders of holy angels. Seraphim constitute one order of angelic beings, but little is known about them. They are mentioned only twice in the Scriptures (Isaiah 6:2, 6). The word *seraphim* comes from the Hebrew *seraph* which means "burning or fiery" and also denotes "copper colored." Seraphim appear to be connected with God's dealing with uncleanness, and their fiery nature is related to "purifying" (Isaiah 6:6-7).

Cherubim make up another order of angels mentioned in the Scriptures. They, like the seraphim, are depicted as having wings, but their function seems to be the avenging of sin. Cherubim guard the tree of life, and golden cherubim guard the Ark of the Covenant (Genesis 3:24; Exodus 25:18-22).

Another type of angel being which appears in the Scriptures is the theophany. Occasionally, God Himself appeared as an angel. God had not yet become flesh, so He manifested Himself in this form at times in order to communicate more directly with man. These manifestations are known as theophanies. Examples are found in Genesis 32:24-30 where Jacob wrestled with an angel (theophany) and in Genesis 18:1-21 where an angel (theophany) appeared to Abraham. The Scriptures also say that angels are capable of taking human form (Hebrews 13:2).

Demons

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; II Peter 2:4

Demons are those angels who were originally created holy; but along with Satan, they sinned and were cast to earth. They are bound with chains of darkness and can never be saved.

Satan's original name was *Lucifer* which means "morning star." Before his fall, he was probably the highest ranking angel in heaven. He is described as "full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty," and he was the "anointed cherub" (Ezekiel 28:12-19). Lucifer became proud and desired to overthrow the throne of God (Isaiah 14:12-15). He failed in his attempt and, along with one-third of the angels, was evicted from his home in the heavenlies (Revelation 12:4, 9):

Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee. Ezekiel 28:17

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Isaiah 14:12-14

These demons, or evil spirits, now go about the earth as enemies of God and man. Their goal is to “steal, and to kill, and to destroy” anything that is good or righteous (John 10:10). “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (I Peter 5:8).

Satan and his demons have an organized system of warfare that is in direct opposition to the kingdom of God. The Bible speaks of principalities, powers, rulers of darkness and spiritual wickedness in high places (Ephesians 6:12). This is a description of the hierarchy of evil which is so obviously gripping this world. Satan dispatches certain demons to be princes or captains over different cities and countries. The prince of Persia delayed God’s answer to Daniel’s prayer for twenty-one days (Daniel 10:12-13).

Because so many people reject the gospel of Christ and live their lives in sin, Satan is called “the god of this world” (II Corinthians 4:4). In the same context, he is “the prince of the power of the air” (Ephesians 2:2).

Spiritual Warfare

For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Ephesians 6:12

For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; II Corinthians 10:4

And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: Luke 22:31

In a realm in which we cannot see, a very real and intense battle is taking place. At this moment, demons everywhere are attempting to draw saints of God back into a life of sin. Satan’s ultimate goal is to see every person upon the earth sentenced to eternity in hell.

A large portion of the Bible deals with the subject of spiritual warfare and instructs the Christian in ways to be victorious over the evil forces which oppose him. One important aspect of the victorious life is the wearing of *the whole armour of God*:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God . . . having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:

Ephesians 6:13-17

Chapter 11 – Angels

“Having your loins girt about with truth” represents the freedom and liberty of knowing the full truth. For instance, Jesus said, “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free” (John 8:32). Knowledge of the truth can free you from the bondage of the world.

The “breastplate of righteousness” is the protection of the heart. A clean and righteous life allows one to live without condemnation (Romans 8:1); therefore, our hearts are free from guilt.

When we have our “feet shod with the preparation of the gospel”, we will walk in paths of righteousness and always stand strong in the Lord.

The “shield of faith” quenches the fiery darts of the wicked. When we are confronted with doubt and fear, faith assures us of ultimate victory, and we have no need to fear.

The “helmet of salvation” is actually referring to the “hope of salvation” (I Thessalonians 5:8). The helmet refers to the protection of our heads and *thoughts*. When our thoughts are filled with the blessed hope of eternity, and we trust in God our Father, we can make it through virtually any difficult situation.

The “sword of the Spirit” is the Word of God. This is the only offensive weapon described in the whole armor of God. Every Christian should strive to be skillful with the Scriptures.

It is imperative that a believer wears this spiritual suit of armor at all times without neglecting a single part of it (Ephesians 6:13). Notice also that there is no protection provided for a person’s back. A believer must face up to every battle with courage.

Another important aspect of spiritual warfare is dealing with demons. The Bible admonishes us not to be ignorant of Satan’s devices (II Corinthians 2:11). A believer needs to be aware of the ways in which Satan works and learn how to combat him in every situation.

Demons can affect a person in two ways: either by outward oppression (from outside the body) or by inward oppression (possession by a demon). When a believer is severely plagued by unclean thoughts or feelings, he is probably being outwardly oppressed by evil spirits. Deliverance can be achieved through prayer. One should begin this prayer by asking God to cleanse him completely in His blood. Then, using the name of Jesus, a person should rebuke and bind the demonic spirits. If a man knows which spirit is oppressing him (for example, the spirit of fear, depression or anger), he should speak directly to it and command it to depart. The same prayer should be used when praying for another person’s deliverance.

In the event that a person is demon-possessed, his oppression will be much more severe than that of someone who is being outwardly oppressed, and he will need deliverance immediately.

Jesus spent about one-third of His earthly ministry delivering people from demons, and He stated that casting out devils would be one of the signs that would follow believers (Mark 16:17). A person should follow Jesus’ example when dealing with demon possession: command the spirit to reveal its name; then, calling the spirit by name, command it to come out (Luke 8:30-33). Jesus also taught that prayer and fasting should accompany the casting out of demons (Mark 9:29). All commands should be made in Jesus’ name (Colossians 3:17).

Testimony of Spiritual Warfare. God recently led me on a forty-day fast. There are many kinds of fasts, this fast was from certain types of food. It was difficult at times, but never too much to bear, and I experienced great intimacy with God. Two weeks afterward, I felt led to fast from all food except water for two-and-a-half days -- a

first. I'm sure the enemy has fought with me before -- the Word of God says that we are in a spiritual battle and that Satan walks about seeking whom he may devour. But I never experienced what happened the days and weeks following that second fast. A theft at my work-place threatened to bring me down, old temptations I thought long gone returned and the emotions I thought were so stable took a roller-coaster ride.

This testimony is to share with you those actions that helped me to stand against the wiles of the devil. I ran to God with all my might. I prayed more than ever laying my heart wide open before Him, telling Him exactly what I was going through, how I was feeling. I examined my heart for any hidden sin and asked God to reveal anything for which I should repent. I resisted thoughts which were sinful. I believed with faith that God would see me through. And I dove into the Word of God, memorizing scriptures such as James 4:7, "Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

The enemy is real, this battle is real and when you engage in spiritual warfare activities such as fasting or ministering to others, you may be the recipient of a response attack from the enemy. Be ready to stand against the enemy by keeping on the armor of God and being watchful over the events of your life and the thoughts of your mind.

Chapter 11 – Angels

Angels – Review Questions

Angels and Their Purpose

- a. The Greek word for angel is *angelos* (ang'-el-os), and it means _____.
- b. Angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:14) which were created by God to act as His messengers and to carry out His _____.
- c. There are two types of angels: _____ and _____.
- d. God created all of the angels holy, but _____ and _____ - _____ of them sinned and were cast down to the _____. (II Peter 2:4)

Holy Angels

- a. It took only one angel to slay _____ of Sennacherib's army. (II Kings 19:35)
- b. "Are they [angels] not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be _____ of _____" (Hebrews 1:14).
- c. "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that _____ him, and _____ them" (Psalm 34:7).

Demons

- a. Demons are those _____ who were originally created holy; but along with _____, they sinned and were cast to earth.
- b. Satan's original name was _____ which means _____.
- c. Demons, or evil spirits, now go about the earth as enemies of God and man, and their goal is to _____, _____, and _____.
- d. The Bible speaks of principalities, powers, _____ of darkness and spiritual wickedness in _____ places. (Ephesians 6:12)

Spiritual Warfare

- a. "For the weapons of our warfare are not _____, but mighty through God to the pulling down of _____" (II Corinthians 10:4).
- b. Satan's ultimate goal is to see every person upon the earth sentenced to _____ in _____.
- c. The _____ armor of God for a Christian consists of having your _____ girt about with truth; having on the _____ of righteousness; your _____ shod with the preparation of the _____ of peace; the _____ of faith; the _____ of salvation; and the _____ of the Spirit which is the _____ of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)

Reference Questions for Further Study

1. For what purpose were angels created?
 - I Kings 22:19
 - Nehemiah 9:6
 - Psalms 103:20-21
 - Isaiah 6:1-3
2. How do angels vary in power and strength?
 - Genesis 3:24
 - Exodus 25:20
 - Psalms 103:20-21
 - Ezekiel 28:14
 - Daniel 7:10
 - Daniel 10:12-13
 - I Thessalonians 4:16
 - Jude 9
3. Can all angels make themselves visible to man?
 - Luke 1:26-38
 - Luke 2:8-10
 - Luke 24:1-10
 - Acts 12:5-11
 - Acts 27:23
 - Hebrews 13:2
4. Are angels still important to us today?
 - Psalms 91:11-12
 - Acts 12:5-11
 - Hebrews 1:14
5. Who was Lucifer, and what did he do?
 - Isaiah 14:12-14
 - Ezekiel 28:12-15
6. What were the consequences of Lucifer's sin?
 - Isaiah 14:12
 - Ezekiel 28:17
 - Luke 10:18
7. What effect did it have on the world when Lucifer was cast out of heaven?
 - Genesis 1:2
 - Jeremiah 4:23-27
8. What are Satan and his demons doing now?
 - Matthew 12:43-45
 - Matthew 13:19
 - II Corinthians 3:14
 - Ephesians 2:2

Chapter 11 – Angels

Ephesians 6:11-13

II Thessalonians 2:9

9. Can Christians effectively resist Satan?

II Corinthians 2:11

Ephesians 6:11-16

James 4:7

I John 2:13

I John 5:18

10. What will happen to Satan and his evil angels?

Matthew 25:41

Revelation 20:1-3

Revelation 20:10

Chapter 12

Daily Bread

Applying to Your Life

But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. James 1:22-25

So what does it mean to be “doers of the word”? As James taught, it is very important to apply the word to your life and not just hear the word. *Doing the word* is more than an *idea* -- a concept we talk about, read about or write about; it is an act or action. For example, just knowing and believing that you should begin each day reading your Bible and talking with God is not the same as actually doing it.

The purpose of this chapter is to build on the knowledge shared in the previous chapters and help you be a doer of the word in your daily life. To underscore the truth represented in this chapter, true personal experiences of faithful “doers of the word” are included as a witness to the empowerment of a daily walk. The testimonies that follow are not mere admonitions, but examples of real people “doing the word” and the benefits that result.

It’s Daily

Give us this day our *daily* bread.

Matthew 6:11

Nearly everyone knows this scripture from the Lord’s Prayer, yet many read it as give us our daily *food*. This is not what Jesus meant. In the Gospel of John, Jesus explained what the bread is:

Then said they unto him, Lord, evermore give us this bread. And Jesus said unto them, *I am the bread of life*: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 6:34-35

Jesus is the bread! Give us this day our daily *bread of life* so the peace of God will reside in our hearts and give us the strength to face any storm that might come our way throughout the day. You will find as you read this chapter that a daily commitment is absolutely essential to your spiritual well-being, and these activities and concepts are part of a daily commitment:

- Why Daily?
- Daily Morning Prayer

Chapter 12 – Daily Bread

- Daily Reading God’s Word
- Daily Praise and Worship
- Daily Dying to Your Own Desires
- Daily Dependence on God

Why Daily?

Have you ever had a Sunday worship experience that was so wonderful you felt you were dancing on clouds the entire day only to wake up on Monday morning back on the ground wondering why it didn’t carry over? “It is of the LORD’S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness” (Lamentations 3:22-23).

The daily-ness of your walk with God cannot be emphasized enough. Everyday you must decide whether you will seek and follow God or do the leading yourself.

And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. Luke 9:23-24

The reason your Sunday experience did not carry over to Monday morning is because God seeks your commitment to deny yourself and follow Him *every day*. Every day you must make this choice.

In addition, there is a spiritual war that demands your daily attention. Paul talks about this in the book of Romans:

For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? Romans 7:19, 23-24

The American Indians also spoke of a similar analogy of two dogs fighting in your soul. One of the dogs is good and the other one is evil. The dog that wins the fight is the dog you feed *daily*.

Daily Morning Prayer

If you have read this handbook, you clearly have a hunger for God. The good news is this: The more you seek God, the more you will find Him; the more you knock, the more God will open to you! 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

David said:

O God, thou art my God; *early will I seek thee*: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longrth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, Where no water is; Psalm 63:1

My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O LORD; *in the morning* will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up. Psalm 5:3

And Isaiah said, “With my soul have I desired thee in the night; yea, with my spirit within me will I seek thee early” (Isaiah 26:9).

Why is prayer every morning so important? Morning prayer prepares you for the day ahead, giving strength to stand in the midst of any storm and giving the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. Upcoming events that day no longer worry you because you began the day following your Father in Heaven, and He only has thoughts of peace for you.

For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end. Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. Jeremiah 29:11-13

A wise man once said, “The goal of every Christian is to end the day as well as you start it.” If you start the day in prayer, you will start with the peace of God ruling in your heart. If you end the day with the same peace in your heart, then you lived the entire day focused on Jesus. And that is the goal!

Testimony of Morning Prayer. I lived as a Christian for many years before making morning prayer a daily part of my life. I prayed, but only when I had free time and that was usually in the evenings. God responds when His children seek Him, and those evening prayer times were precious to me; still something was missing. My days seemed to flow without direction, and I could not wait until evening to have my prayer time with God. I resisted praying in the morning and had a long list of reasons: I was not a morning person, or I was too tired to focus or I was too consumed with the coming day’s activities.

The turning point happened when I decided to give it a test. A dear friend urged me to explore the beauty of starting each day with God and seeking Him to lead me through each day. The effect was immediate! I no longer walked aimlessly through the day but learned to align myself with the will of God as my first act every morning, and I learned what it meant to actively follow Him the rest of the day. I learned that true freedom in Christ was in laying aside all my plans and saying, “Well God, I look forward to what you have planned for me today!”

Now that I start each day in prayer with God, I cannot even consider a day without it. It boils down to this: When you begin the day aligned with God’s will and have submitted yourself to following Him, the events of the day do not cause you to question God. Instead you praise Him because He is sovereign and accept those events as part of His perfect plan for your life.

Daily Reading God’s Word

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us . . . John 1:1, 14

The first chapter of the Gospel of John is the answer to those that say, “God never talks to me.” God talks through His Word because His Word and He are the same! When you are in love with reading your Bible, you are in love with God. God chooses to speak through His Word because it requires faith and trust to receive it. Hebrews 12:2 says that Jesus is the author and finisher of our faith, so

Chapter 12 – Daily Bread

we know that God wants to increase our faith and our ability to trust Him. When God speaks to you through His Word, He is teaching you trust.

“Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee” (Psalm 119:11). David wrote it so beautifully. You need to read your Bible daily to know what is of God and what is not of God. In the Gospel accounts (Matthew 4 and Luke 4) of Satan’s temptation of Jesus, Satan used slight perversions of the Word to try to trick Jesus into sinning. The law required a sinless sacrifice to redeem us to God. What would have happened to our redemption if Jesus had not hidden the Word in his heart and had not seen through Satan’s deception? Likewise, we must study the Word and hide it in our hearts so that we will not be tricked by the subtle lies of Satan.

Daily Praise and Worship

Blessed be the Lord, who *daily* loadeth us with benefits, even the God of our salvation. Selah. Psalm 68:19

Sing unto the LORD, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from *day to day*. Psalm 96:2

So will I sing praise unto thy name for ever, that I may *daily* perform my vows. Psalm 61:8

We are created to worship. God built this into the very fabric of our being. It is not a question of whether you will worship; it is a question of whom or what you will worship. When you choose daily to offer praise and worship to God, it affirms daily who sits on the throne of your heart.

In addition, offering daily praise and worship to God brings you into intimacy with God. When you are intimate with God, who is light, there is no room for darkness. Anger, fear, oppression and doubt all flee because darkness cannot endure the light of God’s presence. It is in moments of praise and worship that you will find the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. “Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12).

Testimony of Praise and Worship. When you enter a dark room, why do you automatically reach for the light switch? Beyond the obvious answer that you don’t want to stumble your way through a dark room, you know that when the light comes on, everything in the room will become visible. What else is apparent is when the light comes on, darkness flees. We experience this in the physical realm, and this applies equally to the spiritual realm.

I am reminded of many accounts of people facing darkness in their lives, but one stands out. A mother was heartbroken over the disintegrating relationship between herself and her teenage daughter. Anger and mistrust ruled their conversations and there appeared to be no hope to stop the darkness engulfing their relationship. The mother was counseled to turn on the light through praise and worship. So she and her daughter devoted time each day to reading a passage from the Bible and spending time praising and worshipping God together. When the light was turned on, the darkness fled, and the issues between them became visible. They were able to deal with the issues that had caused the feelings of mistrust and anger, and through praise and worship, their relationship was restored.

Daily Dying to Your Own Desires

I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.

1 Corinthians 15:31

What does Paul mean by “I die daily”? He means you need to:

- Die to your own desires
- Die to your own ideas of what you need to do for God today
- Die and be reborn each morning, a new vessel ready for God’s use

One of the most profound concepts to learn is this: It is not about you; it is about Jesus. Whenever you make it about you, you end up in the wrong place, and many people have shipwrecked their spiritual lives in this way. Dying daily keeps you focused on making it all about Jesus, and this daily focus is critical because your human nature is at constant war with this. Your human nature wants to receive all the glory and be the focus of everything, and it’s a daily battle to overcome it. Here is what Paul said about making it all about Jesus:

For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: *all things were created by him, and for him*: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; *that in all things he might have the preeminence*.

Colossians 1:16-18

God has a plan for you everyday. The question is: Will you follow or lead? Will you allow God to form you into a new vessel of His choosing each day? “But now, O LORD, thou art our father; we are the clay, and thou our potter; and we all are the work of thy hand” (Isaiah 64:8).

Testimony of Dying to Your Own Desires. In my Christian walk, the Lord has shown me many facets and taught me many lessons on the concept of dying daily and how absolutely necessary it is if I want Him to shine through me. This testimony is just one of those lessons. For a long time, I wrestled with guilt over not doing enough for God. Every time I would hear about a missionary that endured hardships to bring the Gospel to a remote village, I’d feel guilt over why I hadn’t ever done something like that. My cry would be, “Oh God, I want to do so much for you -- why can’t I do more!?” Then God showed me one word in that last sentence which unlocked my understanding about dying daily. That word is “I”.

“And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him *deny himself*, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but *whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it*” (Luke 9:23-24).

This lesson has made me alert to any use of the word “I” because it is not about me; it is about Jesus. It’s not about what I want, even if my intentions are good; it is about what Jesus wants.

“There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death” (Proverbs 14:12).

Chapter 12 – Daily Bread

Daily Dependence on God

. . . and the God *in whose hand thy breath is*, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified. Daniel 5:23

We are dependent on God for our very breath. This is a fact and is not subject to debate. It underscores a very important question you need to answer: Will you acknowledge daily your complete dependence on God when everything in your nature wants to fight it?

Frank Sinatra's song, "*My Way*," is the anthem of our human nature. We all want to have control; we all want to do it our way and admitting dependence is seen as weakness. But weakness to man is strength to God!

And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong. 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

The Bible gives us another beautiful way of looking at our dependence on God. Many times the Bible refers to God's children as sheep. "So we thy people and sheep of thy pasture will give thee thanks for ever . . ." (Psalm 79:13).

What do sheep do? They follow. That's it; sheep do nothing more. Whose job is it to provide for the daily needs of the sheep -- food, water, rest, cleansing and protection? The shepherd. The lesson for us is to follow the Great Shepherd and depend on Him for all our daily needs. Further, do sheep worry about how much wool they will produce for the shepherd? No, therefore we need to depend on the Shepherd for any work He may accomplish through us and stop trying to make our own wool grow.

Testimony of Dependence on God. Some time ago, I was struck with an unexplainable raging infection in my leg and was rushed to the hospital. Doctors placed me on intravenous antibiotics as they worked to figure out what was happening. As my fever reached 104 degrees Fahrenheit, I was placed on the strongest possible antibiotic solutions. My pastors prayed for me and my loving church family visited and prayed, yet the infection raged.

The fourth night in the hospital was a crucial turning point. Lying awake at 2:00 a.m., I questioned God. Then I experienced a vision. I was lying on what looked like a black sea floor and was surrounded by an old decaying shipwreck with debris and garbage scattered all around. Then, in the vision, I cried out, "I may not know why this is happening to me, but nonetheless I will trust my creator and my God. He is the lover of my soul and in His hands I am. I will praise His holy name!" Instantly, I was lifted by a white light. It covered everything and continued as far as I could see. I felt God's presence in a real and unimaginable way. I was surrounded by the living God, and He was larger and more wonderful than I had ever imagined! At that point, I knew all would be well. My fever began to return to normal the next morning. This is hard to explain, but my physical situation no longer mattered to me. I was so full of joy and peace that I felt immortal

What makes this testimony important? The importance is in the choice that was made. Struggles and adverse situations will happen to all of us. No one is immune, and in those situations you *will* make a choice: become bitter and blame God or trust God and see His salvation. In the 38th Psalm, David wrote of a time when he was very ill. Yet instead of blaming God, he sought forgiveness and trusted God. He said, “For in thee, O LORD, do I hope . . .”

My walk with God has grown as a result of my experience. I strive to depend on and trust Him in all things. The more I trust, the more He showers His peace and mercy on me.

Freedom in Christ

Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty.
2 Corinthians 3:17

If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed. John 8:36

Here is the reward to all doers of the Word, to all who now seek the Lord early in the morning, to all who now die daily to their own desires and trust the Great Shepherd to lead them: Freedom! Sing and give thanks to the Lord for He now leads you, and the burden of trying to figure it all out yourself is no longer yours to carry. “Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved” (Psalm 55:22).

As you progress in your daily walk with God, He will teach you how to trust and depend on Him more, and you will remove these words from your vocabulary: coincidence and luck. You will stop using them because you will know that nothing happens by coincidence or luck. God will teach you that He is sovereign and does not allow anything to happen to His children over which He does not have control. This is not to say that only good things will happen to you, but that through it all, you will know God’s hand is on your life, and He is using your life for His purpose.

Now that you know the freedom of Christ, read Psalm 23 with new understanding:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.
He maketh me to lie down in green pastures:
He leadeth me beside the still waters.
He restoreth my soul:
He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness
For His name’s sake.
Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil:
For thou art with me;
Thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.
Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies:
Thou anointest my head with oil;
My cup runneth over.
Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life:
And I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Psalm 23