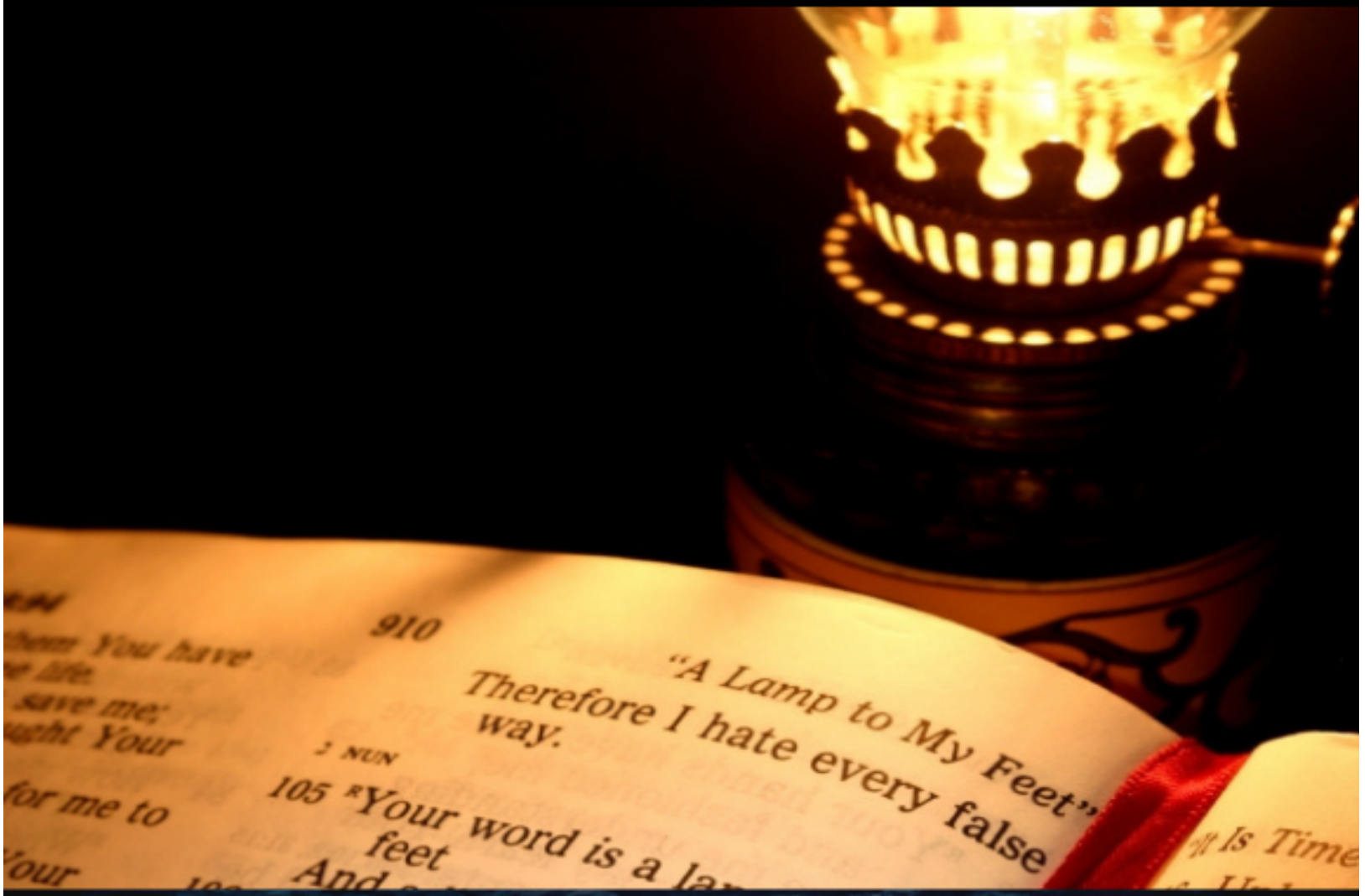
Each chapter will share Bible truths essential for life and eternity



WHEN THE BIBLE SPEAKS

Foundational Bible concepts for learning key themes on salvation, the New Testament church, and personal faithfulness. These Bible lessons are to help a person have a close relationship with God.

JOSEPH SULLIVAN

Preface

These lessons deal with fundamental grounding principles. Principles that share necessary truths on salvation, and God's plan for people in relation to His church. We will cover from the Bible the purpose the Creator has given us in living for Him and the necessity for personal Bible study in growing closer to Christ.

- **For personal use**: These lessons are great for personal Bible studies. The beginning student and the experienced Bible student will find these concepts helpful for being **"ready always to give an answer to every man that asks you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear." (1 Peter 3:15)** There are Bible concepts that may be very new or novel to you. We are covering these topics because of their importance. Some of these lessons have come from past Bible studies from inquisitive Bible students. A special thank you to those who asked these questions. Your spiritual interest caused me to dive into the scriptures to find the answers to such thoughtful Bible based questions. Each lesson will be Biblical, applicational and useful for your spiritual growth.

- **Group studies:** Some suggestions for studying the content of this lesson. Have a student each in turn, read a small paragraph section. After reading that section, ask them what they read. Have that student and adjacent students look up the scriptures in that section the student read. Ask them to read the verses, then to explain what they read. Have the **Bible teach them**, let them **read and answer from the Bible** what they read.

- **When a student asked a question**, I ask the student, "what does the Bible say? Let's go to the Bible to such and such verse to answer your question.80 percent of the work when teaching should be on the student. And the student's responsibility is to find their answers within the Bible. We want the student to know what is being shared is coming from the scriptures. The best way to show them is by having them read what the Bible says for themselves. Once the paragraph and scriptures have *been read, the teacher should discuss the verses being read. The teacher should also ask questions about what was read and discuss what was in the section.*

You will notice that each lesson varies in length of content. If you cover a shorter lesson, then go onto the next lesson. Some lessons will take multiple classes to finish. I want to give special thanks to my father and mother, Bill and Jeanne Sullivan. They have been my north star. Their loyalty to God and His Word, has been an unchanging example, throughout the years.

May God bless you in your studies of His precious Word.

- *Joseph Sullivan*

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The importance of Grace

What is grace? The Greek word for grace, is “charis,” (https://biblehub.com/str/greek/5485.htm) means divine favor. It expresses God will to “freely extend to give Himself away to people.” The Bible story in **John 3:16** (of Jesus) mentions God’s favor towards us. We will read that God’s son, died for us. His death was not something we deserved, earned or merited. But Jesus died for us regardless. Even while we were still enemies of God, Christ died for us. We cannot save ourselves. We are powerless to do such a thing. The death of the Savior was a offering of love for us.

Do we deserve such a sacrifice? _____

What does **Romans 5:6** say? **“You see at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”**

Do you love anyone enough to send your daughter or son to die for them? _____

That’s something God would not ask of you, yet He did ask this of His own son.

In this concept, we can say we are saved through grace... It is not “of ourselves.” We don’t deserve the death of Christ. We don’t deserve the promise of heaven. We don’t deserve to have our sins forgiven. God’s grace is a gift. We can’t earn it. We are not worthy of the blessings that come from grace.

The Bible further explores this concept in **Ephesians 2:6 “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. 8 For it is by grace you have been saved, *through faith*— and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— 9 not by works, so that no one can boast. 10 For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”**

Notice the context, **“saved, through faith...”** This means there is an element that we need to possess to be able to receive this offering. What is that element? _____

Does our ability to do so make us worthy of this gift? Of course not. But if you received a gift of a 10,000-dollar, check from someone, that was undeserved, (a gift of grace), would you still not have to do your part? Would you not need to endorse/sign the check, take it to the bank and deposit it? Do any of these actions make you worthy of receiving such a generous gift? No.

If a stranger paid for medicine you needed, because you could not afford it. If that medicine could save your life and you did not merit such kindness, would that not be a gift of grace? If you were given the medicine as a gift, would the gift work? Only if you went to the pharmacy, talked to the pharmacist, got the bottle filled, drove back home, got some beverage and followed the instructions on the prescription bottle to take the pill. Does doing these things detract from the gift or make you worthy of someone’s gift, of course not. But you still must do your part.

In this above context of (**Ephesus 2:8**), we read, we must have ***“faith.”*** We see in this verse that we ***“are saved by grace through faith.”***

What type of faith is saving faith?

Below you will read that simply knowing there is a God, is not enough. The devils do what in the following verses? (**Luke 8:28/ Mark 5:7**) _____

Demons believe in Jesus and confess His name; they clearly are not saved. Genuine faith is what God accepts. God accepts faith that comes from a heart that is loving and obedience towards Him. The right faith is a faith that has the right attitude towards God. If we truly love Jesus, we need to do what? **John 14:15** _____

Is it enough to just believe and say Lord, Lord? Read **Matthew 7:21-23** on the wrong type of faith. What did these people do? Were save saved? _____

Belief, confessing Jesus and good deeds alone are not acceptable to God. There were Jews who believed in Jesus yet were still in their sins. **(John 8:31-34)** The passage shows that those Jews who believed also had to obey Him to be set free from sin and its slavery. Many Jews believed and yet refused to follow Him. **(John 12:42)** Is such a faith pleasing to God?

Marriage and God: True faith is shown in having the right heart towards God in love. **(Galatians 5:6)** And true love follows God. Is this love is necessary in having a relationship with the Father and the Son? **(John 14:15;21-24 1 John 2:3-5)** _____

In a healthy relationship that we have with our spouse, we show our sincere faith and love in them by how we *treat that person*. Our relationship with God is not different. No man says, "I love you" and mistreats or ignores his wife. No woman says she believes in her husband and doubts him at his word, betrays his confidence and belittles his spirit. Love speaks to commitment in the person that is loved. Faith in someone speaks to supporting that person and in showing trust/fidelity that individual. God calls this spiritual relationship with Him as a marriage. And like marriage there can be betrayal. **(Ezekiel 16:1-22/Jeremiah 2:2)**

What are Bible examples of a healthy marriage? How does this passage below connect marriage to us and Christ? **Ephesus 5:22-33** _____

In (**Ephesus 2:8**), we read, we must have ***"faith."*** We see in this verse that we ***"are saved by grace through faith."*** *But what kind of faith saves? When reading the below passages write down the Bible heroes who are mentioned and the actions they did with their faith.*

Let's read what type of faith we are to have to be accepted by God.

James 2:14 "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? 15 Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. 16 If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? 17 In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

This implies there are two kinds of faith. A faith that is dead through indifference to God's commands, and a faith that is alive through having the right attitude in seeking to please God.

18 "But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. 19 You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that —and shudder. 20 You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?"

This passage clearly says devils believe and belief alone without the right spirit (in trying to follow God), is USELESS. The following examples below are of those who had the right faith. Read carefully, the type of faith they had. Was it a useless faith? Or was there faith the right type of faith?

21 "Was not our father Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did."

23 "And the scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness," and he was called God's friend. 24 You see that a person is considered righteous by what they do and not by faith alone."

Abraham's faith was complete when he showed it. This type of faith made him righteous and God's friend. God called Abraham to offer up Isaac. What if Abraham ignored the Lord? What if he had said, "I have faith. I don't need to do anything." Would that faith have been acceptable to the Lord? Below is another Bible example.

25 "In the same way, was not even Rahab the prostitute considered righteous for what she did when she gave lodging to the spies and sent them off in a different direction?"
26 "As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead."

Rahab did not just sit around and say, "I believe in God, that is enough." She had to do certain things to be accepted by God in faith. *"Faith without deeds is dead." Dead faith will not be pleasing to Him in this life or in the next.*

Thoughts to consider:

If I believe God and don't follow Him, but murder, commit incest, rape, etc. I won't be accepted by the Lord. When talking with a person about the Bible. I was told by a college student in CA that all he needed was just to believe in Jesus. This young man said God would not mind if he raped, murdered, because all Jesus expected of him was belief. I've heard this repeated by college age students in FL. The teachings of the Word say otherwise: Evil behavior will have eternal punishment. While it is true that Bible condemns those who are unbelieving towards God the scripture also condemns many other things that are done in disobedience to Him. ***(Revelation 21:8)****. All will have to give an account.*

What are the sins mentioned in this passage? _____

Does God make a distinction of the sin of unbelief as one of the sins in this passage? _____

What are the consequences of not following God? _____

Concepts of faith and grace:

Does the right faith earn us, Heaven? Does this right faith make us worthy of Christ dying for our sins? Of course not. But as the Bible shows us, we must do our part in having the right heart, to accept this gift. If we don't have the right heart in how we choose to accept this gift…We will fail to accept the grace of God. **(Hebrews 12:14-15)**

When we understand the role of true faith in relation to grace, we can better understand the below passages like **Hebrews 5:9; 2 John 8-9; 2 Peter 1:3-11; Hebrews 10:36-37; Revelation 2:10; Revelation 20:11-15, etc.**

Read two Bible examples of grace:

Noah and the Ark

Due to unrepentant sin and wickedness God choose to destroy the corrupt world by a flood. But in **Genesis 6:8** the Bible says... ***"But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." NKJV***

God choose to spare Noah and his family. This was of grace. The Lord could have let Noah and his family die. But He did not. But did that mean Noah in his faith towards God did not need to do anything? Since it was of grace, did that mean Noah could sit around and wait for the flood to come?

What does the Bible say? The below passage says God told/commanded Noah to do certain things in response to the grace Noah, and his family were given to be saved. Did that make Noah worthy of God sparing Him? No. But Noah still had to do his part in building the ark and do so as God instructed. Read **Genesis 6:9-17** to learn what Noah did.
The Bible says…. In **v 22 "Thus Noah did; according to all that God commanded him."**

Naaman and his leprosy

The following passage gives us another example. God choose to restore Naaman, a man who had leprosy, (a flesh-eating disease). This favor from God was undeserved and unmerited. It was a gift of grace. Naaman was a commander of the army of Syria. This nation hated the Israelites and waged war on God's people. Yet God still gave Naaman a chance. If Naaman had the right heart in following God, he could accept this gift. You will read this Syrian commander was instructed to do certain things in faith to receive this healing.

After reading this passage, write down what Namaan did here:

_____

2 Kings 5:10 "Elisha sent a messenger to say to him, "<u>Go, wash yourself seven times in the Jordan</u>, and your flesh will be restored and you will be cleansed."

11 But Naaman went away angry and said, "I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand and call on the name of the Lord his God, wave his hand over the spot and cure me of my leprosy. 12 Are not Abana and Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? Couldn't I wash in them and be cleansed?" So, he turned and went off in a rage.

13 Naaman's servants went to him and said, "My father, if the prophet had told you to do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much more, then, when he tells you, 'Wash and be cleansed'!" 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy. 14 So he went down and dipped himself in the Jordan seven times, as the man of God had told him, and his flesh was restored and became clean like that of a young boy."

Notice it was not enough to just acknowledge God in faith. Believing in God was not enough to get the grace of healing. Naaman had to have the <u>right type of faith</u>, in following God, to accept the gracious gift of healing. When God, (through the Bible) asks us to do things for our highest good and spiritual well-being, should we not also do as asked?

God told Moses to speak to the rock, so that it would bring water for the Israelites to drink in **Numbers 20:2-12**. Instead, Moses struck the rock.

What did God say about this act in v**erse 12**? _____

True faith is shown in obedience to God.

Other examples of alive faith being shown for grace to happen. These examples did not make the individuals worthy of such blessing. But they did have to do their part.

- God's grace would act to destroy the city Jericho by knocking down the giant walls of Israels enemies. But the Jews had to do their part to receive this gift from the Lord. They had to walk, sound trumpets, shout, etc. **Joshua 5:13-6:27**

- When the Israelites betrayed God, they were punished with being bitten by snakes. The Jews had to do their part to be healed. They had to leave their sick beds, their tends and walk to where a pole was to look at an image they were told to look at. A image that reminded them of their sin and punishment. **Numbers 21:5-9**

Grace should not be used as an excuse to ignore God and His will. This is the wrong attitude. And those who do this will be lost. Grace should not be an excuse to disobey God. This perverts what grace is and makes it into a **license** for wickedness. The Bible condemns such attitudes.

Jude 4 "For certain individuals whose condemnation was written about long ago have secretly slipped in among you. They are ungodly people, who <u>pervert the grace of our God into a license for immorality</u> and deny Jesus Christ our only Sovereign and Lord."

Those who live like this and advocate such behavior are lost. As the Bible says in... **Romans 3:8 "Why not say—as some slanderously claim that we say—"Let us do evil that good may result"? Their condemnation is just!" See also, (Romans 6:1-2)**

Our response to Christ's grace is to follow Him. **(Tit. 2:11-14)**

Do works save us or can we live anyway we want?

I once talked with a college age lady who said she was saved through faith and did not need to follow the Bible or Jesus' teachings because they are works. I asked does that mean you can murder, rape, commit adultery, and still go to heaven and she said, "Yes."

Is this true? Many people say works don't matter. But what does the Bible say? When we read **Ephesian 2:8** we read that we are not saved by works, yet in other passages we read that we are saved by works**. (Hebrews 5:9; 1 Peter 1:22)**

WE MUST CONSIDER THE DIFFERENT KINDS OF WORKS MENTIONED:

• Works of the law of Moses/merit apart from Christ (**Rom. 3:28, Eph 2:8, Gal. 2:16**

• Works of accepting and following the truth that Jesus teaches **(Acts 10:35; Phil. 2:12; Mat 7:21-23)**

We are not saved by the works of the Old Law. During the days of the Apostles, the Jews were teaching you could be saved by the Old Testament works of Moses (like circumcision) apart from Christ. **(Acts 15:1; Gal 5:1-2)** Works that they said justify you by your merit of following Moses, instead of depending on Jesus' sacrifice and His truth.

Notes:

Who to Follow in Religion?

When people don't understand the Bible teachings of scriptural authority, we get religious divisions and confusing man-made doctrinal contradictions.

The reason for this lesson is to share from the Bible what it says on how we get authority and how we are to apply it. If we are to be pleasing to God and do what He wants, we need to know this important topic and learn its truths. Let's look at where the Bible says we get religious authority in making our decisions.

First let's look at some passages that say Jesus Christ, (as God) is our source of authority

Matthew 28:16 "Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some were doubtful. 18 And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

From this passage who has all authority? _____

What are the Apostles commanded to teach? _____

From this passage we read that Christ has ALL authority, (**vs 18**). From which He commissioned the Apostles to impart His authoritative teachings, (**vs 20**).

From these statements, why is it important to follow the Bible? _____

What the Bible says about Jesus' authority

As a Son, Jesus followed His Fathers will. Christ's authoritatively spoke in the Father's Name, (**John 5:43**) and in the Father's words, (**John 12:49**). In His authoritative teachings from the Father, Christ confirmed His message as divine, by doing what? _____ (**John 14:11-12; Acts 2:22**).

The authority of the Apostles

The 12 Apostles were men appointed by Jesus. (**Luke 6:13)** These men were told by Christ shortly before He was arrested and crucified, that they would someday be guided by the Holy Spirit to reveal divine revelation. That the Spirit would be sent from the Father by the Sons name/authority. The Spirit would also bring to their minds all the truths Christ had taught. (**John 14:26; John 15:26**).

How is the Spirit described in these two passages? _____

Since the Apostles were inspired/guided by the Holy Spirit and knew Christ's truth, God gave these men religious to do what in **Matthew 18:18**? _____

The Apostles were teaching Jesus' words and standards and thus could bind and lose in His authority. They also had the Spirit to guide them in such activity.

This prophecy (of the Apostles receiving the Holy Spirit) was fulfilled after the resurrection. Christ appeared to the Apostles and told them to stay in Jerusalem to receive what two things? _____ (**Acts 1:1-5;8)** On a religious Jewish memorial called Pentecost, while waiting in Jerusalem the Apostles received the power and the Spirit. (**Acts 2:1-12)**

The Apostles were men who could raise the dead, heal the unhealable, cure the blind, drive out demons, and the whole world stood up and took notice. Such miracles were a mark of an Apostle, (**2 Corinthians 12:12**). To be an Apostle a person also had to be eyewitnesses of who? _____ **(Acts 1:21-26)**

We don't see such wonders and signs from men today as we read about in the book of Acts. Before the Bible was written the Apostle/disciples were given these abilities from the Holy Spirit for what reason**? _____ (Mark 16:15-20)** The Bible says, we now have all the revelations of God. We have all the beliefs/the things of the faith handed down through the revelation of the Apostles, (**Jude 3**). Through the knowledge of Christ's truth, we have everything we need for living a godlike/spiritual life, (**2 Peter 1:3-4**).

The authoritative teachings of Christ were taught through the Apostles. From the inspiration the Apostles had through the Spirit, they wrote the revelations of God, (the Bible).

From the Apostles, we now have all inspired scripture; to do every good Bible work, that God wants of us, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). From this passage what does the Bible say about the scripture? Is it all inspired? _____

No other should speak another *"gospel,"* other than what the Bible has given us through the Apostles/inspired men, (**Galatians 1:6-10**). The word for gospel in the Bible in Greek is **euaggelion** https://biblehub.com/greek/2098.htm and means divine "good news" coming from God through revelation. If a man or an angel speaks a new revelation other than what has already been given in the Bible, they are what? _____

When it comes to us teaching religious ideas, we need to make sure our teachings come from what source? _____ (**1 Peter 4:11**). Paul wrote to the saints to, ***"walk in line with the truth of the gospel,"*** (**Galatians 2:14**). These Christians were choosing to listen to others and follow uninspired men instead of the inspired gospel truths.

Two sources of authority: We read that Jesus is our authority in **Hebrews 1:1-4**. In this passage what divine descriptions are given about Christ. How is Jesus connected to the Father? described as?

_____

This passage is in alignment with (**John 12:49/John 14:10**). All the words Christ spoke came by the Father's will. We also read the Apostles are a reliable Bible source of authority. For they spoke what Jesus had given them to say, (**1 Corinthians 14:37**). As we have covered in the lesson, the Apostles were led by the Spirit after being told by Jesus to wait in Jerusalem. While in an upper room, these men were told that they would receive "power" from the Holy Spirit, (**Acts 1:4-5;8/Acts 2:1-4**).

By receiving this power, the Apostles confirmed what Jesus had said to them. Jesus foretold that some would not taste death till they saw what come with power? _____ **(Mark 9:1)**

When Jesus is talking to the Peter and the other Apostles, in the following passage, are the terms church and kingdom used interchangeable in **Mathew 16:17-19**? _____

As Christ told the Apostles to wait for that power, it indeed did come in **Acts 2**. In this power, the Spirit confirmed the divine message of inspiration by signs and miracles, (**Mark 16:20**). After **Acts 2** took place the church is mentioned for the first time in a present tense statement in the same chapter. **"And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." Acts 2:47 NKJ** After this passage the church from then on is regularly mentioned in the book of Acts.

Why follow the Apostles?

We follow the Apostles spiritual example, because they were guided by the Spirit. When such men are inspired to speak and do spiritual things, we should pay attention. For this reason, we are commanded to follow them, (**Philippians 3:17; Philippians 4:9**). We also follow them, because they followed Christ, (**1 Corinthians 11:1**). The Apostles had the authority, (**1 Thessalonians 4:2**) from Christ and were guided by the Spirit, into Christ's truth, (**Ephesians 3:4-5**).

Let us, therefore, pay attention to what they show us. When we speak religiously, it needs to come from these sources. We can't bind what the Spirit is silent on.

From what we have covered in our Bible lesson so far, what are reasons we should listen to the Apostles?

_____

Does this mean we should read and accept the Bible that they wrote? _____

In matters of religious authority who do we follow?

Why do I ask this? The world claims there are many sources of religious authority. This final part of our Bible lesson will address the correct sources and detail the sources that are not from God.

1. Do we follow what a preacher says (someone who preaches the Bible, like a religious authority figure, such as a pastor, priest, elder, minister, religious college professor, Bible teacher, etc.) or what a church says if it goes against the Bible? Preachers can be ignorant, misguided, or deceitful **(Matthew 7:15-20)** the Bible never is. Churches can teach wrong things. The Bible is always true and accurate. **(Proverbs 30:5-6)** Preachers and churches can do good deeds and help people **(Matthew 7:21-23**), yet if they teach something false, that can cause people to be lost and affect people negatively for eternity (**Matthew 18:6)**, they are wrong in what they are doing in this matter. **(Acts 20:25-32)**

2. Do we follow the advice of our friends or family if it contradicts the Bible? Friends can believe or think false things; the Bible is never wrong. **(Psalm 12:6)** Family can be misguided; the Bible never is. Even if the majority **(Matthew 7:13-14)** of our friends tell us something, if it does not match what the scriptures teach, we need to go with the truth from God's book. **(Matthew 10:37-38)** Do we follow what the majority says or what is popular? The Bible says most people will be wrong. **Matthew 7:13-14**

3. Angels giving new teachings, people sharing visions, and those following inner "divine" voices, as well as people promoting new religious books and traditions that claim new "revelation," are wrong if they are giving a "new gospel" (gospel means divine "good news" from God) (**Galatians 1:6-8)** When such mentioned sources say we need them, they are saying the Bible is weak and insufficient for our spiritual needs for growth. The Word says otherwise. The Bible is sufficient for our spiritual growth. Through the Bible, we are to "grow in God's grace and knowledge of Jesus." **(2 Peter 3:18)** The Bible says it is sufficient to make us ready to do every spiritual work God wants us to do in following Him **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)**.

4. The Bible says it has given us everything we need for spiritual life through the knowledge of Jesus. **(2 Peter 1:3-4)** People will say Jesus' words have become flawed through the centuries. The divine words of the Bible say otherwise. **(Matthew 24:35)** This applies to how we worship. Any teaching that comes from man, if followed instead of God's Word, is vain in matters of worship and the church. **(Matthew 15:8-9)** In matters of worship, we must do only what Christ (through His teachings/the Bible) has given us authority to do. **(Colossians 3:17) If** we don't have scriptural authority to do it, we should respect God's will on the matter. Examples of people adding/subtracting from God's commands. **A.** Nadab and Abihu: (**Leviticus 10:1-3) B.** Moses: (**Num 20:7-12) C.** Cain and Abel: **(Gen 4:2-7/1 John 3:12)**

5. What our conscience says is not a reliable guide if the Bible says otherwise. Even Paul, when he was not a Christian, killed God's people **(Acts 22:3-4)** in **"good conscience." (Acts 23:1)** Jesus said there will be people who will try to kill those who follow Him, thinking in their conscious they are serving God. **(John 16:2)** Even our feelings and beliefs can be wrong; if the Bible says otherwise **(Proverbs 14:12),** then what we feel or believe. Any Bible teacher who says I "believe" or "feel" to make a point, INSTEAD of using the scriptures in the Bible, is wrong. **(1 Peter 4:11)** The hope for our studies is to mindfully show you from the Bible what God teaches, and for me personally to keep such terms (when I am teaching) out of our studies. I want it to be the Bible that does the teaching and not anything else. Man's feelings and beliefs won't get you to heaven.

6. The scripture says we have *all* of the counsel of God **(Acts 20:27),** and the inspired Apostle Paul writes that we have **"ALL scripture"** to equip us for everything we need to do the Bible teachings of following God in doing His work. **(2 Timothy 3:16-17)** We are not to add or subtract from the words of the Lord by teaching our ideas, feelings, or beliefs. **(Revelation 22:18-19).** The Bible is our guide. **"God's word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path." (Psalm 119:105)** In religion, there is the Buddhist faith, the Islamic faith, and the Christian faith. A person's religious "faith" is a set of beliefs a person holds to. The Bible says the Christian "faith" comes from the gospel (which means divine "good news") **(Philippians 1:27)** and that this "faith was once for all delivered to the saints." **(Jude 3-4)** That means no more divine revelation is needed. We have it all.

Notes:

The seriousness of sin and the story of the cross

Let me ask you a question. Are you a good person? _____

When we read the Bible, have you ever read about the seriousness of sin. Today we will study this concept from the scriptures.

Let me ask you another question. Have you ever sinned? _____

What does **Romans 3:23** say? Most people have lied, lusted, disobeyed parents, got angry and said hurtful things to someone. People have cursed and have done things they regret. Do you have any regrets about bad things you've done in the past? _____

If you were to drive home later this evening and you got hit by a car.... And the last thing you saw in this life was the emergency room as the doctor were working on you.... If you were to die today, would you be 100 percent confident you'd go to heaven? _____

You know what the Bible says when we lie, we are liars.... When we lust, the Bible says we commit adultery, **(Matthew 5:27-30)** ...When we take things from others, even if it's a pen at the office we work at or some candy as a child, it's called theft. The Bible says that when we say, "O my G.O.D," we are taking the Lord's name in vain, when we do this, we blaspheme. If we get angry at someone when we shouldn't be or when call someone a name in anger, the Bible says we are in danger of the fires of hell. **(Mattthew 5:21-22)**

If you have ever done any of these things, you are what? You're a sinner. If you've stolen you are a thief, if you ever said something untrue you are a liar, if you have lusted in your heart and mind, spiritually the Bible says you are an adulterer. If you have ever took God's name in vain, you are a blasphemer. This is serious. Sin is a serious thing. We have these horrible things, these dirty sins that we have done coated upon our souls.

What happens when a person speeds or goes past a red light?

They get a ticket, because this person breaks the law of the land. When we break laws, it can cause us to go before a judge and face penalties When we sin, we commit spiritual crimes and break the law of heaven. Our sins will be with us when we go before the Judge on Judgement Day.

The Bible says that without God no one is righteous. **(Isaiah 64:6)** *If you sinned 5 times a day for a year you'd have sinned over 10,000 times. If you lived to the age of 75 and have sinned (5 times) every day for 75 years you'd have committed over 100,000 sins in your lifetime.* You will have broken the laws of heaven and have these sins weighed on your spirit against you. You will have these dirty sins coated on your soul...as you go before the Great Judge. **(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)**

Every thought, desire, everything you've ever done will be brought to light. Imagine a filmstrip of your life and it being played for God and the world to see on Judgement Day.

What is Judgment Day? The Bible writes about it in **Revelation 20:11-15; 21:7-8**. In these passages the scriptures mention a time and place where our sins are judged. In the Bible passage we read in

Revelation 21, in the **8th** verse using the phrase **"second death"** as a term for eternal separation from God while in hell.

Sin is death, it does alienate us from God. We can't connect or talk to Him in prayer. The Bible says that while alive on earth we cannot be in connection with our Creator when in sin. (**Isaiah 59:2**) The Greek word for death in the Bible is **thánatos**, which means separation. https://biblehub.com/greek/2288.htm When we work at a job, we earn a wage (money) when we sin, we earn a wage (death.) (**Romans 6:23)**

We can agree that sin is serious. But how serious is sin?

Let's read **Mark 9:43-49** to answer this question.

Jesus says sin is so serious that it is better to not have a hand or an eye, then to sin. Christ uses this extreme language not to advocate for self-mutilation but the avoidance of sin. It would be better to be crippled in this life, then to die whole and go to hell.

The death penalty for sin. Someone must die.

The price of sin in the Old Testament when Jewish people sinned, was that someone had to pay the penalty for breaking the law. God does expect justice, because of being perfect as a being of holiness. He cannot be around sin. **(Hebrews 12:4)** Blood had to be spilled and a life had to be taken. (**Hebrews 9:22)** Sin requires punishment. For spiritual crimes being committed, a price must be paid. God is just as a Judge of the earth. He imparts justice when crimes are committed.

Yet God is also merciful. In the Old Testament the punishment for sin was supposed to be a person's life, (that's how serious sin is). Yet God allowed another person to take their place. A animal could die in place of a man/woman to pay the price for sin, (if the guilty party was willing) **(Leviticus 17:11)**

Life is in the blood, and it must be shed to atone for sins. The root meaning for atonement in the Bible is the word "**kaphar**" (https://biblehub.com/hebrew/3722.htm) which means to "cover up." And that is what the shedding of blood does, it covers up the sin. A good way to remember atonement, is to break up the word into pieces. The concept of atonement is centered on this concept, "at-one-ment," or becoming one with God. This happens by covering sin and satisfying the demands of divine justice.

In the Old Law there was a price to be paid for breaking that law. That price for a man or woman was death. **(Leviticus 20:1-18)** Forgiveness came when someone had to pay the price. In this case God allowed an animal to be offered by the guilty party, to take punishment away from the person who committed the spiritual crime of breaking God's law. The animal was to be a lamb that was perfect (without defect). **(Leviticus 22:19)**

God wants us to be with Him. He loves us and has given us a solution for our sins. For us today, we are shown a new path. In the New Testament, we read about a man named John the Baptist, who when he sees Jesus walking towards him, the man cried out, **"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the Word." John 1:29** Like the lambs of old, Jesus also was without blemish or spot, as a perfect **"lamb." (1 Peter 1:19)**

An ancient prophecy for all generations.

We will read (from the Bible) what this **"lamb"** called Jesus did within this lesson. To further outline the theme of atonement we earlier mentioned, let's go to a Old Testament prophecy. 500 years before Christ came to the world, and was born, there was a prophecy spoken in **Isaiah 52** and **53.** Let's read some of the things that are spoken in this prophecy. **(Isaiah 52:13-14; 53:3-12)** *Leads read carefully each verse and discuss each passage.*

*In this prophecy we read about blood being shed, an offering being made, a **"lamb"** being slaughtered, for the sins of others. We read about someone bearing people's sins and taking them away.*

In **Isaiah Chapter 53 verse 10-11** when talking about **"His soul being the guilt offering,"** the Bible says, **"my righteous servant will justify many."** The term justify in Hebrew is the word "**tsadeq**" and means to be declared just (by not being found guilty). In the context of eternity, we can be made just when we come before the Great Judge. https://biblehub.com/hebrew/6663.htm

We read in **Isaiah 53 verse 5-6** of someone being **"pierced for our transgression."** And of a person who **"by His wounds we are healed."** Who was pierced for sins? Whose wounds bring healing? I think you know the answer to that. *Who do you think this prophecy is referring to?* _____

How did Jesus die for the sins of the world?

The gospels detail the crucifixion **(Matthew 27:32-56, Mark 15:21-41, Luke 23:33-46, John 19:18-42)** and the purpose for the shedding of His blood. **(John 3:13-15)** Jesus prophesied this would happen. (**Matthew 20:18-19; John 10:17-18)**

Description: Crucifixion was a slow death of affixation, where the body struggles to breath and a person has to pull themselves up using the spikes in their hands *(think of the raw nerve endings being lite of fire, the broken bones being moved, the insides of the palms being pushed against those hard nails each time this act is done).*

- A person also had to use the back (swollen, raw, as the skin from the flogging has been removed,) as leverage to lift the body up for chance to get a gulp of air. Like drowning in a pool of water is like trying to breathe on a cross.

- We are reading a **500-year** prophecy that was given before Jesus was born. A prophecy that speaks of what the Messiah would do in history. These passages speak about how He took our place in judgement when our sins were placed upon Him.

- Jesus was flogged with whips. **(John 19:1, Matthew 27:26, and Mark 15:15)** The punishment used a whip called a flagrum or flagellum (a "short whip"), which was more brutal than a simple flogging. It had pieces of metal, bone, or other sharp objects at the tips. This was a Roman punishment that disfigured the body and head/face with sharp objects that were attached to small cords attached to a whip. When a person received Roman punishment people were usually flogged to the point where they would collapse, others would pass out and others in these flogging would die due to blood loss, physical damage and intense pain.

- **Procedure**: The victim was often stripped naked and bound to a low pillar so they could bend over it, or tied to an upright pillar, stretching them out. Executioners would alternate blows with the whip, typically on the back and soles of the feet. The blows were intended to cause extreme pain and disfigurement, with the loss of blood potentially leading to hypovolemic shock. If left untreated, the insufficient blood flow can cause damage to organs, leading to multiple organ failures.

When **Isaiah 52:14-15** says, **"His appearance was marred beyond human semblance and His form beyond that of the children of mankind… to sprinkle many nations."** This is what Jesus did for us so that by His wounds and the blood we maybe healed.

When we commit a crime in our country we go before a judge. And we are punished for our crimes. If we speed, we get a ticket. Spiritually when we break God's law there is a consequence. Yet God sent His Son to take our place before the Judge of creation. He loved us enough to send us Jesus. **(John 3:16)**

Would you send your spouse or child to die for someone else's crimes in a court of law? The Bible says **"the wages of sin is death." (Romans 6:23)** But God gave us His Son to pay for our sin of breaking heavens law. That is true love.

Jesus shed His blood to save us. **(Romans 5:6-9)** This is what blood can do. It can save us.

- God can clean our sins and make us pure. **Isaiah 1:18 "Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."**

- God can remove our sins that separate us from Him. **Psalm 103:12 "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us."**

Jesus' blood and death is connected to the divine power of God's gospel. **(Romans 1:16)** But what is the gospel? What does the Bible say it is? **(1 Corinthians 15:1-4)**

What is your salvation story?

Were you saved? _____

If so, what did you do to be saved? _____

Write down your whole story in detail, (year, place, event), share everything you did.

_____

The gospel story in the Bible

What does the scripture say the gospel is? _____

The Bible term gospel in Greek is **euaggelion** https://biblehub.com/greek/2098.htm which means "good news." And this Bible term is always referenced in connection to God and divine revelation. The passage here says the good news is the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Why is this good news?

What does the death of Christ on the cross mean for us?

(Ephesians 1:7) _____

This passage says we have **"redemption through His blood."** What is redemption? In the Biblical original Greek, the word **apolutrósis** https://biblehub.com/greek/629.htm means to pay a ransom. Have you ever watched a TV show where parents were going to pay a ransom to set their son or daughter free? They were going to pay money. But Jesus paid to set us free from sin, by His blood.

This Bible passage also says we have forgiveness because of the death of His shed blood on the cross. This is what Jesus' death can bring us. What can Christ's resurrection give us…by Him overcoming death?

(2 Timothy 11:10) _____

Through God's Son rising from the tomb, we can have that same hope and know we can spiritually live forever with Him. Paul the Apostle further describes what Jesus did though His death and resurrection in **Romans 5:10.**

The term **"reconciled"** in Greek is the word **katallassó** https://biblehub.com/greek/2644.htm. It's the same concept we hear about today. Example: When a husband and wife are estranged and then are later "reconciled," that means they have repaired their relationship. That's the idea shared in this passage. The Bible says we were estranged from God as enemies, (because of our sins). But because of Jesus' death we can become reconciled with God and now we can be saved because of Christs new (resurrected) life.

Declaring Jesus by one's mouth

What should be our response to Christ sacrifice? Should we be ashamed of Jesus? If we are what are the consequences?

(Matthew 10:32-33) _____

What did Peter the Apostle do when Jesus asked him about his beliefs? What did Peter say when he spoke the words in **Matthew 16:13-17** before Jesus? _____

Is this verbal confession important for us to do?

(Romans 10:8-10) _____

Changing one's life for God

Though it is essential to believe and confess our faith in Jesus. God also wants us to love and honor Him by seeking to please Him. **(John 14:15;23)** What is essential to having a relationship with Jesus? Let's read **1 John 2:3-5.**

What does the Bible say in this passage? _____

Belief is not enough. We must love God by committing our lives to follow Him. To **"know Him"** and have the love of God made complete in our relationship towards Him… is shown in how we honor His Word.

That means we must be willing to turn from sinful lifestyle pracices if we are to have the kingdom of heaven. **(1 Corinthians 6:9-10)** How serious is this truth? What does Jesus say people must do in L**uke 13:1-5** to not perish? _____

The term repent in the Bible is the Greek word metanoeó https://biblehub.com/greek/3340.htm and means to change one's mind and purpose towards sin. Does this word sound important? Does the command to repent sound serious?

(Acts 3:19) _____

We read in **1 Corinthians 15:1-4** that the gospel is the divine good news of God. That part of this good news is the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. Turn with me to **2 Thessalonians 1:7-9**

What does this Bible passage say we need to do? _____

The Bible says we must obey the gospel. But how do we obey the story of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection? What does **Romans chapter 6** say? Let's begin in **verse 3.**

Romans 6:3 "Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized *into Christ* Jesus were baptized into his *death*?"

- In this verse it says we need to die. This Bible passage says we need to be baptized into Christ. That speaks to a spiritual joining. When we do this, we are spiritually a part of Jesus' death. What kind of dying is the Bible verse referring to? Let's read further.

Let's back up to verses 1 and 2 of Romans 6:1 "What shall we say then? Are we to *continue in sin* that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can *we who died to sin* still *live in it*?"

- These verses say when we spiritually die, we die to the control and power of sin. Part of being baptized means living differently from a sinful life. We will explore from the Bible more about this truth in the following verses within the Word.
  But how do we get rid of sin so as to be free from it? Turn in your Bibles to **Acts 22:16**. What does the Bible say removes sin from the soul?

Now let's continue in this chapter to Romans 6:4 "We were *buried* therefore with him by baptism *into death*, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, *we too might walk in newness of life*."

- This Bible verse says baptism is a burial. No one sprinkles dirt on a dead person. They bury them. And baptism in this verse speaks to the same concept. The Greek word for baptism is baptizó and means "immersion." **https://biblehub.com/greek/907.htm**

Every New Testament example of water baptism is about immersion. When we are baptized in this passage the Bible says we live a new life. Being born again means we are washed of our sins by the Holy Spirit, to be made clean and holy (sanctified) in God's eyes. **(1 Corinthians 6:11)** As Jesus says in the gospel of John, we must be born again of water and spirit to inherit God's spiritual kingdom of heaven. **(John 3:5)**

The following verse details this Bible concept more…Romans 6:5 "For if we have been *united with him in a death like his*, we shall certainly *be united with him in a resurrection like his*."

- This Bible verse says these two things, the spiritual death and resurrection in baptism joins us with Jesus. We can now be connected with Christ/God spiritually. Our sins separate us from God. **(Isaiah 59:2)** When our sins are removed through baptism, we are no longer alienated and separated from God. **(Hebrews 12:14)** We are now so close to Christ as to be called **"clothed with Him"** as His family. **(Galatians 3:26-27)**

In the next verse within this Bible passage we read in Romans 6:6 "We know that our *old self* was *crucified* with him in order that the *body of sin might be brought to nothing*, so that we would *no longer be enslaved to sin*."

- This Bible passage says we must be baptized into Jesus' death for sins to be done away with. We die when we put away the old sinful man. The Bible speaks of the crucifixion aspect of change in **Acts 2:38**. Let's read this. What does the Bible say here? *To have our sins forgiven we need to repent (turn away from a sinful way of living) and be baptized in Jesus' name*. When we do this **"we die to sin"** and its power. **(Romans 6:1-2)**

Baptism is the spiritual death, burial and resurrection of joining with Jesus. We die when we go down into the waters of baptism. When we do this what happens to our sins? What does Romans 6:7 Say? "For *one who has died has been set free from sin*." (Past references of **Romans 6:3-5)**

Obeying this teaching leads to what? This Bible chapter in Romans further details the importance of this:

Romans 6:17 "But thanks be to God, that *you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient* from the heart to the standard of *teaching* to which you were committed, 18 and, *having been set free from sin*, you have become slaves of righteousness."

- When we obey this teaching, (baptism) we are set free from sin. But that requires the right spirit of seeking to please God in doing what is right from His truth the Bible.

The Bible further says details the benefits of being "set free from sin." Let's read Romans 6:22 "But now that you have been *set free from sin* and have become slaves of God, the *fruit you get leads to sanctification* and its end, *eternal life*."

- To obey these teachings will set us free from sin. Being set free from sin leads to sanctification. In Greek this word is hagiasmos and means to be made pure or holy before God. https://biblehub.com/greek/38.htm The result of these things results in eternal life.

The cross Jesus died on was an act of grace

What God did for us is of grace. And it is a gift. But that still means we need to accept that gift as God asks to receive it. Let's turn to **2 Kings 5:1-18** to read of a good Bible example of the gift of grace.

What did Naaman do in faith to be saved? _____

We should die for our sins. We don't deserve heaven or a relationship with God. Nothing we do makes us worthy of Jesus dying on the cross. But God still wants us to do our part. Was Naaman worthy of God's healing grace? Did he deserve to be cured? No.

But to receive God's gift of healing Naaman still in faith had to do his part. He had to go to the Jordan river and dip himself 7 times into the water to have his leprosy washed away. Turn with me in your Bibles to **Ephesians 2:1-8**.

What does this passage say? How are we saved? _____

In the Bible we read that we don't earn or deserve Jesus going to the cross for us. We are lost by ourselves. In **Ephesians 2:8** the Bible says, **"We are saved through grace by faith."** The Greek word for grace is "charis" and in the Bible is connected with God. This word means favor. https://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm

It took Christ dying for us for our salvation to be made possible. That is of grace. But in **Ephesians 2:4-8** we read we must have faith. But what kind of faith saves us? Naaman had faith. But like Naaman we must also act to do what God tells us in faith to do, to receive His gift of grace.

Let's say you get a million-dollar check from a stranger. You did not earn it, you did not deserve it, yet to receive the money in that check you have to still do your part. You have to sign the check, deposit it by taking it to the bank, etc. Your deeds do not make you worthy or deserving of that gift, but you still had to do things on your end to receive the benefits of the gift that was given. Let's further explore this concept….

The wrong and right faiths:

What type of faith saves?? Let's read **James 2:1-26** and see what the Bible says here.

What type of faith does *not* save? _____

What type of faith does save? _____

We read that there are two types of faith. Dead faith and alive faith. Which faith do we read is pleasing to God? We read earlier in **Ephesians 2:8** that we are **"saved by grace through faith."**

Which faith in the Bible does James say saves us? _____

To have our faith accepted we need to do what to be God's child? Turn with me to **Galatians 3:26-27**

This Bible passage says baptism unites us with God. When our sins are removed **(Acts 22:16)** we can have that joining with Christ and know salvation. Belief in God means we will be baptized. That is part of the salvation process. **(Mark 16:16)** This washing goes beyond physical washing. Turn in your Bibles to **1 Peter 3:20-21.**

This passage says water baptism saves. We can have a right conscious before God, when our sins are taken away. This "washing" justifies us before God and sanctifies us by making us holy. **(1 Corinthians 6:11)**

Once saved we simply need to try to learn how to follow God and seek to obey Him. We need to study the Word and strive to follow it, if we are to receive God's blessings, (heaven, divine relationship, forgiveness). **(James 1:21-24)**

We must strive to walk in the light (follow God) but when we do make mistakes, we can seek Him in prayer to be forgiven. **(1 John 1: 5-10)** Making the commitment to become saved and to follow Him is serious. It's worse for a person to go back to the world, once saved, than to never have been saved at all. **(2 Peter 2:20-21)**

The story of the man in the desert:

A good example of baptism is in **Acts 8:26-40**. As we read we will see a man reading about Jesus…from a 500-year prophecy that was given before Christs birth. This prophecy is what we read earlier in **Isaiah 53**. Let's read this story in **Acts.**

Who are the people in this story? _____

What happened in this story? _____

After reading this story we can see why it's important. The Ethiopian believed, confessed and was baptized. Then he rejoiced in his salvation. Are you willing to be baptized? Think about this question. Let's turn to one final part of what we will study from the Bible.

We read that we need to count the cost. **(Luke 14:26-28)** This is important because it is serious to fall back into living like the world. That means as a Christian we need to study and learn how to faithfully follow God and strive to do His will. **(1 Timothy 4:16)** We can help. It's important to have a Bible teacher to help you grow and mature in Christ. **(Ephesians 4:10-15)** We can do more studies to help you more in learning God's Word.

My question to you: Are you willing to count the cost and be baptized to have your sins removed to be saved?

_____

Understanding evil: Can God be around sin?

This is also going to be an in-depth study of the Trinity and their roles: The Bible says God cannot be around sin. **(Isaiah 59:1-2/ Hebrews 12:14/Romans 6:23)** That is why only those who are what will see God? _____ **(Matthew 5:8)**.

God loved us enough to send us His Son to give us that purity. **(Romans 5:6-8/John 3:16)** He wants to have communion/relationship with us.

No one can enter into the eternal city of God, (Heaven) who are what? _____ **(Revelation 21:22-23;27)**.

That is why we must make sure we faithfully follow God. **(Revelation 22:14-15).** And have our sins removed**. (Acts 22:16)** We must have our robes washed/clean. **(Revelation 7:14).**

In **1 John 1:5-10** the Apostle John says Christians are to live their lives walking in what? _____ What are we not supposed to be walking in as we travel through life in this world? _____

Even with our best efforts, we will still fall down in our walk for the Lord, in striving to do what's right. At times Christians do error, what does John say in this passage we need to do when sin happens? _____

Divine roles: When the Bible says God cannot be around sin, its referring to the **Father. We'll go into Bible verses explaining this concept more.** The Bible says the Father is the supremacy of all. Jesus will sit at the right hand of God and give all authority and power over to Him after Jesus has defeated all enemies, including Satan. (**1 Corinthians 15:24-28) What Jesus does on earth is by the Fathers direction.** Christ speaks the Fathers words, and the Spirit shares these words though revelation. **(John 14:23-26)**

Christ is waiting for this final victory over death and Satan at Judgment Day when those who follow God will live forever and the devil will be thrown into Hell with those who follow Him. **(Revelation 20:10-15)** Yet only God the Father knows when this Day will come. **(Matthew 24:36)** Until then Satan is the god of this world. **(1 John 5:19)**

On that Day Jesus will come to a wicked world to destroy it. **(2 Peter 3:10-14)** and bring judgment **(2 Thessalonians 1:7-9)** Christ will then judge everyone who has sin upon themselves and who has not turned to Him. Jesus will have the wicked, the unsaved, those who have sin on their souls and iniquity in their lives, will go before Him on judgment day. All the sins of the world will be exposed. Jesus will be the judge. **(Ecclesiastes 12:13-14)**

All these things speak to Jesus being around sin: We read about Jesus appearing before the Apostle John in his final years when he was exiled to the island of Patmos **(Revelation 1:12-18)**. We read in the Old Testament Jesus appearing before the prophet Ezekial **(Ezekiel 1:28)** to give revelation as well as the prophet Isaiah **(Isaiah 6:1-5)** We also know Jesus went to a sinful world to interact with sinners to preach the Gospel and die for them on the cross. The scripture Jesus has gone to the sinful world, **(John 3:16)** as God. **(John 1:1-4)** Jesus became is 100 percent God and man **(Philippians 2:6-7)**.

God Father cannot be around sin, that is why Jesus is the mediator. **(1 Timothy 2:5)** By dying on the cross the lost can be saved **(1 Peter 3:18)** and those who are His can have their sins forgiven through Christ's intercession, we they pray. **(1 John 1:5-10; 2:1)** Jesus goes before God on the behalf of saved believers who sin who prays for forgiveness. Being human Jesus can sympathize with us and our weakness when advocating before the Father. **(Hebrews 4:14-16)**

Jesus speak on Christian's behalf as an advocate, and the Holy Spirit speaks on their behalf as an interpreter **(Romans 8:26-27).** The Spirit works to sanctify the sinner at the point of baptism. **(1 Corinthians 6:11)** The Spirit through saving and interpreting **(Romans 8:26-27)** is also around sin. These Two serve as a bridge to access the Father for forgiveness, (through prayer).

Notes*:*

The salvation story of Paul

To read full story Acts 9:1-19; Acts 22:1-21; Acts 26:1-23

The Apostle Paul was originally called Saul. **(Acts 13:9)** Was this man was very religious? Was he still doing evil things, (**1 Timothy 1:15**). _____

- Saul's bad behavior came from his misplaced zeal towards God, following the religious traditions of his fathers. **(Galatians 1:14)** He was educated in the teachings of the law. (**Acts 22:3-4**). In this mindset Saul falsely believed Jesus was not God's son. Saul believed the Christian faith was heresy. He persecuted and killed Christians, **(Acts 9:1-2/1 Corinthians 15:9**) in all good conscious, (**Acts 23:1**), due to that belief. Saul felt in his heart that he was right.

Food for thought: We too can have a religious education. We can have misplaced zeal in our religious behavior. We can follow religious traditions passed on to us by our relatives and family. We can live a life in all good conscious. We can believe and feel that we are doing right religious things. And like Saul still be lost.

- **How Saul was saved:** Why was Saul traveling to a city called Damascus, (**Acts 22:5**). _____ Who appeared to Saul? (**Acts 9:3-4**). _____

- When Saul saw God, he believed and publicly/verbally confessed Him as Lord. (**Acts 22:6-11**). The Lord told Saul to keep traveling to the city of Damascus. Once there Saul ***"would be told what to do."*** (**Acts 9:6-8**). Saul obeyed God's commandment to go to Damascus to learn His will. When the Lord appeared on the road, Saul was blinded.

- When Saul arrived at Damascus, he was repentant to the point of sorrow. Saul's sorrow caused him to not want to do something for 3 days, (**Acts 9:9**). _____

- Fasting in the Bible can be a sign of sorrowful repentance **(Joel 2:12-13/ Nehemiah 8:1-10)**. And since Saul just discovered he had been killing God's people, it makes sense that he was fasting. In his repentant state Saul did what as a sinner to the Lord? **(Acts 9:11)** _____

What saved Saul: Yet did any of these things wash his sins away to save him? Saul had believed and confessed the name of the Lord. Saul also had fasted in repentant sorrow. Though these are important steps for coming to Jesus, (one cannot be saved without doing these things) by themselves alone Saul was not saved. Also Saul as a sinner prayed a sinner's prayer, yet in all these things, Saul was still lost.

A Christian and prophet, named Ananias was sent from God to Saul. (**Acts 9:10-12**) Ananias told him the gospel, (**Acts 22:12-16**) and healed Saul of his blindness. This healing miracle helped Saul see but it did not save Sauls soul. What saved Saul? (**Acts 22:16)** _____

Note: This Greek word in this text for baptized is baptizó and means to immerse, to submerge)
https://biblehub.com/greek/907.htm

Part of seeking God "calling on His name" is in doing what God tells us to do be saved. After Saul's conversion, Paul spends the rest of his life preaching the gospel. And in his epistles, he mentions the importance of baptism 20 times. Paul writes the importance of this washing for sanctification (made pure in Gods sight)**. 1 Corinthians 6:9-11** What does this passage say? _____

Notes:

Acts 2:38 Explained

The passage of Acts 2:38 is best explained a few verses earlier. At Pentecost, Peter speaks to a Jewish crowd in **Acts 2:36**, saying *"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah." When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and asked Peter and the other apostles, what question?* _____

The Jews heard they had killed the Lord, they were (emotionally) pierced with the Word. The Word is called God's sword, and it does what? (**Hebrews 4:12**) _____

These Jews had killed Jesus (**Acts 2:23**). They were the same Jews; Christ prayed about while on the cross. The Savior prayed for these men to have what? (**Luke 23:34**) _____ God provided them a means for such forgiveness, by the Providential sermon Peter gave and the message of salvation that was shared, (**Acts 2:23;36-38**).

When these Jews heard the Word, they could have rejected the message, yet instead they had remorse. How many people were saved? _____What did Peter exhort them to do concerning their generation? _____ (**Acts 2:40-41)** The same term "cut to the heart" used in this chapter in Acts 2, is also used when a preacher named Stephen shared Jesus with a crowd. The Bible says they too were pierced and were emotionally cut, but instead of choosing to turn from doing sin, towards the truth, what did these Jews do instead?

(**Acts 7:51-54**) _____

Continuing in Acts 2…

In **Acts 2:***38 "Peter replied, "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call."40 With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, "Save yourselves from this corrupt generation." 41 Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day."*

Peter did not say to those in (**Acts 2:37-38**), when they asked, "what shall we do?" to "pray the sinner's prayer," to "accept Jesus into their heart," etc.

The Apostles had just received the Holy Spirit, (**Acts 1:4; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-5**). Peter under the inspiration of the Spirit said, *"Save yourselves from this corrupt generation,"* (see also **Philippians 2:12**).

When Peter says, repent in **Acts 2:38,** the word in Greek is metanoeó and means to "Change mind, to reconsider (morally, feel compunction). https://biblehub.com/greek/3340.htm Part of the salvation process is for us to change our mind and morally reconsider our sins. We need to turn from the evils of this world. Our lifestyles need to change. The term repent in **Act 2:38** is further explored by Paul in **1 Corinthians 6:9-11**. What do these Bible verses say? _____.

In **Acts 2:38**, Peter also said to be baptized "for" (in the Greek, the word "for" is "eis and mean *(a preposition) – properly, into (unto) – literally, "motion into which" implying penetration ("unto," "union") to a particular purpose or result."* https://biblehub.com/greek/1519.htm This word "for is "eis and it has the same meaning as the English word. Why am I pointing this out? Some people falsely say this word means something else to ignore this Bible verses teaching.

This chapter says: be "baptized." But be "baptized" for what? Be baptized for, *"the remission sins" other Bible versions say, "forgiveness of sin."* These terms mean the same thing. The Greek word remission (aphesis) means the cancellation of a debt, charge, or penalty. https://biblehub.com/greek/859.htm When we do as God asks in baptism, we cancel the sinful charge/dept/penalty against us. The word remission is another term that is used for "forgiveness."

This baptism was done often in the book of Acts by Christians who baptized people in water. See an example story of the Ethiopian. **(Acts 8:26-40)** Water is part of the process of salvation **(1 Peter 3:20-21)**

This process Paul later writes is a burial of the old self. One does not sprinkle dirt on a person at a burial. One is buried at a burial. The death of sin (through forgiveness) leads to a new life.

Read **Romans 6:1-8**. What does it say? _____

What happens in verse **7**? _____

What is the Gift of the Spirit?

Acts 2:38 says we get the gift of the Spirit through water baptism. What is the gift the Spirit gives us? What does the Bible say?

In scripture we read that it is the Spirit who sanctifies us through Christ's death, when we accept and follow God's will for our salvation.

Fill in the blanks:

1 Corinthians 6:11 *"And that is what some of you were. But you were _____, you were _____, you were_____ in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God."*

What happens when we are washed? We are sanctified. This word in Greek is hagiazó and means to be made holy or pure. https://biblehub.com/greek/37.htm When we are sanctified through the washing, we are justified. That word in Greek is dikaioó and means to be made right in the eyes of the Lord. https://biblehub.com/greek/1344.htm

*God no longer sees our sin, because we are pure. We are pure because we are washed and our sins are no more. This salvation is done by Jesus' authority. What Christ did on the cross is what made all this possible. The Holy Spirit is the One whose role cleanses. The sanctification is done by the "Spirit of our God." That's the gift of the Holy Spirit mentioned in **Acts 2:38**. The gift is our salvation.*

*Our inheritance for those who belong to God is heaven. **(1 Peter 1:3-4)** What does the Bible say about how the importance of receiving the gift of the Holy Spirit in baptism that we read in Acts?*

***Ephesians 1:13** "And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were _____in him with a seal, the promised _____, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory."*

Paul says for those (now saved Christians) who heard the message of salvation in…and responded to the message, that they were given the Spirit as a mark of salvation. *Let's further explore this…*

The gift of the spirit is secondary to being baptized. Once one is baptized, they have remission of sins/they are forgiven. Yet one must first be baptized to receive this gift. This gift comes when one first joins with Christ (Reference **Galatians 3:26-27/Romans 6:1-7)** in water which leads to the blessing of the spirit. We must first be born of water, to be born spiritual birth of the Spirit. **(John 3:5)**

This gift of the spirit by water is different from that of the *baptism of the Holy Spirit.* *This baptism does not give salvation, like what we read about in **Acts 2:38**. Here is an Old Testament example that further explains this concept:*

In the Bible you can read of wicked King Saul and the soldiers he sent to murder David. We read that they received the Holy Spirit when they were trying to kill David. This was God's way of foiling their plot to slay this righteous man.

Yet King Saul was still rejected by God. Notice in the same chapter God had sent an evil spirit to torment this man. Sauls heart was set on murder; he even tried to kill his own son, Jonathan.

Read *1 Sam 19:18-24*; 1 Sam 20:30-34

What does this story say about King Saul. _____

Describe what you read about his plot. _____

How did the Holy Spirit stop Saul and his soldiers? _____

Notes:

What is the Sinners Prayer:

Origins: The Sinners' prayer. When writing this book in 2026, I typed "origins of the sinner's prayer" on the search engine, google and read about the history of the sinner's prayer. If this date for you is current or near this timeline, then you can search online to also see the historical resource links on the right of the picture below. They detail the beginning of the sinner's prayer by Billy Graham and Billy Sunday in the mid 1900's and the earlier historical religious practices before the sinner's prayer, that helped bring these ideas about, like the alter call in the 1800's. For context I'll also have these sources listed below.

origins of the sinner's prayer

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AI Overview

The Sinner's Prayer, as it is known today, **originated in the early 20th century**, with Billy Graham being a key figure in its popularization through evangelistic crusades and media. While its conceptual roots can be traced back to the Protestant Reformation and the Methodist revival movements of the 19th century, the specific prayer was not a consistent feature of earlier ministries and is not found in the Bible.

Historical Development:

- **Post-Reformation Roots:** Some historians note that the practice may have evolved from the Protestant Reformation as a reaction against Catholic emphasis on works, promoting a personal connection with God through faith.
- **19th Century Revivalists:** Preachers like James Caughey and William Booth, and later D.L. Moody, laid the groundwork for the Sinner's Prayer, encouraging sinners to seek and receive salvation through a prayer.
- **Early 20th Century:** Methodologies in evangelism became simplified, particularly with the rise of large-scale revival meetings and the subsequent adoption of radio and television evangelism, creating a need for a concise way to lead people to Christ.
- **The "Sinner's Prayer" Emerges:** The practice gained more defined form during this period, with the term gaining traction around the time of Billy Sunday and later formalized by evangelists like Billy Graham and Bill Bright in the mid-20th century.

Significance and Controversy:

- **Simplification of Evangelism:** The Sinner's Prayer became a tool to simplify the process of salvation, allowing for mass participation in evangelistic events and through media.
- **Not a Direct Biblical Practice:** The specific prayer is not found in the New Testament, which emphasizes faith, repentance, confession, and baptism for forgiveness of sins.
- **Focus on Personal Decision:** It serves as a way for an individual to make a personal commitment to Christ and declare their belief in Jesus's atoning sacrifice.

Dive deeper in AI Mode

If the Sinner's Prayer is the only way to salvation, why isn't it in the Bible?
Dec 4, 2023 — The words of the Sinner's Prayer do not appear anywhere in the Bible, and there ...
Baptist News Global

The Sinner's Prayer: A Brief History of a Novel Practice - Disciples Today
Jun 29, 2017 — In the Inquiry Room the counselors asked the possible convert some...
Disciples Today

The Origins of the Altar Call and the Sinner's Prayer - 9Marks
Sep 3, 2024 — The seedbed of sinner's prayer theology can be found in Methodist preacher...
9Marks

Show all

When you read the details from the picture above, you will see that they outline the historical silence of this practice (sinners' prayer) till these men started this religious teaching. The picture shows the historical book **"Origins of the Alter Call and the Sinners Prayer" by David Bennett.** His book is worth reading. The link https://www.9marks.org/review/the-origins-of-the-altar-call-and-the-sinners-prayer gives a summary of the content. It is a relatively short study, but this material is chalk full of early historical references to the early practices of religious groups in the 1800's and 1900's. The book outlines the religious culture of the day and those men who started the alter call and the sinner's prayer.

- No where will you read in the Bible or in secular/religious history of a prayer for salvation with the words Billy Grahman and Billy Sunday put together in their prescribed prayer phrase list people are supposed to pray…before these men came up with this idea.

Billy Graham popularized a simple, *direct "Sinner's Prayer" for salvation, often presented as: "Dear God, I know that I am a sinner. I'm sorry for my sin. I want to turn from my sin. Please forgive me. I believe Jesus Christ is Your Son; I believe He died on the cross for my sin, and You raised Him to life. I want Him to come into my heart and take control of my life. I want to trust Jesus as my Savior and follow Him as my Lord from this day forward. In Jesus' Name. Amen".*

How people justify this practice of saying a prayer for salvation:

Phrases people say "are Bible based" for doing the sinners' prayer are terms like letting **"Jesus into your heart"** to be saved. They use the words within **Revelation 3:20** to say, "a lost sinner needs to let Jesus into their hearts and they will be saved." But the Bible context matters in what we read. If you read a few verses back in this chapter in **Revelation 3:14-20**, you'll see God is talking to a church of lukewarm Christians to repent.

What church is mentioned in **Revelation 3:14-20**? _____

A. Another phrase that's in the sinner's prayer is confessing **"that I am a sinner and have sinned"** in some form as part of the prayer. They use the passage in, **1 John 1:9** to justify using these words as part of their prayer for salvation. The passage says to confess in prayer your sins and to ask the Lord for His forgiveness. But again, context matters. If we read through the short book of **1 John**, we will see this book is written to saved Christians, not unsaved sinners.

1. Here is an example passage **(1 John 2:12-14)** where the Apostle John writes to different groups of believers—little children (new believers), fathers (mature believers), and young men (strong, growing believers)—offering encouragement, affirming their forgiveness, knowledge of God, and victory over the evil one, reminding them of the resources of God's Word and their relationship with the Father.

What other descriptive words are used to exhort Christians to follow God in **1 John chapter 2?**

_____

2. The passage of **1 John** is about Christians going to God in prayer when they mess up and sin to ask for forgiveness. The Apostle through the Holy Spirit tells the saints to strive to walk in the light in following God. And to avoid living a life that is walking in darkness. (**1 John 1:5-10)**

   When Christians do sin does this chapter say God will forgive them if they pray to Him and confess their sins? **_____**

   John in chapter 2:2-5 says the saved have an advocate in prayer, but they must strive to follow His truth. Who is this advocate? _____

   This word in Greek is a paraklétos and means to "entreat for another." When we pray that's what Jesus does for us. He goes before God on our behalf.

No where are the words of the sinner's prayer for salvation mentioned in the Bible or by religious or secular historians in early church history nor is the sinner's prayer referenced in the later histories till Billy Gramam and Billy Sunday.

B. The chief term people use in the Bible to justify the sinner prayer is **"calling on the name of the Lord."** Yet this phrase within the scriptures is **not** exclusively mentioned during the timeline of when Jesus died on the cross. If "calling on the name of the Lord" is a prayer declaring that Jesus died on the cross for our sins and because of that I'm forgiven, then why is it used throughout the Old Testament?

1. **Bible examples:** In the early days of Genesis during the time of Adams son, Seth (**Genesis 4:26**) it says, what? **_____** The Bible says Abraham called on the name of the Lord. **(Genesis 13:4).** Abraham's child, Issac did the same thing. **(Genesis 26:25)** They were not saying that Jesus had died for their sins on the cross and that they accept Him into their hearts as their Lord and Savior.

   - **What is "calling on the name of the Lord?"** When a child is lost, (mall, grocery store, etc.) they may call out to their parents to find them. That child is actively trying to find their mother or father. When this term is used in the Bible it simply means people are calling out to God, that they are trying to seek Him (spiritually). Part of seeking God is in desiring Him. And if a person truly desires the companionship and salvation of the Lord, as part of **"calling on the name of the Lord, they will turn from doing evil."** (**2 Timothy 2:19)** If people are truly "calling on the name of the Lord," they will earnestly and honestly seek Him and if they do, they will find the Lord. **Jeremiah 29:12 "*Then you will call on me* and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. 13 You will seek me and find me when you *seek me with all your heart*."**

C. Another term that is used to justify the sinner's prayer is from **Romans 10:9-10;13.** Let's read it.

Fill in the blanks:

Romans 10:9 "If you *declare with your* _____, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with *your mouth* that you _____ *your faith* and are saved. 13 for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

- The beginning part of seeking God is in having faith, when we call out to God that comes from a heart of belief, that belief is necessary for salvation. Part of that requires us to verbally confess our faith before man for our salvation. **(Matthew 10:32-33)** It's not enough to just believe. **(John 12:42-43)** As you read this passage in **Romans 10**, you will see faith is shown in the act of a verbal confessing Jesus as Lord. The context of this Bible passage is about publicly giving a verbal confession of one's faith. This passage does not mention giving a private prayer "sinners prayer" to God. The verbal confession of faith is witnessed. **(1 Timothy 6:12)** Notice in **Romans 10:13** that this context of belief and confession is connected to seeking God.

- When the Holy Spirit dropped Philip the evangelist in the desert in **Acts 8:26-40** to share the gospel with the Ethiopian eunuch, after hearing gospel of salvation, the Eunuch saw water in the desert and asked to be baptized, **"And Philip said, "If you believe with all your heart, you may be baptized."** In **Acts 8:37** what did the eunuch confess? _____

- What did the Ethiopian do? He confessed with his mouth and professed his faith publicly that Jesus is Lord. After Philip had the Ethiopian eunuch go down into the water, the Bible says the Holy Spirit took the evangelist away and the Eunuch went away rejoicing that he was saved. No where do we read within the New Testament of a prayer for salvation, but there are many Bible verses on confessing one's faith in Jesus Christ, with one's mouth.

What do early church fathers write about baptism?

(I'm not going to write a bio of these men: I encourage you to study and research these figures online and in reliable texts. I'd ignore the catholic branding of ownership of these historical figures. This group calls many notable Christians throughout Biblical and secular history "saints.")

Irenaeus: John the Apostle lived the longest of the Apostles, he died: around 99 AD at about age 88 years) The student of Polycarp who was a Bible student of the Apostle John. **Irenaeus** mentioned the Bible passage of John 3:1-8 in the quote below.

"And [Naaman] (for context see **2 Kings 5:1-18**) dipped himself . . . seven times in the Jordan'. It was not for nothing that Naaman of old, when suffering from leprosy, was purified upon his being baptized, but [this served] as an indication to us. For as we are lepers in sin, we are made clean, by means of the sacred water and the invocation of the Lord, from our old transgressions, being spiritually regenerated as newborn babes, even as the Lord has declared: *'Except a man be born again through water and the Spirit, he shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"*

—Irenaeus, Fragment 34 Date: 190 A.D.

Besides proof of someone trained by the Apostle John's apprentice as saying baptism saves (from **John 3:1-8**), this story also helps highlight the manner of what grace is.

> In the reference of Naaman, we read that he did not earn or deserve to be cured. This was of grace and yet it was expected that this Syrian general and enemy of Isreal follow God's instructions to receive His mercy. Are not belief, repentance, and baptism, any different?
>
> **Early church father quotes:** You won't find "sinners' prayer" in the Bible or mentioned/referenced by these historical writers. Baptism is quoted as necessary for salvation for the next 500 years. The sinner's prayer is relatively a new concept that was born in America in the early 1800s. And really took root during the 20th century under Billy Graham.
>
> ***For more information on the background on the sinners prayer from historical refences see below link sources:***
>
> ***https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sinner%27s_prayer#***
>
> ***www.9marks.org/review/the-origins-of-the-altar-call-and-the-sinners-prayer***

Sources of early "church fathers" mentioning the necessity of baptism:

Note: These men reflect the views and ideas of the early times of the budding new kingdom of the church and Christian faith. **Though the texts are not inspired, they are historical from these early times**. Though these writers are flawed humans, they do unite under this one theme. Which reflects many of the perspectives of the early church during these early times.

"And when we come to refute them [the gnostic], we shall show in its fitting- place, that this class of men have been instigated by Satan to a denial of that baptism which is regeneration to God, and thus to a renunciation of the whole [Christian] faith…For the baptism instituted by the visible Jesus was for the remission of sins"

- **Irenaeus, Against Heresies 21:1-2 Date: 189 A.D.**

"I have heard, sir,' said I [to the Shepherd], 'from some teacher, that there is no other repentance except that which took place when we went down into the water and obtained the remission of our former sins.' He said to me, 'You have heard rightly, for so it is"

- **Hermas, The Shepherd 4:3:1–2 Date: 80 A.D.**

"As many as are persuaded and believe that what we [Christians] teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, and instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we pray and fast with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father . . . and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven"

- **Justin Martyr, First Apology 61 Date: 151 A.D.**

"For since you have read, O Trypho, as you yourself admitted, the doctrines taught by our Savior, I do not think that I have done foolishly in adding some short utterances of His to the prophetic statements. Wash therefore, and be now clean, and put away iniquity from your souls, as God bids you be washed in this laver, and be circumcised with the true circumcision… The command of circumcision, again, bidding [them] always circumcise the children on the eighth day, was a type of the true circumcision, (Romans 2:28-29) by which we are circumcised from deceit and iniquity through Him who rose from the dead on the first day after the Sabbath, [namely through] our Lord Jesus Christ"

- **Justin Martyr, Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew 18 & 41 Date: 160 A.D.**

“Our Christ, by being crucified on the tree, and by purifying [us] with water, has redeemed us, though plunged in the direst offenses which we have committed, and has made [us] a house of prayer and adoration… “the mystery of saved men appeared in the deluge. For righteous Noah, along with the other mortals at the deluge, i.e., with his own wife, his three sons and their wives, being eight in number, were a symbol of the eighth day, wherein Christ appeared when He rose from the dead, forever the first in power. For Christ, being the first-born of every creature, became again the chief of another race regenerated by Himself through water, and faith, and wood, containing the mystery of the cross; even as Noah was saved by wood when he rode over the waters …I mean, that by water, faith, and wood, those who are afore-prepared, and who repent of the sins which they have committed, shall escape from the impending judgment of God.”

- **Justin Martyr, Dialogue of Justin with Trypho, a Jew 18 & 41 Date: 160 A.D.**

“Then said Jesus unto them, ‘I have been given all authority in heaven and earth; and as my Father has sent me, so I also send you. Go now into all the world, and preach my gospel in all the creation; and teach all the peoples, and baptize them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit; and teach them to keep all whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you all the days, unto the end of the world”

- **Tatian the Syrian, The Diatesseron 55 Date: 170 A.D.**

“Moreover, those things which were created from the waters were blessed by God, so that this might also be a sign that men would at a future time receive repentance and remission of sins through water and the bath of regeneration—all who proceed to the truth and are born again and receive a blessing from God”

- **Tehophilus of Antioch, To Autolycus 12:16 Date: 181 A.D.**

“Regarding [baptism], we have the evidence of Scripture that Israel would refuse to accept the washing which confers the remission of sins and would set up a substitution of their own instead [Ps. 1:3–6]. Observe there how he describes both the water and the cross in the same figure. His meaning is, ‘Blessed are those who go down into the water with their hopes set on the cross.’ Here he is saying that after we have stepped down into the water, burdened with sin and defilement, we come up out of it bearing fruit, with reverence in our hearts and the hope of Jesus in our souls”

- **Barnabas, Letter of Barnabas 11:1–10 Date: 74 A.D**

"When we are baptized, we are enlightened. Being enlightened, we are adopted as sons. Adopted as sons, we are made perfect. Made perfect, we become immortal . . . 'and sons of the Most High' [Ps. 82:6]. This work is variously called grace, illumination, perfection, and washing. It is a washing by which we are cleansed of sins, a gift of grace by which the punishments due our sins are remitted, an illumination by which we behold that holy light of salvation"

- **Clement of Alexandria, The Instructor of Children 1:6:26:1 Date: 191 A.D.**

"Now faith occasions this for us even as the Elders, the disciples of the Apostles, have handed it down to us. First of all, it bids us to keep in mind that we have received baptism for the remission of sins in the name of God the Father and in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was incarnate, died and rose again, and in the Holy Spirit of God. This baptism is the seal of eternal life and the new birth unto God that we should no longer be the sons of mortal men but of the eternal and perpetual God."

- **Irenaeus, The Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching, Date: 192 A.D.**

There are more quotes, but you get the idea. Type "early church fathers' views on baptism" to find link sources. Keep in mind there were false teachers during that time as well. Gnostics who say sinful immorality is accepted by God, who say Jesus was not God, etc. Such man-made ideas will stand out from the Bible teachings.

Yet what connects this theme of baptism is the unified writings/ideas of the views that came from the early church fathers. The unified history of these writings from reliable sources speak to authenticity. What makes baptism for salvation unique in the early historical writings is the unity that these teachings give for decades, (beginning during the life of the Apostles and shortly after the end of Apostles….all the way up through a 500 year period of historical writings on this subject).

Bible references about baptism for salvation:

Acts 22:16; 1 Peter 3:20-21; Acts 2:37-38; Mark 16:16; Romans 6:1-23; John 3:5; Acts 8; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 16:25-40; 1 Cor 6:11; etc.

Notes:

Does the Bible say we can loss our salvation?

Let's first look at what the Bible says on judgment day, to better learn what God says from the scriptures. What does the Bible say about judgment?

A. The Word says Christ's second coming will bring salvation to those who are His. **(Hebrews 9:26-28)** The Bible says that when Jesus comes again to give reward that the Lord will also bring judgment to the world and give punishment to humanity. **John 5:28-29; Matthew 21:31-33; Matthew 13:47-50; 2 Corinthians 5:10**

B. This second coming is mentioned in vivid detail in **Revelation 20:11-15** and in **Revelation 21:1-8;** where all the dead will be judged for their acts both good and bad. Those who are unfaithful in following God will be thrown into hell. Look at the sins, one of them is in not having faith in Jesus, the other sins were for other deeds besides not having faith.

C. People can believe and still be lost. John in Revelation writes to 7 churches and tells them to remain faithful to receive eternal life when Jesus comes. I encourage you personal Bible studies to read each letter to the 7 churches from **Revelation chapter 2 through chapter 3.**

- But let's now read a part of this section. Let's read the letter to the church of Ephesus **(Revelation 2:1-7)** This passage says God will remove the lampstand of a sinful church. In this symbolic book what is the lampstand, representative of being considered as? **(Revelation 1:20)** What is the significance of this statement? If this group does not repent and start following the truth, will this church still be considered as belonging to God? _____

- In **Revelation 2:7** God admonishes the church members to make sure that they are what _____ to receive the tree of life in the paradise of heaven?

- Another church example is Smyrna in **Revelation 2:8-11**. In **Revelation 2:10** what are the members of this church exhorted to do while they are in prison being tortured? If they do what _____ they will receive what _____?

- At the end of this letter in **Revelation 2:11** what does the Holy Spirit through the Apostle John admonish the Christians to do? If they follow this divine command, they will escape what? _____ (Another name for Hell **Revelation 21:8**)

D. The second coming is mentioned in **2 Peter 3:11-14;17**. This event mentions the earth will be destroyed by fire. When Christ comes again the physical will be destroyed. The kingdom will be a spiritual kingdom. (Jesus says in **John 18:36** that His kingdom is not of this world but is spiritual kingdom. At God's coming, we will be given spiritual bodies **1 Cor 15:50-54**) 1 Peter warns the Christian to be prepared for this coming. In **2 Peter 3:17**. The Apostle Peter admonishes the saints to spiritually be on their guard so as to not _____ from their secure position. What can happen to those who receive the truth? What does **2 Peter 20-22** say about the seriousness of being saved and choosing to turn away from God? _____

E. Paul also writes the same thing to the Christians in Rome, (described as such **Romans 1:6-7**) about judgment day. The Apostle warns those who are fallen, who don't repent, that they will receive the wrath of God (**Romans 2:4-6**).

F. Can we Fall from grace? What does the Bible say? Can we drift away, can we ignore our salvation? (**Hebrews 2:1-4**)

- Can Christians loss their salvation? Were their Christians who "once had been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, fall away? _____ **(Hebrews 6:1-12)**

- If they did fall away, why could they NOT repent? Was it because of the state of their heart? These saints had experienced proofs and visions that God existed, and had God indwell them. They saw truth from heaven and yet chose to leave Him anyways. Some people's hearts are hard to the point they choose to not come back. Hebrews tells other Christians in this passage that this won't happen to you if they do what? **(vs 9-12)**

  _____

G. Bible study and striving to follow God matters, to save oneself (**1 Timothy 4:16**) What does Paul say to watch closely? _____

We need to seek to be holy if we are going to see God someday in heaven (**Revelation 21: 27/22:14-15; Matthew 5:8**) and strive to not lose His grace. (**Hebrews 12:14-17**) Christians who have believed in Jesus have been lost. What does Paul say two people did with their faith in **1 Timothy 1:18-20**? _____

Paul even mentions that *he* could be disqualified from the prize (the crown of life). (**1 Corinthians 9:24-27/ 2 Timothy 4:6-8**). The Bible mentions Christians can loss their salvation. Here are some of the passages I want to share: **(Luke 12:35-46), (2 Peter 1:3-11)**

The writer in Hebrews writes to Christians. **(Hebrews 13:22)** What does he say are the consequences of those who turn away from God? _____ (**Hebrews 10:26-36)**

H. Is faith only enough for salvation? What does the Bible say? Did those who were cast out from God and rejected by Him believe in Jesus and do good works? (**Mathew 7:21-23)** _____ It's not enough to just believe and confess Jesus as Lord. We must follow Him also.

In **John 8:31-32**, the passage says the Jews believed in Jesus and yet Christ said to them, if they want to be His followers and be set free from sin (**vs 34**) they need to follow God's the truth. Later Jesus called these same people He was talking with children of the devil. (**Vs 43-44)** Later these same people choose to abandon their earlier perspective of Jesus. They turn around and call Him **"Demon possessed." (Vs 48)**

I. The seriousness of doing sin before God. Bible examples:

- The early church had some of its Christians members struck dead by God because of sin whose names were Ananias and Sapphira. The church was donating money and these Christian church members lied (**Acts 4:32-37/5:1–11)**.

- Simon the Sorcerer heard the gospel in Acts. He believed and was baptized. Yet Simon turned away from God and was told to repent or perish. (**Acts 8:4-24**)

- A man was having sex with his stepmother in **1 Corinthians 5:1-13** and the church is told to withdraw from him, remove their support as a church from him. To **"hand him over to Satan"** so as to encourage this person to repent. In the next letter to the Corinthians Paul writes about how this man repented, (**2 Corinthians 2:5-11**). Sin is serious for God's people. We cannot have God if we are willfully not obeying the truth sin. (**2 John 9/1 John 2:3-4**)

Notes:

Do we need Holy Spirit Baptism?

The purpose of the Holy Spirit in Christ's life:

Thought provoking questions:

Why did Jesus do miracles during His earthly ministry? ***John 3:2/Acts 2:22***

_____

How did Jesus do these miracles? ***Acts 10:38*** _____

Examples in Acts of the baptism of Holy Spirit: The Bible distinctly mentions and set's apart Holy Spirit baptism, by name in two different instances in the book of Acts. When Holy Spirit baptism happens, it is mentioned as being accompanied by signs. We of course can't have such a baptism without the Spirit being present.

Apostles are specifically mentioned as having received the Holy Spirit baptism in **Acts 1:5;8; Acts 2:1-4**. Cornelius and his Gentile family also received the Holy Spirit baptism. It was a shock to the Jews, when it came to this household. Read Bible passages about Cornelius and his family, (**Acts 10:44-48; Acts 11:15-17**).

What happened in this story? _____

If receiving the Holy Spirit was a normal occurrence for Gentile believers being saved, it would not have been a shock to the Jews to hear about Cornelius and his house, received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. Earlier in Acts, we see gentile people being saved, who did not receive the baptism of the Spirit, (**Acts 8:4-8;12**). If God thought, it necessary for salvation He would have given them this baptism. In this chapter, a baptized believer, named Simon offered money to the Apostles to receive the Holy Spirit and its power, (**Acts 8:9-25**).

What happened in this story? _____

During that time in history: The Jews, did not think non-Israelites (except for practicing Mosaic converts), would be accepted by God. But Peter after explaining to the Jews in Jerusalem, what had happened, to Cornelius and his family, (**Acts 11:1-14**), made it clear to them through what God had done, that this perspective was false, (**Acts 11:15-18**).

Fill in the blanks:

Peter see's God accepting this Gentile family and says, *"that God does not show _____ but accepts from every nation the one who _____ him and does what is _____,"* (**Acts 10:34-35**).

For Cornelius and his family to be accepted by the Jews, (without adhering to Jewish costumes and Mosaic law) God choose to give a divine sign of acceptance through this miraculous act.

Why did the Apostles receive Holy Spirit baptism?

The Apostles received Holy Spirit baptism, in **Acts 2** in order to guide them in God's divine oracles, (**John 16:13; John 14:26; John 15:26**). These men were given miracles to speak in foreign languages (as **Acts 2:1-4** says) and to prove they spoke God's divine truth by the signs they did. The Holy Spirit's gifts were given to them in Jerusalem (**Acts 1:8**) for when they began to proclaim the gospel all the world (**Mark 16:15-20**). The Apostles had the divine authority to bind in spiritual matters, for they were guided by the Spirit, (**Matthew 18:18**).

Summarize why the Apostles had the Holy Spirit? _____

How did Christians back then get the Holy Spirit?

Baptizing someone in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of sins, is not the same as someone receiving the baptism of the Holy Spirit. How saved people received the Holy Spirit, in the New Testament was through the Apostles laying their hands on them and imparting the Spirit.

You will notice when you read **Acts 8**, that people did two things to be saved. What were these things? _____ Yet after being saved did they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit? _____ They had to wait till the Apostles came up from where Jerusalem. When John and Peter arrived and placed their hands on the baptized believers, that's when they received the Spirit.

What does Acts 8 teach on the Holy Spirit?

*Does the Holy Spirit always come on those who believe, and are baptized to be saved? Here is the outline of **Acts chapter 8** in matters of the Holy Spirit baptism and the Bible examples of salvation:*

Philip the evangelist proclaims Christ in Samaria. Signs were performed to confirm the teachings of the gospel:

Acts 8:4 "Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word. 5 Philip went down to the city of Samaria and proclaimed to them the Christ. 6 And the crowds with one accord paid attention to what was being said by Philip, when they heard him and saw the signs that he did. 7 For unclean spirits, crying out with a loud voice, came out of many who had them, and many who were *paralyzed*, or *lame were healed.* 8 So there was much joy in that city."

Did Philip have the Holy Spirits power? _____ How do we know whether Philip did or did not have the Spirits gifts? _____

Simon the magician believes in Jesus and is baptized, and others believe and are baptized, after they hear the news about the Savior. They heard and followed the precious Word of God that Phillip shares. Yet did they receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit once they were saved? _____ What does the below passage say?

Acts 8:9 “But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. 10 They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, “This man is the power of God that is called Great.” 11 And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.

12 “But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. 13 Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles 2 performed, he was amazed.” **(Acts 2:38/Acts 22:16)**

These above verses are a good example of the Acts baptisms that are pointed out in the Bible. That it's water and not the Holy Spirit baptism. That belief and acceptance of Jesus does not mean the Holy Spirit baptism will come on a person. If God felt it warranted, would He not have sent such a baptism of fire on these people? We read that a sinner, a witch turned to God, he believed and was baptized. People also believed and were baptized. They accepted Jesus. And yet...they did not receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

How did the new Christians receive the power of the Holy Spirit?

What does the follow passage say? _____

Let's continue reading...for further explanation.

Acts 8:14 “Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John, 15 who came down and prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit, (even in this it was conditional in coming to Him in prayer on God giving the Spirit via the Apostles laying their hands on them) 16 for he had not yet fallen on any of them, but they had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. 17 Then they laid their hands on them and they received the Holy Spirit.”

- People teach that Holy Spirit baptism saves: If belief and accepting Jesus means salvation, why did they not receive the Holy Spirit baptism? If the Holy Spirit baptism is what saves? We read that these people received the Word of God, and they had put their faith in Jesus. They were baptized. And yet the Holy Spirit baptism had not come to them. If this baptism came on those who accepted Christ don't you think they would have received this baptism of fire?

- We read in **Acts 8** that the Apostles (Peter and John – who received the baptism of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost) were asked to come all the way down from Jerusalem to lay their hands on the new believers in Samaria, for them to receive the Holy Spirit This was over a 2-hr. walk. If this baptism was a necessary occurrence the Apostles would not have had to make that trek to lay their hands on these new Christians.

Since the 12 Apostles died out 2,000 years ago....

What are the qualifications of being an Apostle? _____**(Acts 1:21-26)**

A mark of an Apostle was shown that they could do what? _____ **(2 Corinthians 12:12)**

And since Paul says he was the LAST of the Apostles whom Jesus appeared to, **(1 Cor 15:3-9)** then we have no more Apostles like these men today.

So, if the Holy Spirit baptism does not need to come on people when they are saved, and the Apostles can't travel around the world to lay their hands on people today, does that mean we must have tongues of fire, miracles of power come on us, to be saved? _____

Final Bible study thoughts on Acts 8:

What does the Bible say about Simon?

Did this man have the right heart? _____

Acts 8:18 "Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!

21 You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. 22 Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. 23 For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity." 24 And Simon answered, "Pray for me to the Lord, that nothing of what you have said may come upon me. 25 Now when they had testified and spoken the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel to many villages of the Samaritans."

What do we read here? When the Apostles came, the Apostles did not give the Holy Spirit to everyone. They made a discernment on different individuals. An example of this is Simon. He HAD to ask the Apostles for the Holy Spirit to come on him and they said no, due to his heart...

Ethiopian Eunuch: We will read of another person who like Simon, had believed and was baptized and yet did not receive the Holy Spirit baptism.

- *Let's read the final verses in **Acts 8** about Philip the evangelist. In this story in **Acts 8:26-34** Philip meets the Ethiopian eunuch and shares the gospel message of Jesus with him.*

What happens in this story? _____
Immediately after the Ethiopian heard the salvation story what does he request? _____

- Philip shared the gospel with an Ethiopian. This man believed in Jesus, he confessed his faith and was baptized in water. Which again is immersion. Here in this text, it says he went down into the water. If these mentioned activities were not essential, they would not have been done. And yet the Holy Spirit baptism did not fall on him. Did Philip forbid the Ethiopian from leaving till the Apostles could come up from Jerusalem to place their hands on him? NO.

- Did Philip say his belief, confession and baptism, did not count for salvation, till the Holy Spirit baptism came on him? NO.

- We read that Philip left. He was picked up by the Holy Spirit to another location to do evangelism and that the Ethiopian man, went away rejoicing over his salvation.

Other examples of Apostolic laying on of hands.

In **Acts 19:1-6**, notice again the same parallel. People were baptized in Jesus' name, then they had the Apostles place their hands on them to receive the Holy Spirit.

What baptism were they baptized into first? _____

Did these people even know who the Holy Spirit was? _____

Even saved believers like Timothy, who helped Paul preach the gospel in doing missionary work (***Acts 16:1-10)*** *later received the Spirit through the laying on of hands.* ***(1 Timothy 4:14 / 2 Timothy 1:6)***

Recorded examples of salvation in the book of Acts:

Hear Gospel	Believed	Repented	Confessed	Baptized	When?	Blessings
Three Thousand Acts 2:1-47		Repented 2:38		Baptized 2:38, 41	That Day 2:41	Sins Forgiven Received HS 2:38
Samaritans 8:5-12	Believed 8:12			Baptized 8:12	When believed 8:12	
Simon 8:13	Believed 8:13			Baptized 8:13		Therefore, saved Mark 16:15-16
Ethiopian Eunuch 8:26-40	Believed 8:37		Confessed 8:37	Baptized 8:38	After confession of faith – 8:36-38	Went on way rejoicing 8:39
Saul 9:1-18; 22:1-16				Baptized 22:16	Without delay 22:16	Sins washed away 22:16
Cornelius 10:1-48; 11:1-17	Believed 15:7			Baptized 10:48	After command 10:48	Was saved 11:14
Lydia 16:14-15				Baptized 16:15	When she heard 16:14-15	
Jailer 16:25-40	Believed 16:31-32			Baptized 16:33	Same hour of night – 16:33	Rejoiced 16:34
Corinthians 18:8	Believed 18:8			Baptized 18:8	When they believed and heard – 18:8	Washed, Saved 1 Cor. 6:11, 15:2
Ephesians 19:1-7				Baptized 19:5		
Hear **Rom. 10:17**	**Belief** **John 3:16**	**Repent** **Luke 13:3**	**Confess** **Mt. 10:32-33**	**Baptism** **Rom. 6:3-7**	**Immediately** **1 Peter 3:21**	**Salvation from Sin**

The Purpose of the Holy Spirit

The Apostles had the Holy Spirit to give the divine truth of God and to confirm the Holy Spirit's revelation, that was given to them. Through the laying on of hands, the Apostles enabled others to receive the Spirit for this purpose, as well.

Fill in the blanks:

- **Mark 16:17** *"These signs will accompany those who have believed: in My name they will cast out demons, they will speak with _____; 18 they will pick up _____, and if they drink any _____, it will not hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will _____." 19 So then, when the Lord Jesus had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God. 20 And* ***they went out and preached*** *everywhere, while the Lord worked with them, and confirmed the word by the _____ that followed." See also* ***Acts 14:3***

What was the purpose of miracles that the above passage states? What was it to confirm? _____ If people claim to have the Holy Spirit, ask them if they can do all these things today? Can they handle deadly serpents, (get bit) can they drink hemlock (poison) can they speak in various different foreign languages, (can they speak French, German, Russian, Japanese, etc.) Can they cure the incurable, save the dying, heal the paralyzed and crippled, raise the dead? Christ could and the Apostles could. Those who claim to have the Holy Spirit power as **Mark 16:17-20** says, should be able to do these things as well.

I knew of a young man who claimed to have the gifts of the spirit, he told a friend with brain tumor he'd lay his hands on him to heal the cancer. This older man was excited, he thought he was cured. But when visiting the doctor was told he still had the brain tumor cancer. Many people leave thinking they are cured when the laying on of hands is done, only to find they still are dying of an illness. For stories of tragic deaths from "faith healing" ***google "faith healing killing people."***

The Spirit's miraculous role was for the Apostles to give God's oracles, till all the Spirit's revelation was given/made known. When many of the Apostles had died and others where well advanced in years, we read that this role had been accomplished.

The Apostle Paul writes this truth. The Bible says through its inspiration, that we can be equipped for every spiritual work that God wants us (to do) in matters of divine truth. The Bible says we have <u>all</u> inspired scripture for God's desired work for us to do.

Fill in the blanks:

- **2 Timothy 3:16** *"<u>All Scripture</u> is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 17 so that the man of God may be adequate, _____ <u>for every good work</u>."*

We now have <u>everything we need</u> for our lives, through the truth of Jesus.

- The Apostle Peter says (through inspiration) speaks this truth. **2 Peter 1:3** *"Seeing that His divine power has granted to us <u>everything</u> pertaining to <u>life</u> and godliness, through the true _____ <u>of Him</u> who called us by His own glory and excellence."*

The term "the faith," is still used of different belief systems today, when we talk about the Islamic faith, the Buddhist faith, etc. We will read below in Jude the exhortation to keep the (Christian) faith. The Bible details the meaning of this term "the faith," further in **1 Timothy 4:6** as describing the Christian belief/doctrine that comes from the teaching of the Bible. In Jude we will also read that it has <u>*once for all been delivered*</u>.

- ***Jude 3*** *"Beloved, while I was making every effort to write you about our common salvation, I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for _____ which was_____ <u>I handed down to the saints</u>."*

- *In fact, if any other new revelations/gospels are given today, other than God's gospel/Bible, the scripture says that those who promote that revelation are what? _____ We have no new divine revelation. Anyone who preaches a new gospel/revelation (means divine good news), man or angel is what? _____ (**Galatians 1:6-8)***

Since we have all the inspired truth, the Spirit's role for the Apostles is accomplished. We don't need the laying on of hands to impart the Spirit of revelation. Nor do we need the power of signs, to confirm these new divine truths.

Another reason for revelation is in the Apostleship. We don't have such men today. Back then an Apostle had to be one who was an eyewitness of who in the Bible? _____ (**Acts 1:21-23**). In this passage, Peter gave certain stipulations for electing the Apostle Matthias. Peter gave these directives to Matthias, for the reason, an Apostle needed to be "a witness with us of his _____." (**vs 22**).

Even Paul saw the Lord, (**Acts 22:6-8**). When Jesus appeared to Paul, He appeared to him last, as one abnormally born, for He had persecuted the church, (**1 Corinthians 15:8-10**). The term says Paul was the "last" one Jesus came to for Apostleship. This means there are no others who will come after Paul.

An Apostle also had to show irrefutable signs that they had the Spirit's power, (**2 Corinthians 12:12**). *Do you see the dead being raised today, the lame walking, the paralyzed being healed? No. Do you see people being bitten by deadly serpents and drinking poison today? No. Yet this is what those with the Holy Spirit could in the Bible***. Mark 16:14-19**

If hospitals could be emptied and the uncurable cured and the dead raised we would certainly hear about it in this digital age where everything is recorded, posted on social media, and broadcast on cell phones. What is streamed online in India can be seen in Africa….and throughout the world. When a video is novel in the world it becomes "viral" overnight globally.

If we had Apostles today, you would see such divine miracles publicly performed on streets, etc. Such action would create great interest and would bring about crowds, as it did in the times of the Apostles in Acts, (**Acts 5:12-16**). In the age of media and social tweets and video posts, such news would be spread even faster. Yet we don't hear such reports.

Some people will say we must be baptized by the Holy Spirit to be saved. Nowhere in the Bible does God say this. Here's a good example: King Saul and the soldiers he sent received the Holy Spirit while trying to kill David. Yet Saul was a murder and was rejected by God as king. Was this man saved? No. **1 Samuel 19:9-24.**

Read Numbers 22-24 What did the king of Moad want the sorcerer Balam to do?

_____

What happened in Balam's 4th oracle**, (Ch 24)** what came upon this warlock?

_____

How did this evil man still turn against God's will to hurt His people, the Jews? **(Jude 1:11/ 2 Peter 2:15/Numbers 25)**

_____

The One Baptism:

Look with me at two passages…

The book of Ephesians was written around AD 62

Fill in the blanks:

First passage is in **Ephesians 4:4** *"There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; 5 One Lord, one faith, _____, 6 One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."*

The book of 1 Peter was written around AD 61

Second passage is in **1 Peter 3:***20 "who once were disobedient when the patience of God kept waiting in the days of Noah, during the construction of the ark, in which a few, that is, eight persons, were brought safely through the _____. 21 Corresponding to that, baptism now saves you—not the removal of dirt from the flesh, but an appeal to God for a good conscience—through the resurrection of Jesus Christ,"*

The timeline of the letter of Ephesians written by the Apostle Paul and the letter of 1 Peter written by the Apostle Peter is close together. Now…if the Bible says in Ephesians that there is one baptism and we read in 1 Peter that this baptism is **"water," "that now saves you…"** Then we can infer by necessary inference (common reasoning) that we only have one baptism now. That this is water baptism. It's not the Holy Spirit kind of baptism.

These two passages complement one another by unifying a divine message that there is one baptism, and it is of water.

"Baptism for repentance" and the "baptism of the Spirit" were done away with by at this point in history. Both these baptisms served their purpose. You don't hear about tongues of fire falling on people and such miraculous noise as to draw the whole city, as you read about in **Acts 2**. People who claim to have the Spirit can't speak new languages as those at Pentecost did. If tongues of fire, and miracles of the Spirit still existed we'd hear about it on the TV, social media and read about it in the newspaper. There would be a huge following of such groups. Yet all we hear is silence.

Notes:

What is God's church?

How are we to worship God, to be pleasing to Him?

Does it matter if we follow God's teachings on church worship?

The Bible makes it clear that we must obey God to be pleasing to Him.

Matthew 7:21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22"Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles?' 23"And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness."

Is it enough to just believe in Jesus, call on His name and do good works? _____

Turn to **Hebrews 5:9,** what does this verse say? Christ became the source of eternal salvation for all who do what? _____

God commands we worship in a certain way. Should we not, thus, listen to His Word, in matters of worship?

Christ/His truth: The authority of the church

The Bible describes the church as what in **Ephesians 1:22-23**? _____

When we are baptism for salvation, we join what? (**1 Corinthians 12:13) _____**

When we join His church, we become members of His body for service, (**1 Corinthians 12:12;14-23/Romans 12:4-5**).

We must submit to Jesus' truth in the matters of the church, (such church matters as worship, giving, etc.). We must do this for Christ has the headship/authority to govern the church.

In **Ephesians 5:23-24** who is head of the (body) church? _____

Who is the church supposed to submit to? _____

In the book of Revelation Christ's "church" is called a golden lampstand, (**Revelation 1:20**). We read we need to remain obedient to His truth, to *remain His church* (**Revelation 2:4-5**).

What does the Apostle Paul tells us in the passage of **Ephesians 4:4-5?**

How many bodies (churches) does God have? _____

How many faiths? _____

It's important to know what the Bible term for "faith," (or "the faith") is. Different religious groups have their faith, the Buddhists, Hindus, Quakers, Islamists, have their faiths. The term in the Bible for "the faith" or "faith" relates to the Christian convictions/beliefs that come from the truth, (**1 Timothy 4:6**). When people are not obedient to the faith, (**Acts 6:7)** they have left the faith, (**1 Timothy 4:1**). In matters of such divine revelation of truth, we read that "the faith" has for all time been delivered/revealed, to the saints, (**Jude 3**).

We have all inspired scripture, for every good work God wants of us, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17).** From such knowledge of Christ's truth, we have everything we need for a spiritual life, (**2 Peter 1:3-4**). If His truth meets all our spiritual needs, we have no more need for more revelation.

In matters of revelation, the Bible says, we must submit to Christ.

In worship we must do only that Jesus has given us authority to do.

In Colossians 3:17 we are to do all in whose name? _____

The Greek word here for the word "name" here is **onoma** and means "authority." https://biblehub.com/greek/3686.htm

You may have watched a wild west tv show where a sherif says "stop in the name of the law" or a medieval movie where a knight does something in the "name of the king." This same word is used when Jesus says for people to baptize in His "name" **(Acts 2:38)** or cast out demons in His "name." **(Mark 16:17)** The words ***"whatever you do in word or deed, do all in His (authority) name,"*** means nothing should be added to worship or subtracted, that Christ has not given us authority to do, in word or deed, in matters of worship.

We are not to add to His Word. To say something is of Him when God has not given it in revelation is a lie. The Lord needs nothing added, His truth is perfect, (**Proverbs 30:5-6**).

Where do we get authority?

As we have read, the Bible says we get authority through Christ's teaching. Jesus said to His Apostles that He has all authority. He told them they are to teach what He has commanded them. Part of Christ's teaching to His Apostles were for them to baptize in His name, so others could be accepted as His disciples. This command was also for salvation, (**Mark 16:16**).

In Matthew 28:16-20 what is Jesus talking to in this passage? _____

What does this passage say about authority? _____

What does Jesus tell His disciples to do in these verses? _____

His teachings must be followed if we are to be God disciples, (**John 8:31**). Such teachings equip us for His works of service, (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**). We must know His truth, in order to know how we are supposed to conduct ourselves within His house. If a congregation is to be accepted as His, it must follow His truth.

What does **1 Timothy 3:15 say the church is? _____**

The church is the pillar of what? _____

From this verse is the church supposed to have its foundation and support on the truth?

_____

To have unity, we need to be in Christ. This was the Lord's prayer to the Father right before He died on the cross, (**John 17:20-21**). This was Jesus' wish for us.

Jesus is called the shepherd. If we are willing to be guided as His sheep, and listen to His voice, we will be counted as His, (**John 10:14-16**). We do not need to listen to other voices from uninspired men, in matters of religion, (**John 10:5**). For there is one spiritual flock and one heavenly shepherd, Christ.

How does **Acts 20:29-30** apply to the previous verses? _____

Inspired Men

Christ said He had all authority, to His Apostles (**Matthew 28:17-20**). In this context of authority, He then commanded the Apostles to teach His words. To confirm these words of truth, these men were given the Spirit, (**Acts 1:4-5, Acts 1:8/Acts 2:1-4**) to perform miraculous signs and wonders, (**Mark 16:14-20**).

The Apostles were guided into *"all truth"* by the Spirit, (**John 14:26 /John 16:13**). Therefore, we should listen to what they taught and practiced.

This puts **Matthew 18:18** in context. If the Spirit was to guide the Apostles in truth, then what they bound and loosed would be under divine guidance.

We need to look to the inspired example these men showed. What the Apostles spiritually practiced is commanded of us to follow, (**1 Corinthians 11:1/Philippians 3:17/4:9**).

We need to note that all the words of Jesus' came from the Father (**John 12:49**) and was also given by the Spirit. When One in the Godhead speaks, They all speak.

Religious Denominational Divisions

Read the below passage. Notice in this passage the Bible says, God's people must be united. United in what? Is it talking about being united in politics, football teams, etc. No, of course not. They must be united in one mind and judgement. Not divided. In matters of truth. How are we to be united as this passage says? By being enriched in sharing speech about the knowledge of God. In such spiritual matters of truth, in what Christ gave us in His authority, we must agree.

The inspired Apostle writes in **1 Corinthians 14 "I thank my God always concerning you for the grace of God which was given you in Christ Jesus, 5 that in everything you were <u>enriched in Him, in all speech and all knowledge</u>...10 Now I exhort you, brethren, by the name (authority) of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be made complete in the <u>same mind and in the same judgment.</u>"**

How are people divided from the teachings of the Word of God? We cease to have unity with God's truth, when we choose man's uninspired teaching over Gods. Through the knowledge of God, we must be united together in the same mind and spiritual judgement.

What should we do with “brethren” who seek to divide us from the doctrine of Christ**?**

(Romans 16:17-18) _____

We must study to know the Bibles truth, to avoided being deceived by their false teachings.

As we have read earlier, the Bible says there is one “faith,” (**Ephesians 4:5**). We are not to add man-made teachings to God’s truth.

We should not add to the Bible, the uninspired teachings of men. God says people who do this are offering up vain worship. Such people have a wrong heart.

In **Matthew 15:8-9** what does Jesus say about people’s heart if they follow man-made teachings that are not in the Bible? _____

What does the Lord say about their worship? _____

This passage clearly states we need to eliminate uninspired creeds, books, rules, from uninspired men. When we follow such, we are following the wrong sources for religious authority. We must not go beyond what is written.

What does the Apostle John write in Revelation about the seriousness of add or subtracting from Gods words. What does **Revelation 22:18-19** say?

_____

In matters of religious teaching, we should only speak God's oracles. That means we should not advocate things the Bible is silent on. We should not be teaching things that add or subtract from His Word. We should only speak His oracles of truth, (**1 Peter 4:11**).

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

- **We are to give in church**

What day were the saints at the Corinthian church told to give?

(**1 Corinthians 16:2**) _____

How do we add to this command? We give on another day. How do we subtract from this command? We don’t give at all.

What kind of attitude are we supposed to have when we give at church?
(**2 Corinthians 9:6-7**) _____

The New Testament does not say for the church to give a specific sum.

We are to use church funds as the Bible teaches. If we add/subtract from what the Bible says, we are changing His pure Word. We should not ignore God’s preferences, for our own. That’s what Paul warned about. Paul warns about people would distort (change) the truth to make disciples after themselves, Paul warns the church leaders to be aware of such people. (**Acts 20:27-30**).

When a group of people divide from the truth to follow creeds, from uninspired men, they form their own group instead of Christs church. They follow denominational teachings instead of the Bible.

How the church is to use its funds

1. The church is to preach the gospel

Christ commanded the Apostles to tell the world the gospel. Then told them to teach others what He had commanded them, the Apostle taught what Jesus commanded them to teach. (**Matthew 28:19-20**).

In worship what did the church devote themselves to? (**Acts 2:42)** _____

What did Paul do at the church in Troas? _____ **(Acts 20:6-7)**

Does the Bible say a church can pay preachers be? (**1 Corinthians 9:14**) _____

List the things preachers supposed to do within a church? **(2 Timothy 4:1-2)**

_____

What does Paul warn the preacher Timothy about? _____ **(2 Timothy 4:2-4)**

2. The church is to help needy saints

In matters of benevolence the church is to help Christians in need.

A church can help another congregation that has needy saints. Churches in Macedonia and Achaia helped the needy saints in Jerusalem, (**Romans 15:25-26**). The Christians in Jerusalem were hurting due to a sever famine, (**Acts 11:27-30**).

For a local church to help a saint, that person must truly be in need. A needy saint must first look to finding support from one's family, before the saint's congregation can help, (**1 Timothy 5:3-10**). In matters of financial help, accountability must first start at the home, (**2 Thessalonians 3:10)**

In **1 Timothy 5:8** if a Christian won't help is family in need what does this passage say they are? _____

When it comes to helping people, who are not Christian, we can look to the teachings of the Bible in matters of individual/personal responsibility. Helping people is our duty that God expects of us as individuals, (**1 Timothy 6:18**). But we must make sure they are first willing to help themselves, (**2 Thessalonians 3:10**). We need to be part of the solution not part of the problem.

How can we add to God's Word in church financial matters? We add to the truth of God's Word, when we use His church money for things the Bible does not advocate. We add to His teachings, when we use church funds for secular events, like ice cream socials, date nights, paintball games, etc.

Do we read about secular things in worship in the Bible? No. What Christian practiced was from the truth's teachings. God's church/Kingdom is spiritual in nature. In **John 18:36**, Jesus says that His kingdom is not of what? _____

The Lords Kingdom is not about worldly, non-Bible based things, and it's not meant for secular recreation, entertainment. God is silent on such actives and aims. If He does not advocate such activity, then neither should we.

In any act of worship, we must just teach and practice what God says in His gospel. To add to His Word is to distort it. To teach something else then what God says from the Bible says in religion, is to teach a false gospel, (man-made teaching).

What does Paul say about someone teaching another teaching other than God's truth from the Bible? (**Galatians1:6-9**)

Are they blessed or coursed? _____

Can we desert Jesus if we follow another gospel? _____

How can the truth become distorted? _____

How does this happen? _____

No one should speak another *"gospel,"* other than what the Bible has given us through the Apostles/inspired men, (**Galatians 1:6-10**). The word for gospel in the Bible in Greek is **euaggelion** https://biblehub.com/greek/2098.htm and means divine "good news" coming from God through revelation. If someone else claims another "divine revelation" the Bible says they are accursed.

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

- **We are to sing praise to God**

The Bible says that Christ is head of His church. That the church belongs to Jesus. (**Ephesians 1:22-23)** We read that the Lord has commanded us to sing in church worship, (**Colossians 3:15-17**). We read Christ alone has given us authority for worship and for activities related to His church.

In **Colossians 3:15** What are Christians called? _____

In **verse16**, how are Christians to teach one another in worship? _____

How are the Bible commands to worship in this passage connected to **verse 17?**

_____

In worship we are commanded to sing. God tells us to not add/subtract from His Word. If we subtract from this command by having a chorus, (where some people sing), then we change God's command. The command is for all of God's people to sing. If we remove people and add instruments to His command and have a jazz concert and no one sings, we sin again, for God command is for us to sing to Him.

If we add to His command to sing, through the use of instrumental music to our singing, we err, for God says about worship, ***"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus..."*** **(Colossians 3:17)** Has Christ taught anywhere for in the New Testament for the church to use instruments?

No. He tells uninspired man to not add to His Words. To abide in the truth and not go beyond it. We are to worship within the confines of the lines God has marked out for us. We are not to not go beyond His teachings, (**2 John 9).**

The Old Law

You may ask what about the Old Testament, they used instruments in worship? They also offered up animal sacrifices, did circumcisions, had ceremonial rites, abstained from certain foods, observed no work on the Sabbath, had religious New Moon festivals, etc. Do we do any of these things? No. People (many times) were put to death, when they did a deliberate sin, under the Old Testament Law, (**Numbers 15:30**).

The Bible says Christ has delivered us from the Old Law/Covenant to His Law, (the Law of the Spirit). The Old Law was called the *"Law of sin and death,"* (**Romans 8:1-2**) for when people deliberately sinned, under that Law, it meant being put to death.

But we are no longer under the Old Law. Christ put an end this law, (**Romans 10:4/Colossians 2:14-16).** See also (**Hebrews 8:7;13/Galatians 3:16;19).**

The New Covenant is Christ's will/Testament. Established in His death, (**Hebrews 9:15-17**). Would you like someone to change your desired testament/will? Would you like someone to change what you put into it, by adding or subtracting from your will? Christ has established His covenant through the shedding of His blood for you, (**Matthew 26:28**). Who are we to change His teachings? Does that mean the Old Testament is irrelevant? No, we can still learn from its examples (1 **Corinthians 10:6-11**). The Old Testament shows us Gods attitude towards what is right and wrong.

By reading the Old Testament, we see God does not like His Word being messed with. The Lord did not like it then and does not like it now. His attitude does not change, (**Hebrews 13:8**). Through the Old Testament we can find prophetic truths about Christ, which can encourage us and strengthen our hope in Him, (**Romans 15:3-4**).

Remember Nadab and Abihu. They were priests under the Old Law, who offered up "unauthorized fire" before the Lord, because it suited them. They choose to go outside of God's authoritative framework to do what pleased them. The Lord said these men dishonored Him as unholy, for doing what He had not authorized in worship, (**Leviticus 10:1-3**).

But people will ask, “but if what I want in religion accomplishes a good thing. How can that be wrong?” But in whose eyes, yours, mine, or Gods? It’s not a matter of what we think is right. What counts is what God says is right.

Remember King Saul’s example of sin in the Old Testament? Saul was not supposed to burn an offering to God. That was the role of the priests. Yet Saul thought he knew best. God said otherwise. The Lord valued obedience over Saul’s sacrifice, (**1 Samuel 13:5-14**). This was a continual flaw with the Israelite's in the Old Testament. They did in their own eyes what they thought was right, (**Judges 17:6/Judges 21:25**).

Just because we think we know what is best, does not make it Biblically correct, **(Proverbs 14:12)**. Nor is such behavior spiritually pleasing to God. If God had wanted it done, don’t you think He would have mentioned it?

When we follow Christ, we are His disciples (**John 8:31-32**). When we follow uninspired men, who distort the truth, (**Acts 20:29-30**) by adding or subtracting from God's teachings, we are instead choosing to be disciples of these men.

When you add or subtract ingredients from your grandma's recipe, it's no longer, your grandma's recipe, it's something else.

When you change a dead man's will, by adding what you would rather have in that will, ignoring that man's wishes, you distort his will into something that man did not want done. In our previous reading, we saw Christ's New Convent/Testament, is His will for us.

Attending church

When it comes to worship, we are commanded to attend when the saints meet, (**Hebrews 10:24-26**). We are to make this our first priority. Why does this passage say we should assemble? _____

Matthew 6:33 says to seek what first? _____

When we meet to worship, what two things must the church have?

(**John 4:23-24**) _____ and _____

Worship honors God but it also strengthens us. Prayers, praise, Bible study are our foods for spiritual growth. The more we worship the stronger we become. Going to church also gives a chance to encourage others during worship (through praise) and afterwards through words of friendliness and love. We can’t do these things if we don’t follow God’s teachings.

Prayer and Bible study

When we worship, the Bible mentions prayer and Bible teaching. (**Acts 2:42**) God tells us we are to talk to God in prayer and listen to Him through His Word. When we pray together, we are united in thought, attitude and purpose in communing with our Creator. Prayer is a time for gratitude for what Christ has done for us. (**Colossians 4:2)** When we pray, we connect together with our Creator in worship. When we have church Bible class and hear Bible based sermons, we do as God wants. We **"grow in the grace and knowledge of our savior Jesus Christ." 2 Peter 3:18**

Why is worship important in matters of teaching the Bible? What are reasons given in **Ephesians 4:11-16?**

_____

What are the Bible teachings for worship?

The Bible says we are to observe the Lord's Supper

Why do we observe the Lord's Supper?

Reasons below...

Christ observed the Lord's Supper. He did this as an example for His followers. We are commanded to remember Him.

When Jesus was with His disciples, we read in **Mark 14:22 "While they were eating, He took some bread…" Note:** This bread was Passover bread **(Mark 14:1;12-22).** Note: Passover bread was unleavened bread **(Exodus 12:15).**

Mark 14:22 "…and after a blessing He broke it, and gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is My body." 23 And when He had taken a cup and given thanks, He gave it to them, and they all drank from it. 24 And He said to them, "This is My blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 "Truly I say to you, I will never again drink of the fruit of the vine, (which was grape juice, commonly used in Jewish times for drinking) until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

In the Old Testament God's people were commanded to celebrate the Passover. A lamb was killed in the remembrance of Isreal's deliverance of slavery in Egypt. Christ wants the people of His church to remember their deliverance from the slavery of sin. A different lamb had to die. This lamb took away the sins of the World, through His sacrifice. (**John 1:29**)

We are supposed to follow His spiritual example as Jesus did the Supper, so should. We are supposed to follow Christ. (**1 John 2:6)**

Jesus said the Lord's Supper was necessary for eternal life. We need to eat and drink what spiritually (symbolically) represents Him. (**John 6:53 – 58)**

What does the Bible say about literally drinking blood? **(Acts 15:20)** _____

We are to practice the Lord's Supper in remembrance of His death on the cross.

In **1 Corinthians 11:23-24** what does Jesus say is His body? _____

What did He do with the bread after giving thanks to His Father? _____

Why are we to eat of the bread? _____

*What does **1 Corinthians 11:25-26** say we are to do with the cup?* _____
*The word is the same word testament, when Christ died, He established a new covenant/testament and did away with the old. **(Hebrews 8:6-13)***

Why are we to partake of the cup? _____

What do we proclaim (teach) to others by our example of doing the Lords Supper? _____

The term in the gospels (**Mark 14:22, Matthew 26:26, Luke 22:19**), of Jesus ***"breaking bread"*** is used of the church when they met for worship to remember Christ. (**Acts 20:7 Acts 2:42)**

We need to note this act was not a common meal, (**1 Corinthians 11:20-22;33-34**). This action was a memorial practice to remember Christ, not to fill the belly. Food was meant to be eaten at one's home. The Lords Supper is meant to be a time of spiritual reflection on the cross. We can remember His pain, sorrow, rejection of friends, His mother standing near her Son as He died. We can remember Jesus loving us to be flogged, mocked, beaten, cursed, and nailed to pieces of wood for us. The more we read the gospel stories of what the Savior did, the more we can imagine in detail the great sacrifice that was given for us.

When did the early Christian remember Jesus?

The disciples did the Lord's Supper on each first day of the week. When God establishes a day for remembrance, then on that day, it should be remembered. God's commands are absolute. When God say's don't kill or commit adultery, it is an absolute command. We are to observe these commands all the time. Not just occasionally. The Lord's Supper is the same.

Though we are not under the Old Law today, (**Gal 3:16;19/Col 2:14-17**), we can see examples from the Old Testament. The Jews observed each and every Sabbath, because God said, ***"observe the Sabbath,"*** (**Exodus 20:8**).

God did not say "observe each and every Sabbath." Yet if the Jews neglected this absolute command they died. If they decided to skip a Sabbath, God put them to death, (**Exodus 31:15**). Same with the Feast of weeks, it was to be observed every 7 years, not just on the 7 years, when the Jews felt like observing this festival, (**Leviticus 25:4**).

Changing worship: How do we add to the command to remember Christ in the Lord's Supper? We can add to this command when we add root beer to the Lord's Supper or pizza. How do we subtract from the command to remember Christ in the Lord's Supper? We subtract from this commanded, when the Bible elements, (unleavened bread/fruit of the vine) for the Lord's Supper are removed. We are not to add to God's Word or subtract from it.

The book of Revelation **(Revelation 22:18-19)** mentions we are not to change the oracles within it. Such oracles in this sacred book are the very same themes that are universal in the New Testament in matters of doctrine, faithfulness, salvation, church obedience, judgement and eternity, etc.

What does Revelation say will happen if we add or subtract from God's words? _____

The example of Moses shows us that we are not to change the instructions God has given us. (**Numbers 20:7-12; Numbers 27:12-14)** It's presumptuous, arrogant, and vain to worship God any other way, then the way HE WANTS TO BE HONORED.

What did Moses do? _____

What was the consequences of Moses doing what he wanted to do instead of what God had asked of him? _____

Worship is about God, not us. Church worship is an event about Him.

Here is a good story illustration:

A young boy named Dave, had a Birthday party the following day. Dave told his mom he wanted chocolate cake and no veggies. Dave's mom, Jane, knew that chocolate cake was Dave's favorite cake and that her son hated vegetables.

On the day before the party, Dave also asked his mom, to not invite any clowns. Dave said to his mom, that he was afraid of them. When the mother heard his wishes, she went out and got for the party, strawberry cake, a clown and a salad. Jane got these things because she wanted them. Since the party was for Dave, was this appropriate? Did Jane's actions honor her son's Birthday wishes?

Like Dave, God also has a special event. The Lord's special event is each Sunday. We gather to honor God in worship, by doing what He wants us to do from His Word. Church is not about pleasing our own self interests. Church is about Jesus and doing what He wants from the truth.

If the church belongs to Christ, (**Ephesians 1:22-23**) and was founded by Christ, (**Matthew 16:18-19**), then it should be viewed as His. In **Ephesians 5:25-32** we read of descriptive marriage themes paralleled with Christs church. What ideas are mentioned about the Lord's church and marriage?

_____

The Corinthain church is compared to what by Paul in the Bible? _____
(2 Corinthians 11:2)

In marriage the bride through the centuries have been given her husband's name. If the church is called the bride of Christ should His church not be given His name?

The church is given such terms in the Bible, as the church of Christ, (**Romans 16:16**), and the church of God, (**Acts 20:28**). Note these are not titles, but descriptions of what the church is. The church belongs to Christ/God and thus should be termed as such. Why name Christ's church after some other person, if the church belongs to Jesus? He is the one who purchased the church through His death, (**Acts 20:28**). Find a church that is described as belonging to Christ. Find a church that submits to Christ's truth as the *Bible commands*. **(Ephesians 5:23-24)**

Eldership and Deacons

What the Bible teaches about His church in regard to leaders: The local church in the New Testament is guided in the truth by older men, who are called "Elders." These men are given the name "Bishop" or "Overseer." These names come from the same Greek word **episkopos**. https://biblehub.com/greek/1985.htm This Greek work means **"to oversee."** That is the role of these leaders. They are to look after God's church.

The term "Overseer" and "Bishop" are interchangeable in the Bible. If you read (**1 Timothy 3:2/1 Peter 2:25**) using the King James version, the passages will say, "Bishop." If you read these passages using the New American Standard version, the passages will use the term "Overseer." Different versions will either say one of these words or the other.

In (**Acts 20:17;28-30**) you will read the Elders are called, "Bishops/Overseers." In this passage of Acts, the Elders are also called (**poimén**) **Shepherds**. https://biblehub.com/greek/4165.htm Since a Shephard oversees the flock, such descriptions connect well with one another.

Elders are also called **"Pastors"** (**Ephesians 4:11**). This is a Latin word that has stayed in our Bibles from earlier translations. This Latin word (**parochus**) in English means Shephard. If you read the Bible passage in its **Greek** text, https://biblehub.com/interlinear/ephesians/4-11.htm you will read the original word in this passage is "Shephard." The Bible does not lump the role of a Preacher (Evangelist) with a Pastor. Notice in **Ephesians 4:11**, they are distinct from each other.

As **Acts 20** says, the local church is under the oversight of the Elders of that church, who are to spiritually feed God's church people, (**Acts 20:28-32).** This means the Elders work at a local church. Their relationship role is autonomous/singular to the church. Elders are supposed to guide their *own local church.* They are to guide the sheep in the great Shepherds (Jesus') truth. (**1 Peter 5:1-4**). The Bible says the Elders have a role in guiding their local church in the Bibles teachings.

Acts 20 also says, Elders are to defend against false teaching. They must oppose those who distort the truth. These men are to support the truth. **Notice there is no other leadership governing in the church**, (Popes, Priests, Universal Council, etc.,). The Bible is silent on this. As outlined in past Bible passages we must respect the silence and authority of God's will in scriptures. If the Lord wanted a special council or a man over all the churches/kingdom upon the

earth, don't you think He would have asked for it? Concerning those whom God has mentioned. The Bible tells us that should submit to those (elders) over us in the flock, (**Hebrews 13:17**). Such men are to be honored, (**1 Timothy 5:1**).

We should not add what God has left silent in the matters of His church and worship. **Colossians 3:17** ***"Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name (authority) of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."***

The standards for being an Elder are recorded in the Bible. Elders must meet certain qualifications to be appointed, (**1 Timothy 3:1-7/Titus 1:6-9**). It's important that men meet such qualifications to be accepted in this leadership role over a local congregation. Notice in the book of Titus, an Elder is also called an "Overseer/Bishop." Such qualifications are to have believing faithful children, to be mature in the faith, etc. What are other Bible qualifications the Bible mentions for becoming an elder over a church?

_____

Deacons are often associated with Elders. Deacons are helpers of the Eldership in matters of local church work. They must be appointed, (**Acts 6:1-5).** They too must meet specific Bible qualifications, (**1 Timothy 3:8-12**).

Notes:

Scriptures on instrumental music:

1. **Church Bible teachings:**

Instruments being used is not recorded as a command or shown in the New Testament as an example of church worship. The early church worshipped with songs. (1 Corinthians 14:15) even Christ sung with his disciples when they assembled together when remembering Jesus' upcoming death. What the church does now and is known as the "Lord's Supper." (Matthew 26:26-30) We are commanded to sing in worship, (Colossians 3:15-17/ Ephesians 5:19) but never to "play the instrument."

- Since Jesus commands us to worship Him in "truth and spirit." (John 4:24) And to not add man-made rules to worship, (Matthew 15:8-9) we need to make sure we teach/practice only the council of God (1 Peter 4:11).

- We are not do add to God's gospel (divine good news/revelation) (Galatians 1:6-8) We are not to go beyond the teachings of Christ (2 John 8-9). In matters of singing, and worship we are told to *only* do what Jesus' authority/name has given us the right to do. (Colossians 3:17) The teachings of Christ in the New Testament is our guide in such matters.

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2. What about Old Law examples of instrumental music?

In the Old Law, we read of divinely inspired men, (guided by the Holy Spirit) like King David, (1 Samuel 16:13) who promoted this activity in temple worship (2 Chronicles 7:6). The Holy Spirit showed men (under the Old Law), how to worship by such divinely guided examples. As well as by commandment. For King David also prescribed instruments to be used in worship. (Ezra 3:10-13) Instruments are also frequently mentioned in the inspired Psalms. David even commanded such worship (in Psalms) to be done in the Old Testament. (Psalm 150:1-6) For information about Old Testament teachings on instrumental music see this article this link www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume24/TM024121.html

3. Yet the Bible says we are not under the Old Law, (Colossians 2:14;16/ Ephesians 2:15) This Law is meant to prepare people for when Jesus came. (Galatians 3:23-25) But when Abrahams Seed (Jesus) was born this law was replaced by Christ's truth. (Gal 3:19;16)

If we are under the Old Testament Law of Moses these are the commands, we must follow….

A. If we were the Old Law, we are supposed to circumcise children on the 8th day (Leviticus 12:3). If they failed to do so they would be **"cut off"** from Gods people. This term is used interchangeably with the death penalty, (see upcoming Sabbath examples). Moses failed to follow this command, and God was going to kill him. But his wife circumcised their children, and the punishment did not come. (Exodus 4:24-26)

B. Under the Old Law of Moses, Sabbath rest is commanded under the Fourth Commandment. The Old Law required rest on the Sabbath from routine work (Exodus 20:8-11) including doing any small activities like cooking (Exodus 20:23-25, 29-30), the kindling of fire (Exodus 35:2-3) warranted the death penalty (Exodus 31:14-15). Notice this term **"cut off"** is used interchangeable with the description of receiving the death penalty in this passage.

C. Under the Old Law those who cursed God (Leviticus 24:10-16) and disobeyed parents were put to death. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21/Leviticus 20:9) Under the Old Law we could not eat pork, (Deuteronomy 14:8) or eat seafood, like shrimp, lobster, scallops, oysters. (Leviticus 11:9, 12).

D. Under the Old Law certain feasts were commanded to be observed, like the "feast of weeks," in which all the males are **required to annually travel to Jerusalem** to attend (Exodus 23:14–17; 34:22–23; Deuteronomy 16:16)

The "feast of harvest," had the men commanded to "present an offering of new grain to the Lord" (Leviticus 23:16). This offering was to be "two wave loaves of two-tenths of an ephah" which were made "of fine flour . . . baked with leaven." The offerings were to be made of the first fruits of that harvest (Leviticus 23:17). There are other feasts, but you get the point.

If people are truly faithful to the spirit and letter of a law, they will obey all of it. We either have to obey all the Old Testament Law or none of it. This includes Old Law themes of instrumental music. For 700 years after the church was established, instrumental music in worship was condemned in history.

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4. Secular Church History on instrumental music and singing in worship/church:

The last Apostle, the Apostle John died around 99 AD. Here is the timeline beginning from the earliest secular writings on church worship in matters of singing and instruments in worship. ***Note: We don't follow secular writers as Bible doctrine or look at them as divinely inspired.*** *But these quotes below show in history that instrumental music was not part of church worship from the earliest times of the church all the way through 700 years of history. The first quote is around 50 years after the Apostle John died…*

Early church father quotes:

CLEMENT of ALEXANDRIA (150-215 AD)

“Let the pipe be resigned to the shepherds, and the flute to the superstitious who are engrossed in idolatry. For, in truth, such instruments are to be banished from the banquet [worship – RD]…the one instrument of peace, the Word alone by which we honor God is what we employ. We no longer employ the ancient psaltery, and trumpet, and timbrel, and flute” (Clement, The Instructor, 2:4)

“The Lord fashioned man a beautiful, breathing instrument, after His own image and assuredly He Himself is an all-harmonious instrument of God, melodious and holy, the wisdom that is above this world, the heavenly Word. … the Word of God scorned those lifeless instruments of lyre and cithara. By the power of the Holy Spirit He arranged in harmonious order this great world, yes, and the little world of man too, body and soul together; and on this many-voiced instruments of the universe He makes music to God and sings to the human instrument. “For thou art my harp and my pipe and my temple.” (Clement, Readings p. 62)

EUSEBIUS (260-339 AD)

Eusebius summarizes Christian worship as "The singing of psalms and recitation of other such words as have been given us from God" (Church History X.iii.3).

“The unison voices of Christians would be more acceptable to God than any musical instrument. Accordingly in all the churches of God, united in soul and attitude, with one mind and in agreement of faith and piety we send up a unison melody in the words of the Psalms.” (Commentary on Psalm 91

In his "Commentary on Psalms" he says: “Throughout the world—in cities, in villages, and in the country—in all the churches of God the people of Christ, who have been chosen out of all the nations, send up, not to the native gods nor to demons but to the one God spoken of by the prophets, hymns and psalmody with a loud voice so that the sound of those singing can be heard by those standing outside.”

CHRYSOSTOM (347-407 AD)

“They all met together and in old time and responded to the Psalms in common. This we do also now, but then among all there was one soul and one heart” (Homily XXXVI, On 1 Corinthians, 14:33).
“If one enters the sacred chorus of God, there is no need of a musical instrument…” (Chrysostom, Exposition on the Psalms, 42.2-3; Patrologia Graeca 55:158-159)

There are more quotes throughout history showing that instrumental music was condemned for over 700 years.

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5. When was instrumental music first introduced (during church worship) in history?

A. *The **American Encyclopedia**, volume 12, page 688 states, "**Pope Vitalian** is related to have first introduced organs into some of the churches of Western Europe, about - **670 A.D.**, but the earliest trustworthy account is that of the one sent as a present by the Greek emperor **Constantine Copronymus to Pepin**, King of the Franks in **775."***

B. ***Historically*: It may also surprise many to know that when the various religious denominations were formed, many of their leaders opposed the use of mechanical instruments in worship.** Note: We don't follow such men religiously; we instead must just follow the Bible. but these quotes do give us an idea of the times and the historical view of instrumental music. Such practices of instruments in worship are fairly modern. From the beginning of the church, it took around **700 years** before instrumental music was historically introduced in worship.

- **Martin Luther, reformer and founder of the Lutheran Church**
  Born - 1483, Eisleben, Germany Died: February 18, 1546

  "The organ in the worship of God is an ensign of Baal"

- **John Calvin, founder of the Presbyterian Church**
  Born on July 10, 1509, in Noyon, France, and died on May 27, 1564

  "Musical instruments in celebrating the praises of God would be no more suitable than the burning of incense, the lighting of lamps, and the restoration of the other shadows of the law. The Papists, therefore, have foolishly borrowed this, as well as many other things, from the Jews"

- **John Wesley, founder of the Methodists Church**
  Born on June 28, 1703 (June 17 in the Julian calendar) and died on March 2, 1791

  "I have no objections to the instrument in our chapels, provided they are neither heard nor seen"

- **Charles Spurgeon**
  Born on June 19, 1834, in Kelvedon, Essex, England, and he died on January 31, 1892.

  100 and 50 years ago, this Baptist preacher quoted 1 Corinthians 14:15 and added, "I would as soon pray to God with machinery as to sing to God with machinery."

➢ *Now we don't follow uninspired religious men but the Bible but the reason I'm sharing these quotes is to outline that historically mechanical instruments were not common till recent times.*

Beginning from the Bible when the church began to around 700 years, they were not used at all. Then such practices were mostly ignored till recent times.

Sources:

- https://www.northwestcofc.org/why-does-the-church-of-christ-not-use-mechanical-instruments-of-music-in-worship.html
- https://bethelcornerstone.org/2018/09/10/quotes-on-no-musical-instruments-in-the-church/
- https://www.truthmagazine.com/archives/volume24/TM024121.html

Notes:

Why is their pain, evil and suffering?

Why did Paul receive the messenger from Satan? in **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

_____

Why does God allow adversity from the devil to come into our lives? **(Ps 119:65-72)**

_____

Is God near the broken hearted? **(Psalm 34:18)** _____

What is the purpose of being broken and why is God near those who suffer? What does **James 4:6-8** say about the spirit of what who is being humble? _____

When we suffer and have the right attitude towards our circumstance what does suffering do for us?

_____ **(James 1:2-4)**

God allows for us to suffer to make us more spiritually depended on Him. **(Deuteronomy 8:1-5)**. This is the same passage from Deuteronomy, Christ quotes when tempted by Satan to make bread for food in **Matthew 4:4 "Man does not live on bread alone but on every word that proceeds from the mouth of God."** When we are spiritually seeking to depend on the Lord, we will depend on His Words of truth (the Bible) for nourishment (for our soul), as much as we depend on bread (physical food) for the nourishment of our bodies.

Why do Nations suffer? _____ ***(Psalm 9:15-17)*** *The reason nations face trials is to be drawn closer to God.* ***(Isaiah 26:9)*** *As there is a battle for souls, God also has angels fight the powers of darkness, in battles for nations. The angel Gabriel (in* ***Daniel 9:20-23)*** *mentions this battle. He speaks about Micheal fighting with a demonic Prince when talking to Daniel the prophet in* ***(Daniel 10:1-21)***

When we understand death, we understand the point of life (preparation for eternity)
Wisdom is found where? _____ **(Ecclesiastes 7:4)**
In the prayer of Moses, he asks God to teach us about our shortness of life, so we may gain what? _____ **(Psalms 90:12).**

When we trust God, He will direct our steps. **(Proverbs 3:5-6**). If we seek His truth as our guide **(Psalm 119:105)** In this mindset, the Lord makes a person path/way smooth, when they trust in God and the Word is guiding them. This leads to peace of mind. **(Isaiah 26:3-4;7/Psalm 91:1-2)**

Adversity helps us learn to trust n Him and, in that trust, /faith as we go through trial, we grow. When we persevere under hardship we'll mature and develop in character.

The Bible says to rejoice. Why should we spiritually rejoice when we face hard times? _____**(Roman 5:3-5/ James 1:2-4;12)**

For the saved such persistence proves they are true to their faith. **(1 Peter 1:6-9)**

Bible Example: The Apostles were persecuted for preaching the truth. What abuse happened to the Apostles in this story? _____How did they (emotionally) respond? _____ **(Acts 5:17-42)**

Notes:

How to be living sacrifices to God?

What are the two greatest commandments in the Bible. **(Matthew 22:34-39)** The first command is both in the Old Testament and the New Testament, **(Deuteronomy 6:5)** as is the second command. (**Leviticus 19:18)** That's how important they are.

The first commandment:

How do we love God with all our hearts? Brainstorm examples and ideas on how you can love Him with all your heart.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

When we love one of God's people, we do it to who? When we don't love one of God's saved people within His family, it's the same as not doing it to who? ***(Matthew 25:31-46)***

When you get married, you want someone to love you with all their heart. *Someone who goes to church instead of bars, who stays home to help with the children instead of leaving you to go out partying with friends*. Who will help you and your family to heaven. ***(2 Corinthians 6:14-16)***

- *A person who is faithful to God will be faithful to you. A faithful Bible church is the best place to find a faithful Bible Christian. If you find someone* ***"who seeks the kingdom and God's righteousness first" (Matthew 6:33)****, such a person will be loyal to you as the Bible teaches. When a spouse is faithful to the Lord's house, he will be faithful in your house.* ***(Ephesians 5:21-33)*** *This passage is beautiful. It says: As a man and women are twine in marriage and are to be faithful in body and heart, so are Christians joined with the Lord's body the church. They too are expected to be faithful.*

- *Your marriage partner will seek your best If he honors the Bible and what it teaches as Christians are taught to do. Affairs, lies, and selfishness are what worldly people do. I'm not saying such people will never make mistakes. But if that person follows His Word, that person will respect the marriage vows he made and the teachings Christ has shared on marriage. A church person who follows the Bible will help you*

*not be unequally yoked. **(2 Corinthians 6:14-15)** A Bible church helps the marriage grow; as the family/kids develop spiritually. A supportive group will help each spouse on their journey through life. The church does this by worship, by Bible teaching, by the spiritual encouragement the saints give one another. **(Hebrews 10:24-25)***

How do we love God with all our soul? Brainstorm examples of ideas on how you can love Him with all your soul.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

*Whose spirit was faithfully invested into worship and God? What did Cain and Abel do in worship? **(Genesis 4:1-16)** Why was Cains worship wrong? **(1 John 3:12-14)***

How do we love God with all our minds? Brainstorm examples on ideas on how you can love God with all your mind.

1.

2.

3

4.

5.

*What should we focus our minds on? What should we not forget when times are good and life becomes easy? **(Deuteronomy 6:1-2;6-14)** Christians start at the beginning as spiritual babies and mature, if they faithfully feed **(1 Peter 2:2-3)** This does not happen overnight, growth is a process, but maturity should be the end goal of Christians as they grow. **(Hebrews 5:11-14)** As they are taught and grow, they learn to teach and help others grow.*

Satan wants to fill our minds with fear and worry. But there is peace when we can let go and trust God. ***(Isaiah 26:3/Proverbs 3:5-6)*** *And assurance of His provision and care when we seek first His kingdom* ***(Matthew 6:25-34)***

The new way of offering a burnt sacrifice

In the Old Testament priests offered up bulls, calves, doves and sheep, as sanctifies to God. In the New Testament God's people are called what in **1 Peter 2:4-5**? This passage says that when Christians come together, they become what? What kind of sacrifices are we to offer up? What are His people offering as sacrifices? **(Roman 12:1-3)**

- One way to use our bodies as sacrifices is through the offering of the praise of lips in worship and to do good and help others. **(Hebrews 13:15-16)**

- When we are persecuted and families do not believe or accept us in what we believe, Jesus says for the saved, they will receive what? **(Mark 10:29-30)**

- Love is a foundational step in the steps to spiritual growth **(2 Peter 1:3-11)** We must love people within the household of God fervently. **(1 Peter 1:22-23)** That is what makes assembling together so important. When the world sees such love from spiritual brothers and sisters, Christ says it's a testimony. (**John 13:33-35)**

The church is called God's household, and the right church is a place of truth. **(1 Timothy 3:15)** This is a place where we can follow the command to love saved believers fervently.

Why is this important? We want to help them stay faithful through our support and encouragement. Kind words, a smile, a thoughtful statement, and a considerate deed is fuel for their inner fires that can help keep them motivated, strengthened and blessed.

- What did Jesus do in **John 13:1-17**? The Bible has different meanings for love. We read the word "love" in the English language, but in the Greek each love word can mean something different. In **John 13** this term here in Greek for love which is **"Agape"** love. This word means **selfless, sacrificial, unconditional love.** This is the highest form of love. What does Jesus tell His disciples/Christians to do to each other? Why is this example important? What does **Philippians 2:1-11** say? How are we to emulate Christ's attitude and example?

Think of ways to show love towards God's people in encouraging them when assemble with God's house. **(Hebrews 10:24-25)**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Peter betrayed Jesus verbally 3 times. **(Luke 22:54-62)** After Christs resurrection Peter is eating with Jesus and He asks Peter, **"do you love (Agape) me."** Peter replied **"Yes, Lord I love (Philia) you.** Source: https://biblehub.com/text/john/21-15.htm

"Agape" is sacrificial and unconditional love. "Philia" is affectionate love. In this chapter how many times did Jesus ask this question? Jesus asked do you "Agape" me and each time Peter said, I "Philia" you. Jesus was asking for sacrificial, unconditional commitment. What is the significance of Jesus asking Peter if he loved Jesus three times. Before Jesus was crucified what did Peter do three times? When Jesus accepts Peter after His betrayal, what did Christ ask Peter to do after asking for a sacrificial, agape commitment to love Him? **(John 21:1-25)** How do these questions and this story apply to us spiritually?

How do we follow the second commandment? Who is our neighbor? **(Luke 10:25-37)**

How are ways we can show mercy to others?

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

What is the best way to show compassion for another? (Jude 23) We should do to others as we would want them to do to us. **(Luke 6:31)** Sharing hope with someone is the ultimate way of treating others as we'd want to be treated. Those who do this will shine like what? **(Daniel 12:2-3)** We need to help others find hope, it is necessary for eternal life. **(John 4:31-38 – full evangelism story in John 4:1-42)** Christ-ians are supposed to follow Christ. (**John 8:32**;**1 John 2:6)** And Jesus did evangelism and asks His disciples to do likewise. (**Matthew 4:7-20)** Besides sharing eternity's hope with others, Christians are also to seek to do good to all. Let's read **Galatians 6:7-10** to further explore this concept.

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The Bible says Saints are Wedded to Christ:

Christ is the head of the church. **(Colossians 1:18)** As man is the head of the wife. Christ body is the church.

Let's read….and talk about **(Ephesians 5:21-33**) This passage is beautiful. It says: As a man and women are twine in marriage and are to be faithful in body and heart, so are Christians joined with the Lord's body the church. As man and woman are expected to be faithful to each other, we to are expected to be faithful to Christ (His body).

If we reject Christ for the world, it's like we are cheating on God. God compares it to spiritual adultery. **James 4:1-4; Jeremiah 3:20. More detailed story in Ezekiel 16:4-38**

If your married and your spouse is cheating on you, how well will the lines of communication be between you two? Spiritually speaking if we are still in love with the world, and are spiritually cheating on God, how well will our line of prayerful communication be? Do not love the world…**1 John 2:15-17**

How do we cheat on God? What are ways we can be unfaithful to Him?

A.

B.

C.

D.

E.

Can a church cheat on God? How so? The church is supposed to follow the truth (the Bible) **1 Timothy 3:15**

If a church stops following the Bible, it stops being a church that God recognizes as His. **Revelation 2:4-5** What are the lampstands? **Revelation 1:20**

Relationship, prayerful connection comes through being cleanses of sin and in remaining faithful… to God and His Word.

==========

Besides **"Agape,"** love: What are **Other Bible terms for love:**

- There is **"Storge"** love, which is **dutiful and is connected to feelings an ties of family (earthly or spiritual). It's familial and protective. An instinctive, comfortable love for kindred, household members, and even fellow believers. A bond that withstands hardship.**

  Examples of this form of love: The story of Ruth in the book of Ruth shows what storge love is, between a Mother Naomi and daughter in law, Ruth. This is a short book of 4 small chapters that shows loyalty and the bonds of family. God uses this love to describe His feelings as a divine Father towards His children. **(1 John 3:1)** God asks us to know/connect with His family in order to be able to show them that same family bond of love towards them. **(Ephesians 5:1)** Jesus said that love within the family of God demonstrates to the world those who are Christ's true followers. **(John 13:34-35)**

- There is **"Philia"** love, which is **affectionate, and is based on friendship and the bonds that come from such a connection. This love gives and receives support due to feelings of comradeship and a sense of belonging. This love is not a love for strangers, or people one barely knows. This love is mental and emotional in its understanding of the other person.**

- **Examples of this form of love:** the Bible says God loves us in this way, to the extent of disciplining us when we sin. **(Revelation 3:19)** David and Jonathan were close friends. King Saul was trying to kill David and his son Jonathan helped David time and time again. When David was spiritually discouraged, Jonathan **"strengthened him in the Lord." (1 Samuel 23:16)** In **1 Samuel 18:1**, the Bible says, **"the soul of**

Jonathan was bound to the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul" (ESV) This deep bond led to Jonathan making a covenant (of support) with David **(1 Samuel 18:3)**

- There is **“Eros”** love which is **romantic and passionate**. **Eros love, representing passionate, romantic, physical attraction, isn't directly named in the Bible but is vividly portrayed, especially in the Song of Solomon, celebrating marital intimacy as a gift from God.** Song of Solomon: The entire book is a celebration of passionate, sensual, and romantic love between a husband and wife.

  Examples of this form of love: Genesis 2:24: The creation of Eve and Adam's response ("bone of my bones, flesh of my flesh") signifies the deep, physical, and emotional bond of marriage, to “become one flesh,” which is the proper context for eros. Jesus mentions this joining in talking about marriage in **Matthew 19:4-6.** This love is about fulfilling and nourishing the spouses’ wants and desires. (**1 Corinthians 7:3-5)** The term for one flesh and joining is also connected to the intimacy a Christian is to have with His body (church) as we have read in **Ephesians 5:21-33.** This is a spiritual joining that takes place when we come to worship Him.

  The love story of Jacob & Rachel (**Genesis 29**): Jacob's intense desire and willingness to work for Rachel exemplifies the powerful attraction of new love. In **Genesis 29:20** the Bible says, **“So Jacob worked for seven years to acquire Rachel. But they seemed like only a few days to him because his love for her was so great.” Proverbs 5:18-19:** Encourages husbands to "**rejoice in the wife of your youth,**" celebrating the joy and delight in marital intimacy and faithfulness. This love is about purity in loving only one’s mate and no one else. **(Hebrews 13:4)**

Bible Study is a must to Spiritually Survive

Christian families are dying out:

In the 40's and 50's Christians were known as "walking Bibles." Now days, must Christians don't even know how to defend basic Bible facts. Google "Biblical illiteracy statistics." You will find shocking studies. In the US Country, "only 20 percent of Americans say they've read the entire Bible at least once. And only 22 percent say they systematically read through a section of the Bible a little each day. A third of Americans never read the Bible on their own." (*Source: https://factsandtrends.net/2017/07/10/discipling-in-an-age-of-biblical-illiteracy*)

- The Bible commands us to ***"grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord,"*** (**2 Peter 3:18**). Yet most Christians refrain from maturing in Christ, through actively studying the Word. Many 50-year-old Christians, who've been to church most of their lives...cannot quote a Bible passage, (other than **John 3:16**). Must Christians tend to just reserve reading the Bible, to Sunday sermons and Wednesday night Bible studies. If such Christians bother to attend faithfully, to study the Word, they will get on average, less than 3 hrs. of Bible study, a week. Which is not much.

- Many Christians eat more meals, sleep more, watch more TV, do more hygiene, do more recreation, etc., then they tend to their souls. How messed up is that. Most Christians can't defend the convictions they hold with scripture, not even if they have a Bible in hand. Yet this is what God expects of His people. **(1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:15)**

- Many families are losing their children to the world, in their teenage years. Parents fail to study regularly with their families. Many parents tend to reserve such Bible training to the church. Grounding our kids, in the Word must include our personal accountability to teach them.

Reasons to Study:

We need to study to better discern what is right and wrong. Many saints have been in the church for years, yet don't know enough to teach others the truth. Such people don't know the deep truths. They need to continue in the basics, due to lack of progressive/regular study.

In **Hebrews 5:12-14**, the Bible says once we mature in the Word, we are spiritually ready to be what? _____

What types of foods does the Bible use to explain spiritual growth? _____

How are we able to begin discerning what is right and wrong? _____

Self-analysis:

Am I doing what I should in Bible study?

When people go to church, to hear a sermon or engage in a Bible study, they partake of 2-4 Bible teachings a week, if that. Which is not a lot. Let me ask you a question. Do you only eat two to four times a week in meals? No, of course not! You'd get frail and slowly die! You'd starve to death. Would you only feed your kids 2-4 meals a week? No, you'd have childcare come knocking at your door.

In the Bible we read that His truth is necessary as spiritual milk for us to grow by. As beginning Christians, the Bible says we need to do what?

(**1 Peter 2:2-3)** _____

We will read passages, that say the Bible is compared to food. God says we need to depend not only on bread but on the Word for our wellbeing. If we need to eat daily to thrive physically, should we not expect our spirits of needing regular spiritual nourishment, as well? We must feed the mind.

When the Israelites where traveling in the wilderness what was God trying to get them to depend on? Why was He humbling the Jews? _____ **(Deuteronomy 8:3)**

God calls His Word food. What do the following verses say about how our response should be to His Word?

_____ **(Jeremiah 15:16; Psalm 119:103)**

We should enjoy partaking in His spiritual food. It should be sweet to our spiritual tastes. His truth should be our delight and joy. God's Word should be treasured. We should value His truth more than anything in this world.

How does Job describe the words of God in **Job 23:12?** _____

The Bible says its message, is more important than food. Food, (like oxygen and water), is necessary for our physical survival. As with food, God says we need His spiritual Word, for our spiritual survival. The body fades the spirit is eternal, which food is more important? The Bible is our most necessary food for in it is our souls welfare.

Spiritual famine

God punished the Israelites for repeatedly rejecting Him and the Word. He refused to give them eat the truth. The very thing they had refused to accept. What happened to them **in Hosea 8:11-13?** _____

Many people are starving themselves to death, spiritually. How can a spouse or a parent willingly bring about a famine in his/her household? Yet many families are starving to death.

Complete diet

People may hear the truth but still get an incomplete spiritual diet. If we don't read our Bibles and are sitting at the feet of inept teachers and preachers, we are not getting the whole council/message of God.

People need all of the Bible food groups. If you ate only bread, would that be healthy? If you ate only nuts would that be healthy? You get the point. We need a well balance diet.

We need all of the teachings of truth, not sectioned out parts.

Here are scriptures that talk on this point: Did Paul the Apostle teach only parts of the Word of God or all of the council (or purpose) of God? _____ **(Acts 20:27)**

What was the prophet Jeremiah told to preach? _____ (**Jeramiah 26:2)**

What were the Apostles commanded to preach? _____ (**Acts 5:20)**

By offering half a message, (instead of the whole truth) we get a watered-down message. Such teachings contribute to the dumbing down of a local church. When such saints become weak due to poor congregational sources of education, they lose strength (of conviction) in their beliefs. Weak beliefs create weak lifestyle practices from the Word. With time such people stop coming to church all together. Those that are largely dependent on others for Bible teaching, will die spiritually. Allowing ourselves to become emaciated on a poor spiritual diet, only leads to death.

We must not allow ourselves to starve to death. We need to be holding onto the Word and know what is sound in doctrine (complete truth) and what is error, (watered down, distorted truth). (**Titus 1:9; Ephesians 4:13-14)**

We need to know the Bible, to know what truth is and what is a distorted half message. If we only listen to others and depend solely on them, we are in danger of being led astray. How to rectify this? When it comes to families, we must daily teach our kids. Don't put it all on the preacher and Bible class teachers.

Teach your families

Timothy was raised in a home of faith, (**2 Timothy 1:5**). He was trained in the Word from childhood. What did Timothys learning of the scriptures give him in matters of salvation? _____ (**2 Timothy 3:14-15)**

Training children was commanded of the Israelites so future generations would be faithful to God… (Deuteronomy 6:5-9) Yet, Isreal failed to do this, and the people turned away from the Lord to live in lifestyles of wickedness. **(Judges 2:10-15)**

Why was Abraham picked by God? What was he expected to do with his family? _____ This was required of the Patriarch, for receiving the promises of the Lord. **(Genesis 18:18-19)**

Christians Fathers are told to instruct their families in the Word. **(Ephesians 6:4)**

But how can we train our families if we don't first train ourselves? We need to impress the message of truth on our hearts and minds. We can't do that without regular Bible study. We should know the Word so well, that it's as if we are literally carrying the truth on us. Only when we know the truth can we teach it to our children.

How often should we teach our children the words of the Lord? _____ **(Deuteronomy 11:18-19)**

Personal review:

Am I studying the Bible like I should? _____

To grow in the Word, we need to make study a priority. This behavior is a must for our spiritual growth in life.

Let us read the Bible daily.

Notice, the mark of the wise man. He avoids evil influences and delights in God's truth. How often does this person eat the word daily? _____ ***(Psalm 1:1-3)***

People who are always in the Word will be people who talk about the Word to those they love, (spouse, family, etc.) People who read the Word, will be strengthened to observe what is written therein. We become what we feed our minds.

In **Joshua 1:8,** what was on Joshua's mouth regularly? **_____**

How does this connect to **Luke 6:45? _____**

Why does God ask Joshua to meditate on the Word, day and night?

_____

Have the Word to overcome the Devil

In order to know God, we need to know His words. We need to have His Word abide in us to overcome Satan's influence. How do we overcome the evil one? What does the Apostle John say to the young men?

_____ (**1 John 2:12-14)**

Consistent Bible study is a must!

In the book of Timothy, the Apostle Paul writes in **1 Timothy 4:16,** teachings about Bible study.

In this epistle what are we to watch closely? _____

What will this ensure? _____

To look at God's truth intently and to avoid forgetting His words, we need to make Bible study a regular priority. Such people who are intent on the Word, will find blessing within the Word.

What does **James 1:23-25** compare the Bible to? _____

How does this passage say we will be blessed in our Bible studies

_____

Bible study is a must to know Jesus' truth and His precious promises.

We must know His Word to live a godly life. We must know what God teaches to escape the evils of this world by living that godly life. What does **2 Peter 1:3-4** say we have through the knowledge of Christ? _____

How does the promises within the Bible about Jesus help us?

_____

Knowledge is part of our spiritual growth

Read **2 Peter 1:5-11**. What do these verses say?

_____

Here are some more thoughts on these verses to explore, read again, discuss. We must study to grow in the aspects of Bible character, (self-control, perseveres, etc. **vs 5-7**). We must study to grow, to be effective in the truth on the Word, (**vs 8**). We must study to grow, to avoid atrophy. Study and maturity will help us to not forget what God has done for us, (**vs 9**). When we study to grow, to better ensure our calling, (**vs 10-11**).

We need to place the truth within us, through study the Bible, to avoid the pitfalls of slipping into sin. (**Palms 37:31; Psalms 119:11)** This statement is true, when Peter says, **"Lord you have the words of eternal life." John 6:68 Let's** eat daily and let Gods word feed our spirit as we journey through this world to eternity.

Notes*:*

Closing of this lesson material:

Thank you for your interest in spiritual issues. It's rare and it speaks highly of you. These lessons are great for further reflection and for use in future studies with people you meet. Many ideas (within this book) relate to people who seek answers on topics of church and salvation. Many core Bible passages are outlined in this book on vital topics.

Feel free to print part or the whole lesson book to use as you wish. Feel free to distribute (for free) this content. There is no copyright. All glory goes to our Heavenly Father in this written work as well as praise to those who have helped in the creation of this work.

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https://www.biblestudycourseonline.com

Bible study materials:

In matters of Bible truth, I encourage you to find helpful Bible study resources to use in your Bible studies. I will list some excellent ones below.

- ### *Muscle and Shovel*

  This book is a story of a man's life finding God. Michael records the Bible studies he had that transformed him. This is one of the best books I've read in helping me with my Bible studies. For those who want to grow, I recommend this material.

  https://www.michaelshankministries.com

- ### *Big Picture*

  This book goes through the Old Testament to the New Testament, unifying a divine message of Gods overall "Big Picture" theme for our lives. My second favorite Bible study book next to Muscle and Shovel.

  https://www.amazon.com/Big-Picture-Bible-Kenneth-Craig/dp

For more books I've written, and other excellent Bible study books written by evangelists and Bible scholars, please see my online website www.churchofchristevangelism.com

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A special thank you to my parents Bill and Jeanne Sullivan: The phrase "You train a household; you train generations," is true. What parents have taught their children lives on in grandchildren and into the future legacies of faith. Mom and Dad invested much into their family by being active in training me and my brothers. I am indebted to their years of commitment to the truth and their love towards our Lord. They lived the gospel and showed us what Christlike attitudes should be in how to treat others in the ways of peace and forgiveness.

I pray this Bible lesson has blessed you.

Many warm wishes to you.

- **Joseph Sullivan**