

THE CHURCH OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

LESSON NUMBER 1

THE PATTERN OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

INTRODUCTION

God has designed the church. It has a distinct identity. Without identifying characteristics the church could not be recognized by those searching for it, nor could it be reproduced in the earth, nor could it be distinguished from false organizations. Identity precludes the idea that the church could be anything one might wish. It is a unique institution bearing upon itself a certain identity by which it is easily distinguished from any variation from the divine pattern, and that pattern is revealed to us in the New Testament.

I. THE PATTERN DEFINED

The language of the New Testament writers was Greek. Often a word must be defined from that language if its importance and meaning are to be established.

A. From the Greek

TOPOS is the Greek word translated “pattern” or “form” in the New Testament. It can be thought of as a mould into which one pours lead, and each image produced looks identical. As patterns have identities, all things coming from the same pattern look alike.

B. Illustration from the Bible

The word **TUPOS** is used in the book of Hebrews, when speaking of Moses. God warns him concerning the tabernacle to be certain that all things are made “*according to the pattern that was showed thee on the mount.*” (Heb. 8:5). It is also used to instruct the evangelist, saying, “*in all things showing yourself an pattern of good works*”(Tit. 2:7).

The meaning should be obvious. God wanted that tabernacle to be made a certain way and so gave the pattern for it. He gave the design or the blueprint for that structure, and the apostle Paul said that the evangelist’s life is to be a pattern of Christian living for others to imitate.

Remember, a pattern is a design for others to imitate. So if we are to be New Testament Christians, reproducing the New Testament church, there must be a New Testament pattern to imitate. Just as God gave a blueprint for the pattern of the tabernacle, He has given a blueprint for the church as contained in His word, through the pages of the New Testament. Any deviation from that pattern automatically renders it as being a church different from that specified by God, and the institutors and followers are not only disobedient to God and His wishes but had established a church other than the church which Christ built. (Matt. 16:18).

II. EXAMPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT PATTERNS

A. The distinct identity of New Testament doctrine

The following illustrations should sufficiently demonstrate, that New Testament doctrine can be recognized from the Bible and be reproduced today.

1. THAT FORM OF TEACHING. Paul writes to the church in Rome and says, “*you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. “and having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.”* (Rom. 6:17,18). The fact that this “*form of teaching*” has identity is considered in the word “*form*” which is translated from the Greek word **TUPOS**. That makes it a pattern easy to be recognized and imitated. Further, its singularity is pointed out when Paul said they obeyed “*that form of doctrine.*” That is, that particular form. No other form can be taught and still teach “*that*” form.

2. THE TRUTH. Our Lord said, “*you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free*” (John 8:32). That “*truth*” is not truth in general. There is much truth in the Bible. Moses crossed the Red Sea dry-shod. That is the truth, but it is not the truth that Jesus was talking of which makes us free. That “*truth*” which makes us free from sin is a distinct body of truth. Peter wrote, “*seeing you have purified your souls in obeying the truth*” (1 Pet. 1:22). Here is a truth that can be obeyed. Not all truth can be obeyed, but this particular body of truth can be, and Jesus says you shall “*know*” it. You cannot obey what you do not know, therefore, this truth can be known, distinguished from all error, and be obeyed. This truth has an identity which will not leave us in doubt.

3. THE FAITH. As a fully developed system of religion, Christianity is often distinguished in scripture under the title of “*the faith.*” The New Testament speaks of “*the faith*” as both singular and distinctive. So distinctive is the Christian faith that it can be preached, heard and obeyed with certainty (Gal. 1:23; Acts 24:24; 6:7). Christians are exhorted to “*contend earnestly for the faith*” (Jude 3). Paul commanded the church to “*strive for the faith of the gospel*” (Phil. 1:27). “*The faith*” and “*the gospel*” suggest that there is only one faith and one gospel, and the New Testament affirms that there is only “*one faith*” (Eph. 4:5). If the Christian faith is not one unchanging system of religious truth it is absurd to talk about obeying it and contending for it, if it did not have a distinctive doctrinal identity.

The New Testament further teaches that God provided so that we can “*all attain unto the unity of the faith*” (Eph. 4:13). It is not merely stated that we are to attain unto “*a*” unity of some sort or other, nor does it teach that there is “*a*” unity in diversity, but rather that we are *all* to “*attain to the unity of the faith.*” In order to attain unto the particular unity of which Paul spoke we must be able to identify the particular faith of which he spoke. In order for that faith to produce a unity for all believers it must have certain distinctive elements which are both absolute and attainable, and which make “*the*” faith essentially what it is. As many as accept these elements of “*the*” faith, and practice them as revealed in the word of God, will attain unto the unity of that New Testament faith.

This should convince the honest mind that Christianity is not anything and everything that we want to make it. It is not reasonable to think of the Christian religion as presented in the New Testament as indistinguishable, varied, without definite form. Its identity, its unchangeable truth, its constant

sameness is the great abiding principle by which pure New Testament Christianity **can** be and **must** be reproduced in every age till the end of time. This is the principle of restoration, to restore the church of the New Testament.

B. The apostolic pattern. The following is from a single book in the New Testament, the book of first Corinthians. It should be all the more convincing that Christianity follows a pattern designed by God and revealed in His word, by holy men of God who wrote as the Holy Spirit moved them, when it is observed that the apostle Paul seeks to establish once and for all his authority as an apostle in the church of our Lord, and insists that all Christians imitate him even as he imitated Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 11:1).

1. 1 Cor. 1:10. The apostle opens the first argument in this epistle with this imperative, *“now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”* This phrase *“by the name of”* is not a formula of words. It means *“by the authority of.”* Hence, it carries with it the force of a command. The following is not merely a suggestion, it is an apostolic command. The command is that all of God’s people speak the same thing. Different people in the body of Christ, cannot speak the same thing unless they all speak ONE thing. That ONE thing becomes the common ground from which all their speaking, thinking and deciding, is derived. That becomes a pattern.

2. 1 Cor. 4:17. *“For this reason I have sent Timothy to you, who is my beloved and faithful son in the Lord, who will remind you of my ways in Christ, as I teach everywhere in every church.”* Notice that Paul says *“my ways”* that is, his apostolic ways. The church is reminded of the apostles ways, and he is careful to stress *“which I teach everywhere in every church.”* What he taught in the Corinthian church was no different to what he taught in the Ephesian church. There is no difference in the doctrine of each church, every church has the same doctrine. This establishes a pattern.

PATTERNS ESTABLISH IDENTITY

3. 1 Cor. 7:17. *“and so ordain I in all the churches.”* It is not our purpose here at this time to discuss what Paul ordained. But that what he ordained was ordained in all the congregations of the Lord’s church throughout the world. All churches come under this common obligation. A pattern is thus observed.

4. 1 Cor. 14:33,34. *“s in all the churches of the saints, let the women keep silence.”* An identifiable doctrine and practice is established in the apostolic church.

5. 1 Cor. 16:1,2. *“Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given orders to the churches of Galatia, so you must do also: On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collections when I come.”* Here is an unmistakable pattern for the church. *“s I gave order to the churches..... so you must do also.”*

This is the pattern for ANY person who will come to the Lord through reading the New Testament. The apostle lays it down in **1 Cor. 14:37** that, *“If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord.”* What is written by the apostle by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit becomes a command for ANY person who

would belong to the Lord.

He undergirds the necessity of retaining and reproducing the apostle's pattern with the following words: "*Learn not to go beyond that which is written.*" (1 Cor. 4:6) What is written is the Lord's command, and men are not to go beyond that which is written in the word of God.

It would seem that this fact alone would cause men to accept the fact of the pattern which God has designed for His church to follow.

C. The preacher's charge. To the evangelist comes this commandment: "*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia-- remain in Ephesus that you may charge some that they teach no other doctrine.*" (1 Tim. 1:3). An obligation of the evangelist is that he charge men not to teach another doctrine. In the name of everything that is logical and reasonable, how could one doctrine possibly be as good as another, and yet at the same time the evangelist fulfill this God given charge? Unless the evangelist can measure his teaching against the teaching in the New Testament and know that they are the same, he cannot obey this command. To charge men not to teach a different doctrine, there must be a pattern by which the evangelist can tell the difference. That pattern is the truth which is to be defended against error, but such a pattern of the doctrine insists upon distinctiveness and identity in the gospel.

D. The charge to the church. In his second epistle to Timothy, Paul writes, "*hold fast the pattern of sound words*" (2 Tim. 1:13). In the letters to the evangelist there are a number of instructions to be passed onto the church, as in this case. The apostle clearly commands the church to hold fast the pattern of sound apostolic words. Thus the sound words of the apostles form themselves into distinct doctrines which can be categorized and identified; such as, the doctrine of atonement, the law of pardon and induction into the church, the organizational structure of the church, the worship of the church, the work of the church and so on. The church is expected to identify these doctrines and hold on to them by practice and preaching. Once again a pattern is obviously revealed as essential to New Testament Christianity. See also Gal. 1:6-9. This is the principle of restoration.

E. The word of God is like seed. In Luke 8:4-15, Jesus told the parable of the sower. He speaks of seed falling into different kinds of soils, which He likens to the hearts of men. Then in revealing the parable to His disciples, He declared, "*the seed is the word of God.*" We all know that seed brings forth after its kind (Gen. 1:11,12). Never have apple seeds brought forth oranges, nor have monkeys given birth to eagles. Without exception, you can rely on the word of God to bring forth after its kind. When the word of Christ is sown in the hearts of men, it will bring forth Christians, not denominationalists. It will produce the church in the New Testament. It will ever produce after its kind. Hence the word of God cannot produce two different churches or two different kinds of Christians. One church with one Spirit having one hope, with one Lord, one faith and one baptism, because there is only one God, sowing the seed of the kingdom will only produce Christians. All other churches with different doctrines are man made institutions and not sanctioned by God, and their doctrine makes void the word of God (Matt. 15:6).

CONCLUSION

It becomes obvious through scripture that New Testament Christianity possesses a distinct identity. It is through the study of the identity of the church that recognition and reproduction of the original first century church of Jesus Christ can be accomplished at any time anywhere in the world.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 1

THE PATTERN OF NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTIANITY

1. What was the language that the New Testament was written in? _____

2. Define the word TUPOS _____

3. In Heb. 8:5, what did Paul say that God warned Moses to do? _____

4. In Tit. 2:7, what is the evangelist instructed to do? _____

5. Did God design the tabernacle? _____
6. Did the tabernacle have a specific pattern? _____
7. Has God designed the church? _____
8. Does the church have a distinctive pattern? _____
9. Can Christianity be distinctively identified? _____
10. If Christianity is distinctive can error be identified? _____
11. In Rom. 6:17,18, what was obeyed from the heart? _____

12. What body of truth was Jesus talking about in John 8:32? _____

13. How many faiths does the bible speak about? _____
14. How many gospels does the New Testament contain? _____

15. Can unity exist where one church teaches one thing and another church teaches another on the same subject? _____
16. List five references in the book of first Corinthians that show an apostolic pattern.

17. What did Paul tell the church to speak? _____
18. How was their mind and judgment to be? _____
19. By whose authority did Paul write these things? _____
20. Can two people say different things and still be the same? _____
21. Did the apostle Paul teach the same thing in every church? _____
22. In the Lord's church can there be a difference in doctrine from congregation to congregation and still have unity? _____
23. How many congregations were to let the women keep silence in the assembly? _____
24. How many churches were to lay by in store as they had prospered on the first day of the week?

25. What did the apostle Paul say regarding the things that he wrote? _____

26. What should we learn not to do? _____
27. What is the charge to the evangelist? _____

28. What is the charge to the church? _____

29. The Bible tells us that seed brings forth after its kind. What is the seed that Jesus was referring to in the parable of the sower? _____
30. Can the seed of a denominational doctrine make one a Christian? _____

31. Did God institute denominationalism? _____

32. In what way do patterns establish identity? _____

LESSON NUMBER 2

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH

INTRODUCTION

When the New Testament speaks of the church it speaks of all the saved people in the earth. It tells of the people of Christ. This study seeks to analyse what the church is and how people become a member of the New Testament church.

I. WHAT THE CHURCH IS NOT : TRADITIONAL DENOMINATIONALISM

Through the centuries religious traditions gather to themselves the force of law and bind themselves upon men's minds and hearts like chains. Truth has often been rejected for tradition. Christ says this will happen, "*you have made void the word of God by your own tradition*" (Matt. 15:6). The Lord goes on to say in verse 9 that the practice of such man-made doctrines is worthless (see also Mk. 7:6-9).

A. Traditional views of the church. To many the church is a religious meeting house, that is a church building (brick and mortar), but the Bible never speaks of the church as a material house. It is stated in Acts 11:22, "*then news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as "Antioch."*" Notice that the church has "*ears.*" A material building does not have ears. People have ears. It is recorded that "*they sent forth Barnabas.*" Who is the they? They who made up the church whose ears received the news. The church is people.

Man-made traditions have also viewed the church as being composed of many different religious groups, each teaching different religious doctrines. Each group is called a denomination. A denominational church is distinguished from all other denominations by its particular doctrine. Many, perhaps most, think of the church of Christ as composed of all of these differing denominations, but the following will demonstrate that the Bible opposes such a concept.

B. Denominational tradition opposes:

1. Christ's prayer for the unity of all believers. "*I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.*" [emphasis mine - gwh] (John 17:20,21). If all who believe on Jesus Christ are one, they cannot be different. They must be one in what they believe and in what they say and in what they practice. This is the only way men can be one religiously. Also the Lord's definition of unity is based upon believers being one as Christ and the Father are one.

2. The apostolic teaching. "*Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, "ND TH" T THERE BE NO DIVISIONS "MONG YOU, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*" [emphasis mine - gwh] (1 Cor. 1:10). These words are written to the church which is at Corinth (1 Cor. 1:2). The apostle Paul

condemns division in the Lord's church. Willful practice of traditional doctrines of human origin, which divide believers, rejects this commandment.

3. The Bible basis for achieving and maintaining the unity of the church.

The New Testament teaches in Eph. 4:4-6 that there is just one church (which is the body of Christ, see Eph. 1:22,23), one Spirit, one hope for the church, one Lord, one faith, one baptism and only one God. If men would let the New Testament tell them WHAT the church is, and WHAT the hope of the church is, and WHO the Lord is, and define WHAT the faith is, and WHAT that baptism is, etc., then accept it, we could all be one in what we believe and what we speak and what we practice. We could achieve religious unity and maintain it.

How do people find their way out of the maze of denominational confusion? While the answer may seem somewhat over-simplified, it is nevertheless has the answer: so it's back to the Bible. To be a New Testament church it must be reproduced after the New Testament pattern.

II. WHAT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST IS

This study is intended to present the church of the New Testament from the vantage point of its distinctive identity. That identity is to be found only in the New Testament revelation of God's word. It is to that word that we now go to for this study.

A. The word CHURCH.

1. Definition. EKKLESIA is the Greek word for church. A Greek dictionary of New Testament words by W.E.Vine says it is from *ek*, meaning "out of" and from *klesis*, meaning "a calling." Hence, the church is composed of the called out.

2. To the Greeks, the EKKLESIA was an assembly of people which were called out of their homes and businesses into a political assembly to discuss affairs of state or civic matters. It is also used by Luke in Acts 19:39 where it is translated *assembly*. It is also used of a non-political gathering of craftsmen whom Demetrius gathered together in Acts 19:24,25. This gathering of people was also called by Luke *the assembly* (Acts 19:32). Thus EKKLESIA embraces the idea of a group of people.

3. In Matt. 16:18 our Lord used the term EKKLESIA when He said, "*upon this rock I will build My church.*" In the following it will be shown that what Jesus meant is that He will, by His gospel, call out from the world, a group of people whom He would save from their sins through obedience.

B. What the church is.

Scripture is its own best interpreter. The scriptures reveal with clarity that the church is:

1. The saved from sin (Matt. 1:21; Acts 2:47). As soon as one is saved, the Lord adds him to His own church. Can one be saved without being in the church? How is that possible when the saved are immediately added to it?

2. Those purchased with the blood of Christ (Acts 20:28). Jesus' blood was shed for the

forgiveness of our sins (Matt. 26:28). We have our redemption from sin through His blood (Eph. 1:7; 1 Pet. 1:18,19). We are washed from our sins by His blood (Rev. 1:5). Yet the blood was shed to purchase the church, says the New Testament. Therefore, the church comprises all who have been forgiven, redeemed, washed, or saved by the blood of Christ.

3. The sanctified (1 Cor. 1:1,2). Paul addresses his epistle *“To the church of God which is at Corinth, to those who are sanctified in Christ Jesus.”* Can one be saved without being sanctified? However, the church is the sanctified, says the apostle.

4. The body of Christ (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,24). In these verses the apostle speaks of the church as the spiritual body of Christ on earth over which He is the head. He commands, through His word, and the church obeys. This body is the fulness of Christ on the earth.

5. The body of the reconciled (Eph. 2:16). The body and the church are the one and the same, the New Testament says (Eph. 1:22,23; Col. 1:18,24). Paul declares that God gave Jesus *“to be head over all things to THE CHURCH, WHICH IS HIS BODY.”* [emphasis mine - gwh] Then he records that Christ reconciles Jews and Gentiles *in one body*. It is IN THE BODY (or the church) that we are reconciled.

RECONCILIATION : To reconcile means to erase the enmity or estrangement between parties and **restore friendship**. Christ reconciles by His blood (Col. 1:21,22). However, WHEN He reconciles through His blood, He does it IN THE BODY, which is His church. So WHEN a sinner is reconciled by the blood of Christ, it is IN the church. Outside of the church there can be no **restoration of friendship** with God.

6. Christ’s spiritual wife (Eph. 5:22-32). Paul’s instructions to the church in Ephesus concerns the relationship which Christian wives and husbands sustain to each other because of their relation to Christ. Then he concludes *“this mystery is great, but I speak in regard of Christ and the church”* (v32). To the Corinthian church, Paul wrote, *“I espoused you to one husband that I might present you as a pure virgin to Christ”* (2 Cor. 11:2). There can be no doubt that the church of the New Testament is the bride of Christ. Can one be saved and not be married to Christ?

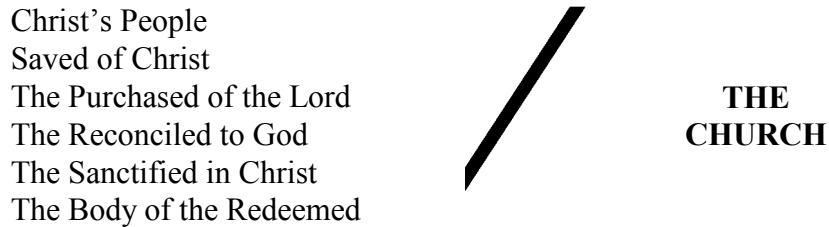
7. Those who are spiritually in God (1 Thess. 1:1,2; 2 Thess. 1:1). A church is a body of people. The church of Christ is that body of people who are spiritually in God, declares the apostle.

8. The enrolled in heaven (Heb. 12:22,23). The Hebrew writer speaks of *“the church of the firstborn.”* In the Greek language, the word *“firstborn”* is plural, meaning *“firstborn ones.”* In other words, the church is that group of people, who, because of Christ, sustain a prime relation with God, who has enrolled them for residence in heaven. See also Phil. 4:3.

9. The institution in which God will be eternally glorified (Eph. 3:21). We must be in the church if we are to glorify God. In it, both now and throughout eternity, we will glorify God.

To speak of the church of Christ is not to call the name of a denomination. Neither is it the name of the Lord’s church, seeing as God has not given one specific name to His body, the church, but has given many names to describe its designation of relationship. The church of Christ is the church which belongs to Christ. It is Christ’s church, Christ’s people. The church of Christ is the saved of

Christ, the purchased people of God, the reconciled of the Lord, the sanctified in Christ Jesus, the body of the redeemed by blood. The church of Christ is all the saved people of Christ in every place.



Notice carefully. The New Testament says nothing about being saved first, and later joining a denomination of your choice. You cannot join the church of Christ. You are added to it by the Lord Himself, immediately upon being saved. You are reconciled in it immediately upon being reconciled by Christ's blood. When you are set apart (that is the meaning of sanctified), you are set in the church.

The undenominational nature of the New Testament church. In summing up the forgoing, we conclude that the church is not part of the whole. It is rather the whole body of Christ. It is the entire body of believers in Christ, whose faith and practice is patterned after the New Testament order. By its very design, the church of Christ cannot be a denomination.

C. The church universal and the church local. The word "church" is used in the New Testament of the church in its entirety, as made up of all Christians in every place. Such scriptures as Matt. 16:18; 1 Cor. 10:32; Eph. 1:22,23; 5:23; 1 Tim. 3:15 and others show from their context the universal inclusiveness of the word church as used therein. There is, then, the church universal.

There is also a more restricted use of the term. It is used of a local congregation of Christians in a particular city, such as 1 Cor. 1:1,2 when Paul wrote to the church at Corinth, or to a number of congregations in different places, such as "*the churches of Galatia*" (Gal. 1:2), or "*the churches of Judea*" (Gal. 1:22). "*The seven churches of Asia*" (Rev. 1:4), can be included in this category. These are but local congregations of the church universal, located here and there. The apostle Paul included every local church of the Lord throughout the world in his day when he said "*the churches of Christ salute you*" (Rom. 16:16). There is also, then, the local church.

There should be no difficulty in determining which is local and which is universal. The context itself declares it.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 2

HOW TO BECOME A MEMBER OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. What did Jesus say to the Pharisees concerning their traditions? _____

2. What is the traditional view of the church? _____

3. Paul said that the church in Jerusalem had ears. Was he referring to a building or something else?

4. Is the church the sum of all the different religious denominations? _____

5. How many churches did Christ establish? _____

6. In the garden when Jesus was praying to the Father, what was His request for the church?

7. The word denomination has its root in Latin from where we get the English word denominator, when working with fractions. Hence common denominator. What would you say the word denomination means? _____

8. What did the apostle Paul say about division in 1 Cor 1:10? _____

9. If there are two churches both teaching different things, are they both of the same mind and the same judgment? _____

10. Can one faith produce more than one church? _____

11. Does the New Testament give us a pattern for achieving and maintaining unity? _____

12. What does the Greek word EKKLESIA mean? _____

13. Jesus used the word in Matt. 16:18. What did He say? _____

14. Whose church is it? _____

15. List nine things that characterize the church.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

(f) _____

(g) _____

(h) _____

(i) _____

16. What did the Lord do to those who were saved? _____

17. How are our sins washed away? _____

18. Paul says that we are sanctified IN Christ. What does sanctification mean? _____

19. In Eph. 1:22,23, what does Paul refer to the body as being the same as? _____

20. We are reconciled to God through obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ. What does the word reconcile mean?

21. If one is reconciled to God in obedience to the gospel of Jesus Christ, discuss how this refutes the doctrine of total heredity depravity (babies born in sin). _____

22. Can one be reconciled to God outside of the church? _____

23. From Eph. 5:22-32 and 2 Cor. 11:2, what is the relationship of the church to Christ? _____

24. Where are all spiritual blessings? _____

25. When we become children of God where are our names enrolled? _____

26. Where will God be eternally glorified? _____

27. What is the universal church? _____

28. What is the local church? _____

29. In referring to all the local churches throughout the world, in Rom. 16:16, what did he say?

30. Can you join the church of Christ? _____

LESSON NUMBER 3

III. HOW PEOPLE BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

To speak of the church is to speak of a group of people. When one person is saved, he is added to the church. When a group of people are saved, they are also, as individuals, added to the church. To become the church of Christ, a local congregation, a group of people must be saved and then be added to the church by the Lord, and then work and worship together. However, the emphasis in this lesson shall be placed on how one is saved. The reasoning is as follows:-

1. Men are saved from sin.
2. But saved men are added to the church (universal).
3. Therefore whatever is required to save, is just what is required to make the church.

A. The law of pardon and induction into the church. The New Testament teaches that when one obeys a particular form of doctrine, he is saved, and that he is immediately added to the church. Thus that particular form of doctrine becomes a law of pardon and induction into the church. This is seen in the following:-

1. Salvation is from sin (Matt. 1:21; Lk. 19:10; 1 Tim. 1:15).
2. The church is all the saved (Acts. 2:47; Eph. 2:16; 5:23). It is the same to be made free from sin. See John 8:32,36.
3. But one is saved or made free from sin when he obeys "*from the heart that form of teaching delivered*" him (Rom. 6:17,18). It is clear from this passage of scripture, that a sinner is made free from sin WHEN he obeys from the heart that particular pattern of teaching.

Inasmuch as the church comprises those who have been freed from their sins, and sinners are made free from sins when they obey "*that form of doctrine,*" it follows that the form of doctrine which man obeys is the law of pardon and induction into the church.

Hence to become a New Testament church, men must obey that particular form of doctrine. Without that particular form of doctrine, that particular church cannot become the church of the Lord. That one (singular) form of doctrine is required to produce that one New Testament church.

B. The law of pardon and identity of the New Testament church. The first mark of the church's identity is its teaching concerning what man must obey to be made free from sin. If that teaching is exactly what a man in the New Testament obeyed to be made free, then that identifies it as the church of Christ, inasmuch as the Lord adds such to His church. The same reasoning can be stated another way:

1. That form of teaching makes a man free from sin.
2. But a sin-free man is added to the church.
3. Therefore that particular form of teaching identifies the church which Christ built.

C. The law of pardon revealed in the New Testament. So far the particular form of teaching has not been defined as to just what a man is required to obey. That is the purpose of this lesson.

Before we go any further, it should be noted carefully that obedience to the form of doctrine is man's part in the scheme of redemption. It does not reflect God's part, which was shown through His love, grace and mercy which culminated in the cross of Christ at Calvary. It was God who took the initiative to save men. Man could never save himself. God has provided man's salvation for Him. Since the beginning when Adam and Eve fell prey to sin in the garden of Eden, God has been active in the scheme of redemption. God's promise to the devil was, "*I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.*" (Gen. 3:15). If it were not for this verse, the rest of the Bible would not make any sense, for it is the carrying out of that promise. In man's part in the scheme of redemption, we are not minimizing God's part, nor are we advocating that we are saved by works that man does, nor are we saying that we are not saved by the blood of Christ, because we are. We are not substituting God's grace, we are implementing the instrument of God's grace. Man is not saved unconditionally. If that were so then the demons would be saved, because they "*believe and tremble*" (Jas. 2:19). No, God Himself has not only designed what a man must do to receive pardon from his sins, but He has revealed that design in the pages of His word, the Bible. Man cannot possibly save himself by keeping God's laws were it not for Christ having been offered to become our propitiation, that is, our satisfaction to God for our sins. See Rom. 3:24,25; 1 John 2:1,2; 4:10. So the form of doctrine delivered must include what God has done for man at Calvary. The sinner must believe in Christ as his propitiation and trust Him to save at the point when his faith in Christ leads him to obedience. Man's salvation is not in formulas, but in a divine Person, Jesus Christ. It is not a doctrine that saves man from his sin, but a Person. That Person frees him, however, when, and only when, he obeys His commandments by faith. It is not that form of doctrine wherein we place our faith to be saved, but in a Savior. That Savior saves us from our sin, when our faith leads us to obey His particular doctrine. Christ and His word cannot be separated. Jesus insists that to reject His words is to reject Him (John 12:48). See also Matt. 7:24-27. Thus the New Testament tells us to hear the gospel, to believe that gospel (faith), to repent of sin, to confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and to obey that form of doctrine that is delivered. Christ saves when we obey. The faith that saves is the faith that obeys.

The Law of Pardon IDENTIFIES The True church

1. The law of pardon reproduced in the book of Acts. The book of Acts reveals what people did in New Testament times to become Christians. In every case of conversion, the same thing was delivered, believed and obeyed. When the same doctrine is taught and obeyed by all, it becomes apparent THAT doctrine is to be identified as God's law of pardon.

Below is a table of the cases of conversions in the book of Acts. The items which are checked (T) show which particular areas of obedience the Holy Spirit mentioned in that particular case. Remember, "*the sum of thy word is truth*" (Psa. 119:160 RSV). Each person in each case obeyed every point of the doctrine delivered, but the only specially mentioned by the Holy Spirit is recorded, but we need to note that baptism was indeed mentioned in every case. Yet to baptism many in the world would object. Read carefully each case of conversion listed below.

Case of conversion	Pentecost Acts 2	Samaritans Acts 8:12	Simon Acts 8:13	Eunuch Acts 8:35-40	Saul of Tarsus Acts 9:22	Cornelius Acts 10	Lydia Acts 16:14,15	Jailer Acts 16:30-34	Corinthians Acts 18:8
Hear	T	T			T	T	T		T
Believe		T	T	T		T		T	T
Repent	T								
Confess				T					
Baptism	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T	T

2. The purpose of baptism. Baptism is an essential part of man’s obedience in order to effect the remission of sins. All covenants whether man made or made by God were sealed with blood. The covenant with Abraham, (see Gen. Ch 15). The Mosaic covenant, (see Ex. 24:3-8). The New Covenant, (see Matt. 16:27,28). Baptism is a part of God’s law of pardon which alien sinners must obey from the heart. The purpose of baptism as revealed in the New Testament will make this clear.

a. Baptism is essential for salvation from sin.

(1) Jesus connects baptism with salvation (Mk. 16:15,16). Notice that the Lord said, *“he that believes AND IS baptized shall be saved.”* [emphasis mine - gwh] He did not say that he that believes is saved and can be baptized as an outward sign of an inner conviction, later. Who is **he** that shall be saved? **He** that believes AND IS baptized. That is what is taught in other places in the New Testament.

i. The Samaritans.

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized.” (Acts 8:12).

ii. Simon the sorcerer.

“Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done.” (Acts 8:13).

iii. The Ethiopian eunuch.

“Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. “and the eunuch said, See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized? Then Philip said, If you believe with all your heart, you may. “and he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. So he commanded the chariot to stand still. “and both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him.” (Acts 8:35-38).

iv. The Philippian jailer.

““and he brought them out and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved? So they said, Believe on the

Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household. Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. “and he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes. “and immediately he and all his family were baptized.” (Acts 16:30-33)

v. The Corinthians.

“Then Crispus, the ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his household. “and many of the Corinthians, hearing, believed and were baptized.” (Acts 18:8) .

vi. The Galatians.

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.” (Gal. 3:26-27).

(2) Peter teaches baptism for the remission of sins. *“Then Peter said to them, Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.” (Acts 2:38).* Remission means forgiveness or pardon. Salvation is from sin. We are saved when our sins are forgiven. Since baptism is FOR the forgiveness of sins, then we must be baptised to be forgiven. Baptism is a part of the law of pardon which must be obeyed from the heart.

(3) Peter teaches that baptism saves. *“When once the longsuffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 3:20-2).* Three subjects are mentioned by Peter. Baptism, a clear conscience, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What is the connection? The resurrection is the supreme sign authenticating Jesus’ deity (see Rom. 1:4). To believe that Jesus was raised from the dead is to believe that He is the Son of God, divine, and therefore has the right to command all men and be the only authority in religion. Christ commands that all men be baptized *“in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit”* (Matt. 28:19). If a person believes in Jesus Christ and knows that He has commanded him to be baptized, and does not obey the command to be baptized, that person is disobedient, and cannot have a clear conscience. Can a person be saved if they refuse to obey a plain command? Jesus said, *“if you love Me you will keep My commandments”* (John 14:15).

Consider the following:-

i. The blood of Christ cleanses our conscience (Heb. 9:14), but our conscience is clear toward God, ONLY through baptism (1 Pet. 3:21). Therefore, our conscience is cleansed by the blood of Christ at baptism.

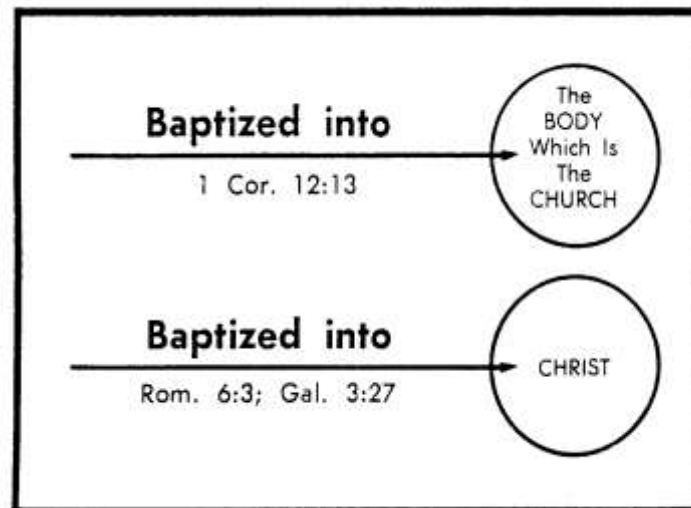
ii. *“Into the name of”* as in Matt. 28:19, in the Greek means “into the possession of.” It is not a formula of words one must speak while baptizing. Since Jesus gave Himself to *“purify unto Himself a people for His own possession”* (Tit. 2:14), and since baptism is “into the possession of” the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we become God’s possession at baptism.

(4) The blood of Christ washes away sins at baptism. Paul was commanded to *“arise and be baptized and wash away your sins”* (Acts 22:16). We are *“washed from our sins by His blood”* (Rev. 1:5).

Therefore, we are washed by the blood of Christ when we are baptized. (This will become more apparent when we study Rom. 6:3,4).

b. Baptism places one into Christ. Men are saved only when IN CHRIST. Saving grace is “bestowed upon us IN the beloved” (Eph. 1:6). All spiritual blessings are for those who are IN Christ (Eph. 1:3). All those who are not IN CHRIST are OUT of Christ and are lost. To be saved one must be IN Christ. The following shows the relationship of baptism, to coming into Christ.

(1) Rom. 6:3,4. The New Testament says we are “baptized into Christ Jesus.” We are also “baptized into His death.” Since Christ shed His blood at His death, if we are baptized INTO His death, we will contact the blood that He shed at His death. Paul says “I have been crucified with Christ” (Gal. 2:20). When was Paul crucified with Christ? When he was baptized INTO His death. This is why baptism is so important. The blood seals the covenant relationship that we enter into with God, but we cannot be sealed with that blood unless we are baptized INTO Christ’s death. Anyone who has not been baptized INTO Christ cannot be in a covenant relationship with Him. We all acknowledge that where there is a death there must of necessity also be a burial. In being buried with Christ we “put off” the old man and “put on” the new man. In the Greek language **apotithemi** put off has to do with putting off clothes, and **enduo** put on has to do with putting on clothes. The old man is the body of sin which is “put off” in the waters of baptism. We then “put off” our filthy rags, and “put on” the righteousness of Christ. As one is raised from the watery grave of baptism, he “walks in newness of life.”



(2) Gal. 3:26,27. The Bible teaches that faith leads one to be “baptized INTO Christ.” Paul tells us how the Galatians “put on” Christ. Again the word **enduo** means to put on like clothing, and it carries with it the idea of permanence. One cannot put on and off Christ as one would clothes. The Christian life is a permanent relationship with God. We “put on” Christ at baptism, and at the same time we are placed INTO Christ.

c. Baptism places one into the church. (1 Cor. 12:13). “For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body-- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free-- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.” Remember the body is the church (Eph. 1:22,23). Also the church is all the saved (Acts 2:47).

The spirit teaches us by His word, that we are “*all baptized into one body.*” Thus we are placed into the body of the saved at baptism.

A person becomes a member of the church of Christ, when by faith they are baptized into Christ, into the church.

3. The design of baptism. The New Testament teaches there is “*one baptism*” (Eph. 4:5). Yet the New Testament tells us of the baptism of John (Matt. 3:1-6), the baptism of fire (Matt. 3:11), the baptism of suffering (Matt. 20:22,23), the baptism of Moses (1 Cor. 10:2), the baptism of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-4; Acts 10:44-48), and the baptism of the great commission (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15,16; Lk. 24:46,47). However, the “*one baptism*” is the one that Christ commanded in the great commission, and the examples of conversions that we have already looked at was baptism in water for the forgiveness of sins to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

a. Baptism is an immersion. The word “baptism” in the Greek text is **baptizo**. It means immerse, plunge, dip, submerge or overwhelm. Vine’s Expository Dictionary defines the noun “baptism” as follows: “**Baptisma**, baptism, consisting of the process of immersion, submersion and emergence (from **bapto**, to dip), is used of John’s baptism, of Christian baptism.” Thus, when baptism is commanded, one is commanded to be immersed, plunged, etc.

b. Baptism is not sprinkling or pouring. There are different words in the Greek language for sprinkling and pouring. **Rhantizo** is translated sprinkle, and **cheo** is translated pour. Since neither of these two words was used by the inspired writers when commanding baptism, then baptism cannot be sprinkling or pouring water. The word used in every case in the New Testament was **baptizo**, or its derivative, which means immerse. That is what the Lord has said and He has said nothing else. It is not an option, it is a command.

(1) The use of the three words in the Septuagint. The Septuagint is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament. In Lev. 14:14-16, Moses gave the Lord’s instruction to the high priest, concerning the ceremony to be performed for cleansing healed lepers. He said, “*the priest shall take some of the blood of the trespass offering, and the priest shall put it upon the tip of the right ear of him that is to be cleansed, and upon the thumb of his right hand, and upon the great toe of his right foot: “and the priest shall take some of the log of oil, and pour (**cheo**) it into the palm of his own left hand: “and the priest shall dip (**baptizo**) his right finger in the oil that is in his left hand, and shall sprinkle(**rhantizo**) of the oil with his finger seven times before the LORD”* These three words are all different in meaning, and the Holy Spirit has chosen His words well. Baptism is not sprinkling or pouring, it is immersion.

c. Baptism is a burial in water. (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12; Acts 8:36-39). The Ethiopian eunuch was baptized in water. Philip preached unto him Jesus. As they were going on their way they came to a certain body of water, and the eunuch said “*here is water, what hinders me to be baptized?*” Both he and the preacher “*went down into the water*” and Philip baptized the eunuch, and then they both “*came up out of the water.*” Peter went to the house of Cornelius and told him words whereby he and all his house should be saved. When the Holy Spirit fell on them as He did on the apostles in the beginning, Peter said “*can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized.*” It was also Peter who referring to the days of Noah and the fact that they were saved by water, said “*the like figure whereunto baptism does also now save us.*” (1 Pet. 3:21). New Testament baptism requires going

down into and coming out of the water.

d. Candidates for baptism are ONLY those who:-

(1) Can be taught (Matt. 28:19,20). Christ commanded His disciples, *“Go ye therefore, and TE”CH all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”* Those who were taught, were the ones to be baptized. Infants can no more be taught about Christ and His scheme of redemption, including baptism, than they can be taught to observe all things subsequent to baptism.

(2) Can believe the gospel (Mk. 16:15,16). In Mark’s account of the great commission, Mark records Christ as having said, *“Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that BELIEVES and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believes not shall be damned.”* Infants cannot believe the scheme of redemption if they are unable to be taught it.

(3) Can repent of sin (Acts 2:38; Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30,31). Peter’s reply to the question asked on Pentecost, men and brethren what shall we do? was, *“REPENT, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”* (Acts 2:38). Repentance is not a change of life. It will produce a change of life, but repentance is translated from the Greek word **metanoeo** which means a change of mind, and includes a change of heart. Infants cannot change their minds and their hearts. No one is ready for baptism until they have repented.

(4) Can confess that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9,10). The apostle Paul said that *“with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”* On the road from Jerusalem to Ethiopia, whilst Philip was teaching the eunuch *“Jesus,”* before he could be baptized he confessed *“I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”* Infants cannot confess what they cannot be taught, or what they are not able to believe.

(5) Can obey that form of doctrine from the heart (Rom. 6:17,18). Obedience is a conscious decision to do something. A person must of his own free will arise and be baptized. Infants are forced to be sprinkled in so called “christening” (which is not baptism), and do not have any say in the matter. Infants cannot respond to obedience from the heart.

CONCLUSION : The church of Christ is not a denomination. It is the saved body of Christ everywhere. All of the saved are members of the universal body of Christ. Sinners are added to that universal church, by the Lord, when by faith in Christ, they obey that form of doctrine from the heart. Local churches are congregations of Christians. A group of people can become a New Testament church of Christ by obedience to the law of pardon and induction into the body of Christ, and then uniting together for work and worship. Such is the plan God has revealed in the New Testament.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 3

HOW PEOPLE BECOME MEMBERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

1. Does the New Testament have a distinctive law of pardon and induction into the church?

2. Of what does the church comprise? _____

3. What does the Lord do to those who are saved? _____

4. When does one become made free from sin? _____

5. What is God's part in the scheme of redemption? _____

6. What is man's part in the scheme of redemption? _____

7. Christ is our propitiation. What does propitiation mean? _____

8. Is salvation conditional or unconditional? _____

9. Can Christ and His word be separated? _____

10. List ten cases of conversion in the book of Acts.

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

(f) _____

(g) _____

(h) _____

(i) _____

(j) _____

(k) _____

11. What is the Bible's greatest hermeneutic? _____

12. What are the five steps to salvation? _____

13. Is baptism essential for salvation from sin? _____

14. How are we sealed in a covenant relationship with God? _____

15. From Acts 2:38, what is baptism for? _____

16. Who are we baptized into the possession of? _____

17. Does Peter say that we are saved by water? _____

18. How is our conscience cleansed? _____

19. What does baptism place one INTO? _____

20. At what point do we contact the blood of Christ? _____

21. When was Paul crucified with Christ? _____

22. How is it that we can rise out of the waters of baptism to walk in newness of life?

23. What does the Greek word **enduo** mean? _____

24. Paul says that there is only one baptism. What baptism is that? _____

25. What does the Greek word **baptizo** mean? _____

26. What does the Greek word **rhantizo** mean? _____

27. What does the Greek word **cheo** mean? _____

28. What would you say baptism is? _____

29. List 5 qualifications necessary for a candidate for baptism?

(a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

(d) _____

(e) _____

30. What does the Greek word **metanoeo** mean? _____

31. When one understands God's scheme of redemption, does it include infants? _____

LESSON NUMBER 4

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

INTRODUCTION

Christianity is a historical religion. It stands upon the actual work which Christ accomplished at Calvary and proved in His resurrection. The doctrine of Christ as the foundation of the church is not mere theology unrelated to the Christian's life. Rather it is the real motive of the Christian's faith and service. If Christ was raised from the dead, He can raise us. If He was not raised from the dead, His own death was a meaningless sentiment. Upon belief in that historical resurrection, the church has founded her confidence for this life and her hope for an eternal future.

I. THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

No institution can endure longer than the foundation which supports it. Jesus said He would build His church "*upon this rock*" (Matt. 16:18), that is a permanent foundation. In this lesson we seek to learn what that rock is, upon which Christ has established His church.

A. The foundation as foretold by the prophets.

1. "*a tried stone*" (Isa. 28:16). Isaiah predicted that the foundation stone upon which God's house should be built would be tried, tested and proved.

2. A "*rejected*" stone (Psa. 118:22). He was rejected by the Jews.

B. Peter's confession and Christ's prediction. Read Matt. 16:13-20.

When Christ requested His disciples to tell what others were thinking of Him, they replied "*Some say John the Baptist, some Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.*" While prophets were great, Jesus was greater. The disciples themselves were asked to declare what they thought. Peter responded, "*Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.*"

1. Jesus' Deity. What Peter confessed was the deity of Jesus, His Godhood. Like begets like. Since God is divine and Jesus is His Son, then Jesus is divine. His divinity is the rock upon which the church is built. The church is built on neither Peter nor his confession, it is built upon that which Peter confessed Jesus to be, Deity, God. The original Greek word for Peter was PETROS, the masculine carrying the idea of a small stone. The word for rock is PETRA the feminine of PETROS meaning a mass of Rock. Jesus was clearly not pointing out Peter as the rock.

2. Death shall not prevail. Hades is the place of disembodied spirits. It is not hell (sheol), the place of the damned. Only those who die go to the hadean world. Here Jesus predicted that not even death could hinder Him. It would not prevail against His intention to build the church. (Of course without His death there would have been no church. See Acts 20:28). Hence His own prediction of a resurrection.

C. The resurrection the supreme sign of deity (Rom. 1:4). To conquer the grave for Himself would be proof that He could do so for all. In His resurrection is the proof of His deity as Peter claimed. This

would be sufficient to sustain all men throughout all time and eternity. To believe His resurrection is to believe that He can and will raise us who take our stand on Him. He truly is the ROCK of our salvation.

II. FULFILMENT OF THE PROPHECIES.

A. Jesus was rejected by the Jews who put Him to death (Mk. 8:31; Acts 4:11). The fulfilment of Psa. 118:22-24.

B. The resurrection (Matt. 28:6). In His death He was tried and tested for His claims. In His resurrection He was proven to be the Son of God with power (Rom. 1:4). Hence the fulfilment of Isa. 28:16, *“a tried stone.....a sure foundation.”*

III. THE APOSTLE=S DOCTRINE

A. Paul’s declaration (1 Cor. 3:11). *“For other foundation can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.”* A belief in Peter as the foundation stone of the church is a rank rejection of divine inspiration. No comment could be needed for Paul’s statement of fact provided people are honest. Plainly Christ is the foundation of the church.

B. Peter’s declaration (1 Pet. 2:3-8). Peter reports that Christians have come unto the Lord Jesus *“a living stone,”* who was rejected of men, but made of God to be the foundation stone upon which His spiritual house, the church was built (see 1 Tim. 3:15). Over this truth, like stones, men stumble when they are disobedient. Christ is precious as the rock-solid foundation upon which we build for our eternal future.

Peter in addressing the Sanhedrin after having been arrested said, *“This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone. Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:11,12). In ancient times foundations would be formed by beginning with a very large stone, cut out for the corner, upon which the rest of the foundation would take its direction and angle. The entire building had to wait for the cornerstone, it was of such importance. Christ is as important to Christianity as the cornerstone was to ancient buildings. The word *“rejected”* indicates that the Jews had considered the Stone, but rejected it as not worthy of being in the building that they were building.

Jesus’ Deity is the Rock

CONCLUSION

The “rock” is the deity of Jesus Christ. He was rejected by the Jews, tried, tested and proved to be the Son of God with power in His resurrection. On the proposition that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, the church rests.

This becomes another point of identity. Any church which does not rest as its foundation for the future, cannot be the church of Christ.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 4

THE CHURCH'S ONE FOUNDATION

1. The foundation of the church was prophesied of in the Old Testament. What did Isaiah predict that the foundation stone would be? _____

2. In Psalm 118:22, what did David prophesy that the foundation stone would be? _____

3. In the region of Caecarea, Philippi, Peter declared that Jesus was the Son of God. In doing this what was he confessing? _____
4. What is the Greek word for Peter and what does it mean? _____

5. What is the Greek word for rock and what does it mean? _____

6. What is hades? _____
7. Peter quotes David's Psalm on the day of Pentecost that God would not leave Christ's soul in hades. Where did Christ's soul go to after it had been in hades? _____

8. Christ performed many miracles and signs which would leave any honest person in no doubt that He was who He said He was, but what was the supreme sign of Jesus' deity? _____

9. By whom was Jesus rejected? _____
10. What did Paul declare that proves that Peter is not the rock? _____

11. Peter describes God's people as living stones built up a spiritual house. Upon what foundation? _____

12. Why does Peter say that Christ is precious? _____

13. The chief cornerstone was rejected in the building that the Jewish leaders were building. In what building did God include it? _____

14. Without the death of Jesus Christ there would be no church. From Acts 20:28 what was the purchase price of the church? _____

LESSON NUMBER 5

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

Jesus declared to the apostles that He would build His church (Matt. 16:18). At the time of this pronouncement, its establishment was futuristic, “*will build.*” In Acts 5:11, it is later declared that “*great fear came upon the whole church.*” Therefore, somewhere between Christ’s promise to build it and Luke’s statement to the effect that it existed, the church had to be established. The establishment of the church of Christ can be traced through the pages of God’s word.

I. THE CHURCH AND THE KINGDOM ARE THE SAME INSTITUTION

If it can be satisfactorily shown that the church and the kingdom are the same, then reason would lead to the conclusion that all references to the kingdom of Christ are references to the church of Christ.

A. Jesus used the terms interchangeably in Matt. 16:18,19.

““*and I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My CHURCH, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. “and I will give you the keys of the KINGDOM of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*” [emphasis mine - gwh]

B. Both are composed of saints. Paul writes to “*the church of God which is at Corinth, even them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints*” (1 Cor. 1:2). The church is composed of the “*saints.*” To the Colossians he says that God “*made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, who delivered us out of the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of His love*” (Col. 1:12,13). Saints are translated into the kingdom. Since both the church and the kingdom are composed of saints, they must be the same.

C. The church and the kingdom comprise blood purchased men. Acts 20:28 speaks of “*the church of the Lord which He purchased with His own blood.*” We know, of course, the church is the body of saved people, saved by the blood of Christ. John said of Christ “*thou wast slain, and did purchase unto God with thy blood menand made them to be a kingdom*” (Rev. 5:9,10). Inasmuch as both the church and the kingdom comprise men who have been blood purchased, both must be the same.

D. Priests of the House are priests in the kingdom. The church is God’s spiritual house (1 Tim. 3:15). God’s spiritual house is made of holy priests (1 Pet. 2:5). The kingdom is composed of those priests (Rev. 1:6; 5:9,10). Therefore, the church, God’s house, is the kingdom of priests. When the Bible speaks of the kingdom, whether in the Old or New Testament, if it refers to the kingdom of Christ, it is referring to the church of Christ.

II. THE KINGDOM WAS NEAR DURING THE MINISTRIES OF JOHN AND JESUS

The gospel records tell us how close at hand in point of time the kingdom was during the ministries of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

A. The kingdom of God was at hand. This was the message of John the Baptist (Matt. 3:1,2), the message of the Lord (Matt. 4:17; Mk. 1:15), the message which Jesus commanded of the twelve (Matt. 10:1,7), and the message which the Lord commanded the seventy to preach (Lk. 10:1,9).

When something is “*at hand*” it is near. If the kingdom of God is not NOW here, then it was not NEAR when John, Jesus, the twelve, and the seventy said it was.

B. Some of them would live to see the kingdom come. Jesus said to the people and His disciples, “*assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power.*” (Mk. 9:1) . If the kingdom of God is not yet come, then there are some men over 1900 years old, who are still waiting for it to come. Christ did not speak nonsense.

III. THE POWER AND THE PLACE OF THE KINGDOM’S ESTABLISHMENT FORETOLD BY CHRIST

A. The power. In Mk. 9:1 it is recorded that Jesus foretold that some should not “*taste of death till they see the kingdom of God come with power.*” In Acts 1:8 He said to His disciples that they would “*receive power, when the Holy Spirit is come upon you.*” The kingdom was to come with power, and the power was to come with the Spirit.

B. The place. Just prior to Christ’s ascension, He instructed the disciples to return to Jerusalem and wait “*in the city until you be clothed with power from on high.*” (Lk. 24:49). The Holy Spirit was to clothe them with power in the city of Jerusalem.

IV. THE DAY AND THE TIME OF THE KINGDOM’S ESTABLISHMENT

A. The day. The day of the kingdom’s establishment was the first Pentecost after the Lord’s death, burial, resurrection, and ascension back into heaven. (Acts 2:1).

B. The time. The time of the kingdom’s establishment was the third hour of the day (Acts 2:15), or about 9 o’clock in the morning. Such was Peter’s answer to the multitude who wondered about the source of the apostle’s power to speak in different languages. They were not drunk as some said, (v.13), it was too early in the morning.

V. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH, THE KINGDOM

Christ had foretold that the kingdom would come with power, and that the power would come with the Holy Spirit. Acts 2:1-4 records the coming of the Holy Spirit upon the apostles as foretold. Therefore the kingdom came.

When the Holy Spirit was poured out, the apostles were empowered to preach by divine guidance. They preached that Jesus Christ had been crucified for our sins, buried in a tomb, and rose again the third day, and that this was the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. The apostles convinced the Jews who heard them preach, and, when asked what they should do, they were commanded to *“repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38). It is recorded in verse 41 that, *“those who gladly received his word were baptized.”* The number of those baptized on the day of Pentecost were about 3000. Now remember that those who are baptized in the name Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, are baptized into the church. *“The Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved.”* (Acts 2:47).

Thus the kingdom came when the Holy Spirit came with the power, but the second chapter of Acts records the establishment of the church. Therefore, the kingdom of Christ, the church of Christ, was established on the first Pentecost after Jesus’ ascension back to the Father. Its establishment was in the city of Jerusalem at about 9 o’clock in the morning. The church of Christ is over 1900 years old, as is the kingdom of Christ. It is not anything new, nor was it started by man.

CONCLUSION

Once again marks of the identity of the New Testament church come forth. The time, place, power, day of establishment. Identity is the thing sought not succession. We are not concerned with tracing a line of succession from the apostles to today, but of identifying the church of Christ, which is the kingdom of Christ, as revealed in the New Testament, that it may be reproduced in this present time. Again, we note the principle of seed reproducing after its kind.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 5

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE CHURCH

1. Jesus said that He would build His church. In what scripture will we find that statement?

2. In which scripture do we find the statement that great fear came upon the whole church?

3. Is there any connection between the two statements, and if so what? _____

4. Did Jesus use the terms "kingdom" and "church" interchangeably, and if so where? _____

5. From 1 Cor. 1:2, what institution comprises saints? _____

6. From Col. 1:12,13, what institution comprises saints? _____

7. What conclusion would you draw from this? _____

8. Discuss the relationship of the church to the kingdom in regard to blood purchased men.

9. Discuss the relationship of the church to the kingdom in relationship to the priests of the NT.

10. What was the message of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve and the seventy? _____

11. What does it mean when something is at hand? _____

12. If we are still waiting for a kingdom to come, would it be “at hand” at the time of John the Baptist, Jesus Christ, the twelve and the seventy? _____

13. What do you understand by Jesus statement, “*assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste death till they see the kingdom of God present with power?*”

14. Jesus said that the kingdom would come with power, but what would the power come with?

15. When did that power come? _____

16. Where was the place that the kingdom would come? _____

17. What day was the kingdom of God established? _____

18. At what time of the day was the kingdom of God established? _____

19. Discuss the establishment of the kingdom, the church. _____

20. Is the church to be identified by an apostolic line of succession? _____

21. Discuss the principle of seed producing after its kind, and then apply this principle to reproducing and identifying the New Testament church. _____

THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CHURCH

LESSON NUMBER 6

CHRIST THE HEAD

INTRODUCTION

Most all who come out of religious error into the New Testament church are impressed with the simplicity of its organization. The organizational structure of the church of Christ stands in sharp contrast to the seemingly never-ending chain of command and man-made machinery of great ecclesiastical groups. Whereas the structure of Christ's church is rather simple and uncomplicated, it has nevertheless been designed to efficiently and sufficiently accomplish her God-given work.

The next several lessons will deal with the organization of the church, with those offices essential to her nature, and with the purpose, authority and function of each.

No government or body in society can exist long without a head. The guidance for the body always resides in its head. Such is the order of things in nature, and such is the nature of the church.

I. JESUS CHRIST : THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

A. The absolute declaration of scripture. The apostle Paul writes to the church in Ephesus and tell the saints there that God gave Christ *“to be the head over “ALL THINGS to the church”* (Eph. 1:22). Further in Eph. 5:23 is the statement that *“the husband is the head of the wife, “AS CHRIST IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH.”* To the Colossians he wrote *“He (Christ) is the head of the body, the church .. THAT IN ALL THINGS HE MIGHT HAVE THE PRE-EMINENCE.”* (Col. 1:18). [Emphasis mine - gwh]

Any religious organization which exalts man to the place and pre-eminence of Christ, through whatever rationalization may be offered, cannot identify as the church of the New Testament over which Christ is the absolute head.

B. Christ has all authority (Matt. 28:18-20). Subsequent to His resurrection and prior to His ascension to His heavenly throne, Jesus declared to His disciples that *““all authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.”* If you analyse this statement carefully there can be no mistake as to the claim that Christ made concerning Himself. He has ALL authority, not just on earth, or in heaven, but in heaven and on earth.

1. The question of authority is of prime importance. Most religious differences would be resolved by an appeal to Christ's authoritative word. While men often attribute differences in religion to

difficulties of interpretation, one will find upon investigation that most of the questions and differences are not problems of interpretation at all, but rather they are questions which depend for their interpretation upon an accepted authority. Christ emphasized to His disciples the principle that they should teach those whom they baptize, to observe ALL things whatsoever He had commanded them. All religious controversy must be settled on the basis of Christ's authority.

2. The authority of Christ in the written word of the New Testament. Christ kept His promise to the disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit, who would help them to remember ALL that Christ had taught them, and show them things to come. (John 14:26; John 16:12,13). That which they taught was that which the Holy Spirit gave them to speak.

a. The apostolic word is the word of Christ. Many would adhere to a "red letter" version of the Bible, only referring to the words that Jesus said while He was on earth as authority, but if we follow the words of Christ Himself, we can demonstrate that the words of the apostles are authoritative. Jesus in sending out the seventy said, "*He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.*" (Lk. 10:16). In John 13:20 the Lord told His disciples, "*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who receives whomever I send receives Me; and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me.*" Thus to receive whom Jesus sent is to receive, first Christ, then God, who sent Him. To reject whom Jesus sent is to reject both Christ and the Father. If Christ or the Father were to speak a word from heaven for all on earth to hear, it could be no more authoritative than that word spoken by the one whom He sent.

b. Christ's promise to the apostles that the Holy Spirit would guide them. Jesus made a promise to His disciples, that after His ascension back to the Father, the Father would send the Holy Spirit to teach them all things they needed and "*bring all things to your remembrance, that I have said to you*" (John 14:26). In clearing away the confusion which the disciples earlier had about the kingdom, Christ said, "*I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.*" (John 16:12,13). Notice carefully that the disciples were to speak the words which the Holy Spirit gave them. To demonstrate this point on one occasion when the Lord sent the twelve disciples out to preach the kingdom of God is at hand, He told them, "*But when they deliver you up, do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.*" (Matt. 10:19-20).

c. The promise fulfilled. Acts 2:1-4 records the promised coming of the Holy Spirit, and the apostles speaking under inspiration. Luke records that the apostles were filled with the Holy Spirit "*and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.*" The "*other tongues*" were the different languages of the people gathered from out of all nations under heaven. See Acts 2:6,8-11. Paul states that the words he spoke and wrote were not from men, but from the Holy Spirit (1 Cor. 2:12,13; Eph. 3:3,4), and that his written word was the commandment of the Lord (1 Cor. 14:37). Peter claims that the gospel of grace was announced at first by "*them that preached the gospel unto you by the Holy Spirit*" (1 Pet. 1:10-12), and that his brief written epistle was "*the true grace of God*" (1 Pet. 5:12). Peter also claims for Paul, that his writings were scripture (2 Pet. 3:16). Paul sums up, warning not to go beyond the written word (1 Cor. 4:6). Finally, John declares what happens to those who do go beyond and do not abide in the doctrine of Christ (2 John 9).

C. The church does all in the name of Jesus. (Col. 3:17). That phrase, “*in the name of*” has been woefully misused as well as misunderstood. It is not a formula of words which must be spoken prior to doing a thing in religious matters. It simply means, BY THE AUTHORITY OF. Bank cheques are authorized for cashing by the signature of one’s name. Christ’s name is above every name (Eph. 1:20,21). That is, there is no authority greater than Christ’s. Peter insists that there is no other name under heaven given among men whereby we are saved (Acts 4:12). That is, only Jesus Christ has the power and authority to save man from their sin. What is done in the name of Christ, is done by the authority of Christ, **as Christ directs.**

1. The church is not the authority. Whereas some in the church have some amount of delegated authority, they are not the authority, neither is the church the authority. The church executes the commands of Jesus Christ. What ever the church does must be “*in the name of the Lord Jesus*” as the word of God commands. That is, all the church does, must be according to the word of Christ.

2. Oral tradition not the authority. The Roman Catholic church teaches that in addition to the written word of Christ, they have received the oral traditions from the apostles, but the apostles teach that all traditions must agree with the written word (2 Thess. 2:15). Why is it that so many so-called oral traditions disagree with the written word?

3. Church ordinance not authorized. Baptism is not a church ordinance, it is a command given by the Lord Himself. Baptism is not an invention of the church. The Lord’s supper is not a church ordinance, it is also a command from the Lord. The church is commanded to do these things. Baptism “*in the name of Jesus Christ*” (Acts 2:38) means that baptism is to be performed because Christ commands it. “*In the name of Jesus Christ*” is not a formula of words which one must say when he immerses another into the watery grave of baptism, it is an appeal to Christ’s authority to forgive.

To Christ’s word, as written by inspired apostles and prophets, the church must go for guidance. A warning is pronounced upon those who do not. Jesus said, “*He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.*” (John 12:48).

Christ has the authority, not men. The apostles, by inspired guidance, penned His authoritative word. It is, therefore, to the word we must appeal for church action.

II. JESUS CHRIST : LAWGIVER AND JUDGE

Scripture declares these two characteristics of Christ. “*One only is the lawgiver and judge, even He who is able to save and destroy*” (Jas. 4:12). Residing within the head of any government are the powers of legislation and judgment.

A. Lawgiver. All legislation, the passing of laws, is to come from Christ as revealed in His word. We are to obey and execute those laws according to Christ’s own word of instruction. At the cross, Christ abolished the old covenant of Moses (Eph. 2:14) and provided us with a better covenant, established upon better promises.

1. The New Covenant. (Jer. 31:31-34). In verse 33 the passage reads, “*I will put my laws into their inward parts.*” What are those “*inward parts?*” In Hebrews chapter 8, this prophecy is quoted. Heb.

8:10 tells us what those inward parts are. *“I will put my laws into their minds.”* The minds of men are in the inward parts. God’s laws of His New Covenant are to be in our minds. We can know God’s laws and carry them out. We have no authority whatsoever to make laws of our own.

2. The apostles are ministers of the New Covenant. (2 Cor. 3:4-6). Read that passage carefully and digest it. The apostles claim to be SUFFICIENT as ministers of that New Covenant. They ministered it ALL. Nothing was lacking in what they ministered to us in their words. Further, their sufficiency came from God, not man. That New Covenant was not planned by some synod or council, but by the mind of God for the minds of men. The church is commanded to go to the written laws of Christ, the New Covenant, for its authority in matters religious.

B. Judge. Christ came first as a Savior. He will come again as a Judge, to judge those who have rejected Him and His word.

1. Christ the appointed Judge of all. Christ claimed that God had given Him to judge all men, because He, Himself was also a man (John 5:22,23). The apostles present the Lord as the one ordained by the Father to judge the world in righteousness (Acts 17:31).

2. The judgment is to be according to the written word of God. Jesus said, *“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.”* (John 12:48). John tells us in the Revelation of Jesus Christ, that *“the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books (of the Bible), according to their works”* (Rev. 20:12).

CONCLUSION

Jesus Christ, as lawgiver and Judge stands absolute in His authority as Head of His church. No one can presently claim to be His vicar on earth, to speak on behalf of God, and make laws for God, and still have respect for the authority of God’s word. It is a mark of identity, that the true church which honors Christ as Head and having ALL authority, follows His word as revealed in the pages of the New Testament. Only a healthy respect for Christ as Head of the church will enable men to function properly and acceptably as members of the church of Christ.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 6

JESUS CHRIST THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

1. What place does the head hold in the church? _____

2. Who has all authority in religious matters? _____

3. What are the bounds of that authority? _____

4. Are the differences in denominational teachings a matter of interpretation? _____

5. Where has the Lord vested His authority? _____

6. If we reject someone who preaches the word of God in all of its truth, are we rejecting him/her or are we just rejecting the God's word? _____

7. Was the Holy Spirit a promise to the twelve disciples or was it a command applicable to all who would come to Christ? _____

8. If it was a promise, where and when was it fulfilled? _____

9. What did the apostle Paul mean by the statement "*do all in the name of the Lord Jesus?*"

10. Why is the church not the authority? _____

11. Why is oral tradition not the authority? _____

12. Why are church ordinances not the authority? _____

13. Is baptism a church ordinance? _____

14. Is the Lord's supper a command from the Lord? _____

15. Who makes all legislation and laws for the church? _____

16. What was abolished at the cross? _____

17. From Jer. 31:31-24, where would the Lord put His laws? _____

18. Where does the Hebrew writer say He would put His laws? _____

19. Who are the ministers of the New Covenant? _____

20. Jesus Christ came first as a Savior. When He comes again what will He come as? _____

21. What will the world be judged according to? _____

LESSON NUMBER 7

THE ELDERSHIP

INTRODUCTION

God ordained that the local church should be overseen in its work and worship by men qualified for this special task. These men are known as elders or bishops. Their special assignments are due to the Lord's directives for the church as revealed in the New Testament. They are not the authority, but rather are given the authority by God to lead the congregation in the decisions to carry out the commands of Jesus Christ. This lesson considers their names and their number.

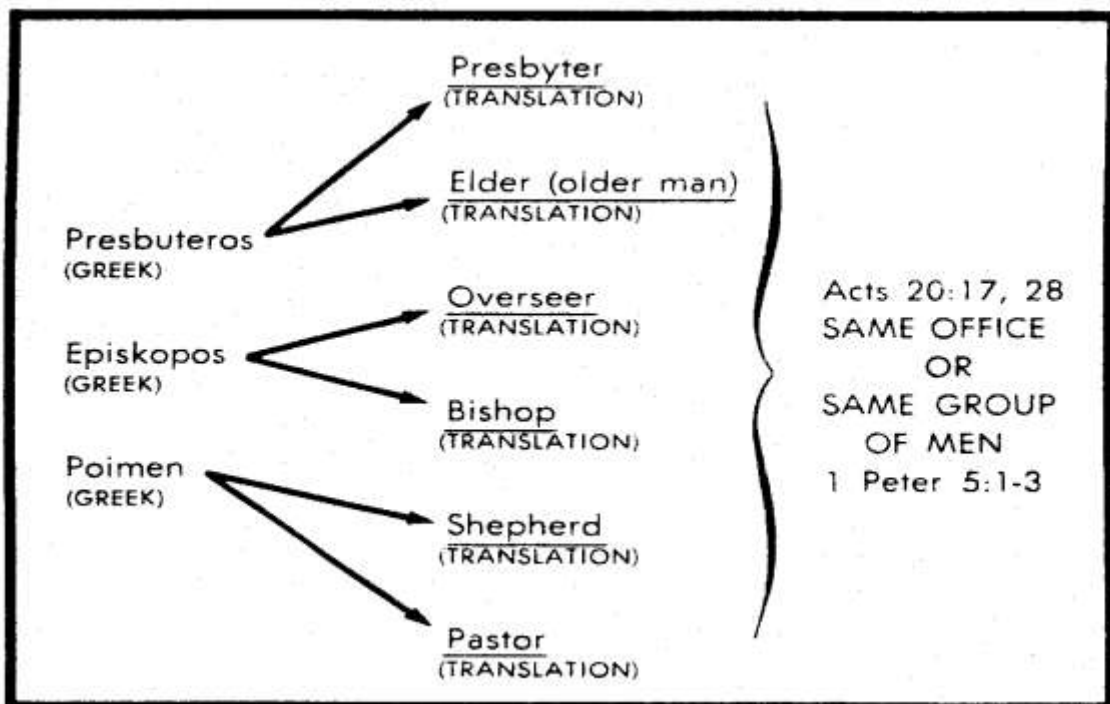
I. THEIR NAMES AND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF EACH

There are three Greek words in the original language which are translated by six English words.

A. PRESBUTEROS. Translated "presbyter," or "elder." This word actually means one "advanced in life, an elder, a senior." This shows the dignity of the office.

B. EPISKOPOS. Translated "bishop," or "overseer." The word is defined as "an overseer, a man charged with the duty of seeing that things by others are done rightly, any curator, guardian, or superintendent."

C. POIMEN. Translated "pastor," or "shepherd." Though the word is found some eighteen times in the Greek New Testament, it is translated "pastor" only once in the English version, in Eph. 4:11.



II. THESE TERMS DESIGNATE THE SAME OFFICE OR GROUP OF MEN

Though the terms “bishop” and “pastor” convey to many minds distinct offices or even different levels of authority among various religious groups, they are, nonetheless, speaking of the same office, or group of men.

A. Acts 20:17-28. In this particular passage, all three Greek words are used to refer to the same group of men. Paul called to him the “elders (PRESBUTEROS) of the church” at Ephesus. Paul was at Miletus when he sent for them. Beginning at verse 18, the apostle addresses the elders and charges them “*take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you bishops (EPISKOPOS) to feed (POIMAINO) the church of the Lord.*” The verb POIMAINO should be more accurately translated as “tend,” for feeding is just one aspect of overseeing a flock, whereas tending means to bind broken limbs, seek lost sheep etc.

The elders, (older qualified men), are bishops (who oversee the work of the church), who are spiritual shepherds (who pastor or shepherd the flock of God). Notice that none of these words are titles given to these men but merely descriptive terms, describing the office and its function.

B. 1 Pet. 5:1,2. In this passage again all three Greek words are used by the Holy Spirit in reference to the eldership. “*The elders (PRESBUTEROS) therefore among you I exhort..... Tend (POIMAINO) the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight (EPISKOPOS).*” So Peter is in accord with Paul that elders, bishops, pastors, are the same group of men.

C. Tit. 1:5-7. While only two of the words are used in this passage, it is still a valuable tool for defending the faith. The apostle Paul charged Titus to ordain elders (PRESBUTEROS) in every city, then he states “*for the bishop (EPISKOPOS) must be blameless.*” It becomes obvious that qualified elders become overseers or bishops of the church.

EVANGELISTS ARE NOT PASTORS

D. Preachers (evangelists) are not pastors. The New Testament does not refer to its evangelists or preachers as pastors. This is a denominational misuse of the term. Nor is there a difference between an evangelists and a gospel preacher, a man who preaches for a local church as Timothy did at Ephesus.

The one place where POIMEN is translated “pastor” in the English New Testament is Eph. 4:11, “*and He (Christ) gave some to be apostles, and some, prophets, and some, evangelists, and some, pastors and teachers.*” This verse draws a very definite line of distinction between evangelists (EUANGELISTES) and pastors (POIMEN). An evangelist is a preacher, who preaches and a pastor is an elder, who shepherds the flock.

Even this distinction has been corrupted through denominational tradition. The denominational pastor system exists in the form of a pastor over a local church but without elders. An attempt to justify such an arrangement in the face of clear New Testament teaching is supposedly on the grounds that no man is good enough to meet the qualifications of elders as specified by God in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Therefore, many denominational churches do not have elders. The distinction between pastors, which we know are elders, and evangelists as clearly defined by the Holy Spirit in Eph. 4:11 is glossed over by denominational tradition and usually explained in this manner: a travelling preacher is an evangelist, but a local preacher is a pastor. Of course, there is no Bible proof for this premise, just tradition.

In the New Testament, however, preachers and evangelists were the same without distinction. In 1 Tim. 1:3 and following, Paul left Timothy at Ephesus to do a certain work with the church that was there. That church had elders. This we know from Acts 20:17-35. There in the Ephesians church an evangelist (See 2 Tim. 4:5) worked together with the pastors (elders) in a local situation. This evangelist was commanded to stay in Ephesus and work, not to go from place to place. Also in Tit. 1:5, Paul left Titus in Crete to “*set in order the things that were lacking, and appoint elders.*” Titus could stay in Crete for as long as it took him to set in order the things which were lacking, and appoint elders, which had to meet the qualifications that Paul set out in Tit. 1. Hence, evangelists are not to be equated with travelling preachers, nor are pastors to be equated with local preachers who guide the church without elders. A pastor is one thing, and a preacher is another. However, the evangelist and the preacher are the same.

III. THE NUMBER OF ELDERS OVER A LOCAL CHURCH

The number of elders for each local church is always in the plural in the New Testament. This is another distinguishing characteristic of the identity of the church which follows the pattern of sound words.

A. Every example presents a plurality of elders over each individual congregation. There was a plurality of elders in each of the churches at Iconium, Derbe, and Lystra as appointed by Paul and Barnabas (Acts 14:23). At Jerusalem the church had a number of elders (Acts 15:2,4,6,22). The church at Ephesus had a plural number (Acts 20:17,28). Paul’s epistle to the church at Philippi addressed the Philippian saints with their “bishops and deacons” (Phil. 1:1). The church of the Thessalonians had a number of “them” that were “over” the saints (1 Thess. 5:12). Titus’ job description included “appoint elders (plural) in every city” (Tit. 1:5). The churches of Christ at Iconium, Derbe, Lystra, Jerusalem Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, and the churches in the cities of Crete, without exception had a plurality of elders. There are no examples to the contrary in the whole of the New Testament. This plurality of elders in each local church is God’s plan for His church throughout time. If not, nothing in scripture could be said to guide us today.

B. The departure from this order of things was gradual, resulting finally in a falling away from the New Testament pattern. The apostle Paul predicted that this would happen whilst he was talking to the elders of the church at Ephesus “*also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them*” (Acts 20:30). That falling away resulted eventually in the Roman Catholic church which was established in 606 A.D.

The pattern for the church of the New Testament includes in its local government, a group of men qualified (by God’s standard as revealed in the New Testament) to serve as elders, overseers, spiritual shepherds. A church can exist without elders while it matures men for appointment to the office. Each church must begin first, then appoint her own overseers. No local church can find authority for one elder or bishop to rule over it, or a number of churches, because the New Testament contains no

pattern or example for such an arrangement.

IV. LOCAL CHURCH AUTONOMY.

Contrary to the highly complex system of one ruling bishop over a cluster of churches known as a “diocese,” the New Testament church is provided with an efficient government for each local congregation sufficient for it to be and do everything God has designed for it. That system of government can be referred to as congregational autonomy, inasmuch as it expresses the actual form of God's arrangement for each church.

Each local church is self governing

A. Definition. Autonomy simply means “self-rule or “self-government.” Congregational autonomy means that each congregation is a self governing entity. It has no rule over other congregations and other congregations have no rule over it. Each congregation’s own government is limited to the boundaries of its own membership.

B. The New Testament teaching.

1. Acts 20:17,28. Paul’s address to the elders of the church at Ephesus reveals much to us in the way of the limitation of that church’s government. The very fact that Paul called to him “*the elders of the church,*” that is the church at Ephesus, is sufficient to point out the limits of authority of that one eldership. It was confined to the church of which they were the elders.

In verse 28 the apostolic charge is to “*take heed.....TO ALL THE FLOCK, OVER THE WHICH THE HOLY SPIRIT HAS MADE YOU OVERSEERS.*” [Emphasis mine - gwh] The ASV says “*in which the Holy Spirit hath made you bishops.*” It is conclusive that the extent of the oversight of an eldership is only to the flock “*OVER THE WHICH*” they have been appointed bishops.

2. 1 Pet. 5:1-3. Peter’s apostolic exhortation to all elders emphasizes three areas of consideration concerning local autonomy. “*Tend the flock of God WHICH IS “MONG YOU, exercising the oversight....neither lording it over the charge allotted to you, but making yourselves examples to the flock.*” [Emphasis mine - gwh]

a. The flock of God which is among you. This restricts the limits of the elder’s oversight to the church, or flock, among which they tend. The Greek word for “tend” or “feed” (KJV) is the verb POIMAINO, meaning “to shepherd.” Shepherds tend only one flock, their own, not another’s. Yes, it is Christ’s flock and there is only one fold. The elders of each local congregation have been given delegated responsibility by the Lord Himself through the pages of His word. Thus the figure is that of an eldership caring for a local church even as a shepherd for his flock, under the Headship of Christ, who is the chief Shepherd. The exercise of the elder’s oversight is confined to one particular congregation.

b. The charge allotted to you. The “charge” allotted, is the local church, and a local church is all that is allotted. No more.

c. Examples to the flock. Examples or “ensamples’ in the older versions, is the Greek word TUPOS, defined as “the impress of a seal, the stamp made by a die, a form or mould, pattern.” (W.E.Vine). In other words the elders are to be patterned after by the church. As it relates to the limits of the local church, it is only reasonable that a church have their examples before them, their daily manner of life in constant view. No group of bishops can be immediate examples to a church among which they do not have constant contact. This is the intention of Peter’s words.

3. Local autonomy in congregations without elders. Each local church in the New Testament is commended to the authority of the apostles’ word (1 Cor. 4:14; 14:37;16:1). The local churches are all commanded to hear the word of the Holy Spirit (Rev. 2:7,11,17,29; 3:6,13,22). In each case the word of God was the authority for each local church. Each congregation was independently responsible to maintain its own respect for the word of God.

The church at Corinth was instructed to handle its own problems according to the apostolic instruction. (1 Cor. 5:1-8).

The very absence of any centralized earthly government among New Testament churches and the responsibility of each local church to hold to the pattern of sound words from the apostles, insists upon the autonomy of each local congregation. Local church autonomy then is God’s safety valve against full scale apostasy.

CONCLUSION

In the organizational structure of the local church, as designed by God and revealed in the New Testament, provision is made for a plural number of elders to oversee the affairs of the congregation. The boundary of their authority is limited to the membership of the flock which is among them. If one congregation digresses, it cannot carry another congregation, or other congregations, with it. Such is the safety valve against apostasy, provided we hold fast the pattern of sound words.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 7

THE ELDERSHIP

1. Give the three Greek words in the New Testament and their six corresponding English words, that pertain to the group of men known as elders or bishops. _____

2. List three scriptures that contain the above Greek words. _____

3. Is there any difference between the office of a pastor and the office of a bishop? Explain.

4. Is there a difference between a pastor and a preacher? If so, what? _____

5. Who has been divinely selected to determine the action of the local church? _____

6. What is required of a church without elders? _____

7. What would a church do in the case of not having a preacher? _____

8. How many elders must each congregation of the Lord's church have? _____

9. Can anyone be an elder? _____

10. In Titus chapter 1, who did Paul say had to appoint elders? _____

11. What did the falling away from the divine pattern lead to? _____

12. Elders are to be an example to the flock. What Greek word is used for example, and what does it mean? _____

13. Does the Lord's church have an earthly centralized government? Explain. _____

14. What is the safety valve against wholesale apostasy? _____

15. What is the boundary of the eldership's authority? _____

LESSON NUMBER 8

THE PASTORAL WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

INTRODUCTION

To the evangelist Timothy, the apostle Paul writes, “*faithful is the saying, if a man seeks the office of a bishop, he desires a good work*” (1 Tim. 3:1). Perhaps the greatest exploitation of power in religion has come through a feigned use of the eldership. Many men have sought the office for what would seem good reasons, but not all have desired the work. It is important to consider the very responsible work of elders and the qualifications which equip them for the task.

I. THE WORK OF ELDERS

Only when the church realizes the importance of the work of her elders to the eternal destiny of human souls will the high qualifications for each elder be required and attained by those desiring the work. Qualifications will be slackened as though unnecessary as the great work of elders passes from our sight. Those who would desire the office of an elder would do well to aspire to this work and qualifications, and the church should not only know but encourage its leaders to the high degree that the office requires of them.

A. A watchman. The intensity of Paul’s spirit of urgency can be felt in his address to the Ephesian eldership in Acts chapter 20. Realizing that after he left them, false teachers would try to exploit the church from within the eldership itself, he charges them solemnly:-

“Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. “also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves. Therefore watch, and remember that for three years I did not cease to warn everyone night and day with tears.” (Acts 20:28-31).

Notice carefully: “*Therefore,*” because of base pretenders, “*WATCH.*” The Hebrew writer charges Christians to “*obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them, for they WATCH on behalf of your souls*” [emphasis mine - gwh] (Heb. 13:17).

The idea of the watchman would carry greater force to the people of that day than in modern times. Ancient cities were protected by a wall, which encompassed the city. Along the walls were watch towers occupied by men, whose job it was to constantly keep a vigilant eye for invaders. If an enemy was seen to be approaching, the watchman would warn the city occupants, who would prepare for their defence. In the hands of the watchman, the people placed their confidence for safety.

Perhaps the most descriptive portrayal of God’s watchman is to be found in Ezek. 3:16-21. This entire passage needs to be read with thoughtfulness:

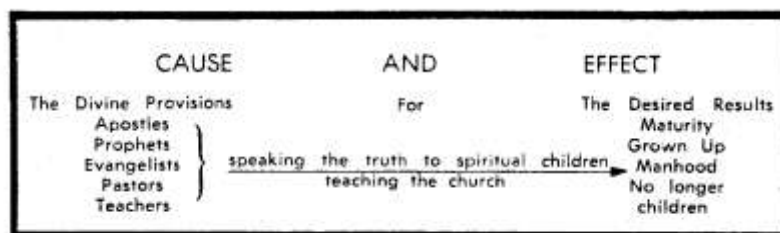
“Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the LORD came to me, saying, Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul. “gain, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die; because you did not give him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he has done shall not be remembered; but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man that the righteous should not sin, and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.” (Ezek. 3:16-21).

The awesome responsibility of a spiritual watchman is piercingly depicted by charging him to warn with the word of God and then requiring at his hand the life of the people if he fails to do the job. Again Heb. 13:17 is cutting in its accountability: *“Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, “AS THOSE WHO MUST GIVE “CCOUNT.” [emphasis mine - gwh]*

One of the qualifications of the elder is that he must be *“apt to teach”* (1 Tim. 3:2). Another is, *“holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict”* (Tit. 1:9). No honest aspirant to the eldership, knowing his job as a watchman requires him to warn with the living word of God, can possibly interpret these qualifications to mean something less than being a qualified public teacher, with his mouth, the word of God. There is no other way to fulfill these requirements, and do the job of an elder - a watchman. The elder must KNOW the word, and TEACH it. THEN shall he protect the flock of God.

B. Mature the church. (Eph. 4:11-16). Included in the list of gifts from Christ for the perfecting or maturing (not speaking of sinlessness) of the saints are pastors (or elders). These evangelists, pastors and teachers are given by Christ to mature the church. The *“children”* are spiritual babes. They can be tossed to and fro with any and every wind of doctrine, because of their lack of knowledge and maturity in Christ. Pastors (elders) together with evangelists and teachers, are to *“speak the truth in love,”* that is, teaching the word of God to those saints, that they may no longer be spiritual children, but may grow up. A work of the elder is to see that spiritual babes mature into spiritual men/women.

Notice that this is not a job which the elders hire another to do. They are not themselves maturing the saints, when they merely SEE that it is being done. They are themselves qualified for the task. THEY are to participate in the spiritual development of the local church, together with evangelists and teachers, THEMSELVES participating in the actual speaking of the truth in love. No wonder elders must be *“apt to teach.”* This might be referred to as Paul’s cause and effect method of maturing the church.



C. Discipline the congregation (1 Thess. 5:12-15). Discipline is not always harsh. Often it requires a gentle hand. Sometimes it requires a strong hand.

“and we urge you, brethren, to recognize those who labor among you, and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. Be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn those who are unruly, comfort the fainthearted, uphold the weak, be patient with all. See that no one renders evil for evil to anyone, but always pursue what is good both for yourselves and for all.”

The brethren were to *“KNOW THEM THAT LABOR AMONG YOU, AND ARE OVER YOU IN THE LORD.....esteem them exceedingly highly in love FOR THEIR WORKS SAKE.”* [emphasis mine - gwh] The work of elders is further outlined here. They are to admonish disorderly brethren, encourage fainthearted brethren whose spirits need lifting, and support the spiritually weak, the new babes in Christ, together with those who are not growing up in Christ. This might include those whose lives have been shattered by some painful experience which brings their trust in God to a crisis. Elders are to see that none render evil for evil. That's a big job. Only qualified men can accomplish it.

Such work as described above, dealing with the lives and problems of different persons, cannot be fulfilled at a church service. This work requires elders to go to the homes and perhaps even businesses of those members. As one college professor once said, “elders need not only head-power (knowledge of the word), and heart-power (sensitive to their needs), but also FOOT-power.”

D. Shepherd the flock (Acts 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:1-3). The word translated “*feed*” in Acts 20:28 is the Greek word POIMAINO. It is the verb of the word POIMEN which is usually translated “*pastor*” or “*shepherd*” and is a word of action. The work of a shepherd is to shepherd the flock. This is the same word in 1 Pet. 5:2 which is rendered “*tend*” in the ASV or “*feed*” in the KJV. A partial description of the work of a shepherd is given by the Lord in Luke 15:3-7. “*What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? “and when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. “and when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!’ I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.”* When a sheep strays from the fold, the shepherd leaves to search for it until he finds it. Then tenderly bearing it upon his shoulders, he returns to the sheepfold with rejoicing. So the word “*feed*” which is usually thought of as meaning to teach, is an unfortunate rendering. The Greek word means the entire work of the spiritual shepherd. Feeding the sheep is but a single task of the shepherd, just as teaching is but a single task of the elder. By no means is feeding the sheep all the shepherd must do. The shepherd protects, searches out the strays, binds up the broken limbs as well as feeding the sheep. The word “*tend*” then would be a better rendering of the original Greek word, in that it embraces the entire work of the shepherd. Perhaps “*shepherd*” itself would be the best translation.

E. Prayers for the sick (James 5:13-18). The prayer of godly men will avail much. This is not a miraculous thing. James illustrates the matter by the example of Elijah, a man of like passions with us, who prayed fervently to God and received an answer to his prayers. You can read the account in 1 Kings 18:41-46. God answered not with a miracle, but by interfering into the natural order of things, as He must do to answer men’s prayers, He gave Elijah his request. So will God answer the prayers and supplications of righteous elders on behalf of the sick, according to His will?

F. Restrictions while doing the work (1 Pet. 5:1-4).

1. Not of constraint, that is, not by compulsion, not reluctantly, but willingly.
2. Not for filthy lucre. Elders can be supported to do their work on a full time basis (1 Tim. 5:17,18). Thus the warning against exploitation of the eldership for a livelihood.
3. Neither as lording it over the charge allotted. Elders are not to use their authority as dictators.
4. According to the will of God, as opposed to a self-willed desire.
5. Exercising their oversight only over the charge allotted them. Their oversight is limited to the flock of God which is among them.

The work of an eldership is second to none in its responsibility to God and man. The elder as the church's spiritual shepherd is to:-

1. Watch - warn according to the instructions of the word of God, with regard to the preservation of the flock.
2. Mature the church - speaking, teaching the word of God with a view to edifying, building up the body of Christ to spiritual adulthood.
3. Discipline the individual members - for the sake of church unity and their own souls.
4. Shepherd the flock - protect against false teachers, seek out the strays, return the erring and the worldly to faithful obedience.
5. Pray for the sick.

II. THE QUALIFICATIONS OF ELDERS

The qualifications of elders is laid down in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 and Tit. 1:5-9. Note with great care the emphatic "*must*" of 1 Tim. 3:2. [Must is an impending divine necessity] Each individual elder "**MUST BE**" possessed of each one of the requirements as listed. The qualifications are not for the eldership as a whole, which may exempt one or more elders of one or more of the qualifications if it is covered by another elder. Such an application of the scripture is not worthy of men who would be fully qualified for an effective work. The scripture is clear enough. The "bishop" (singular) "must be." Thus each bishop must be required to measure up to each qualification. The degree of possession may vary, from bishop to bishop, but to an acceptable degree each bishop must be qualified in each area. The first qualification then is to "*take heed unto yourselves*" (Acts 20:28).

A. Negative Qualifications.

1. Without reproach. Not open to censure, irresponsible.

2. No brawler. Not given to wine, drunken, brawling, abusive.
3. No striker. Bruiser, ready with a blow, a pugnacious contentious, quarrelsome person.
4. Not contentious. Disputatious, quarrelsome.
5. No lover of money. Avaricious, eager for base gain. Dishonest.
6. Not a novice. A newly planted one, a new convert.
7. Not soon angry. Prone to anger, irascible. Hotheaded, does not act calmly.
8. Not self-willed. One who is dominated by self-interest, and inconsiderate of others, arrogantly asserts his own will.

B. Positive Qualifications.

1. Husband of one wife. The word husband derived from the Greek word ANER, is never used of the female sex. Denotes an adult male, signifying a husband. In other words the office of a bishop (elder) "MUST BE" a married man, not a woman, or an unmarried man. Nor can the bishop have more than one wife (polygamy). No rationalizations are to mitigate this requirement. Each elder "MUST BE the husband of one wife," and each must have a family, otherwise he has no experience, so "how shall he take care of the church of God?"
2. Temperate. Sober.
3. Sober minded. Of sound mind, not flighty. Possessed of his senses.
4. Orderly. Well arranged, modest, of a man living with decorum, a well ordered life.
5. Given to hospitality. Hospitable, generous to guests.
6. Apt to teach. Includes being both able as a teacher, and willing to give of one's self to the preparation for the task.
7. Gentle. Seemly, suitable, equitable, fair.
8. Rules well his own house.
9. Good testimony from without. Has a good reputation from those not members of the church.
10. Self-controlled. Places curb on himself. Continent and content.
11. Holy. From the Greek word HAGIOS meaning different. The elder is different from worldly persons, as God is different.
12. Lover of good, or lover of good men. (KJV)

13. Just. Attempts to be fair in his judgment.

14. Having children that believe. *“The Greek word TEKNON means “a child” (akin to tikto, “to beget, bear”), is used in both the natural and the figurative senses. In contrast to huios, “son, it gives prominence to the fact of birth, whereas huios stresses the dignity and character of the relationship.”* There is no conclusive evidence that the Greek construction binds the qualification to more than one child i.e. children. One begets or bears even if he only has one child. However, as to an elder who cannot have children and has an adopted child the scripture are not clear. Perhaps the qualification to be met is that the elder would be mature enough to have a child who was old enough to obey the gospel of Jesus Christ, coupled with the fact that he must rule well his own house.

There is no doubt that the English translations have caused many to conclude that an elder must have more than one child who have obeyed the gospel of Jesus Christ. The scripture is its own best interpreter and offers abundant testimony to the fact that the word “children” cannot be dogmatically bound as more than one child. Let us consider the following:-

a. 1 Tim 5:4. *“But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.”* Here is the case where “children” and “grandchildren” are to show piety to their family, and to repay their parents. The words “children,” “grandchildren” and “their” are all plural words it would seem. Yet if this is pressed so as to mean plural children and not just a child, then would that relieve a single child from his/her obligation to the parents simply because there were no other children? That sounds like Jews straining out gnats and swallowing camels. Yet some insist that “children” means more than one and cannot mean any less.

b. 1 Tim 5:16. *“If any believing man or woman has widows, let them relieve them, and do not let the church be burdened, that it may relieve those who are really widows.”* This is basically the same principle as above. Here the scripture says “if any believing man or woman” singular “has widows” plural. Shall this be pressed? Does >widows” mean plural and only plural and cannot mean singular? If that is true then the believing man or woman does not have to take care of a singular “widow” then that one widow can be cast out. She will be cared for neither by the church nor the believing man or woman. Is God so arbitrary?

c. Luke 24:26. *“If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”* Must this word “children” mean more than one child? If so that man does not have to hate him as the Lord said, for the Lord meant only more than one child. The argument becomes nonsense.

d. 1 Chron 2:30. *“The sons of Nadab were Seled and Appaim; Seled died without children.”* Does this mean that Seled died without more than one child, or just one child? Or that he died without any children at all? If “children” is pressed to mean more than one, then Seled could have died having had at least one child.

e. 1 Chron 2:31. *“and the sons of Appaim; Ishi. “and the sons of Ishi; Sheshan. “and the children of Sheshan; “hlai.”* Notice that Sheshan had “children” plural. The scriptures name only one, “Ahlai.” Hence Sheshan’s “children” were only one.

f. Practical application. Ask a group of parents to hold up their hand if they have children. Then ask how many respondents only had one child. Some hands will go up.

The qualifications of elders produced through years of service and preparation, develop within Christian men a spirit and ability which enables them to discharge their auspicious work. Nothing less than these qualities are to be found in God's elders.

III. THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE LOCAL CHURCH TO THE ELDERSHIP

The church is not a democracy. It is an absolute monarchy with Christ on the throne. Whilst elders are not kings, they have, nevertheless, been duly authorised to expedite the work of the church as Christ commands. Elders make the decisions for church action. Whilst wise elders will lead, rather than drive, neither is the congregation to press its will upon the elders contrary to the elders' decisions for dispatching that work. The church must oppose every effort of the eldership to legislate new laws, but it is to encourage every effort of the elders to execute the work as revealed in the New Testament. It is one thing to agree with the wisdom of the elders' decisions, and an altogether different thing to oppose such decisions. It becomes apparent that only qualified elders should ever be appointed. God is not mocked we reap what we sow.

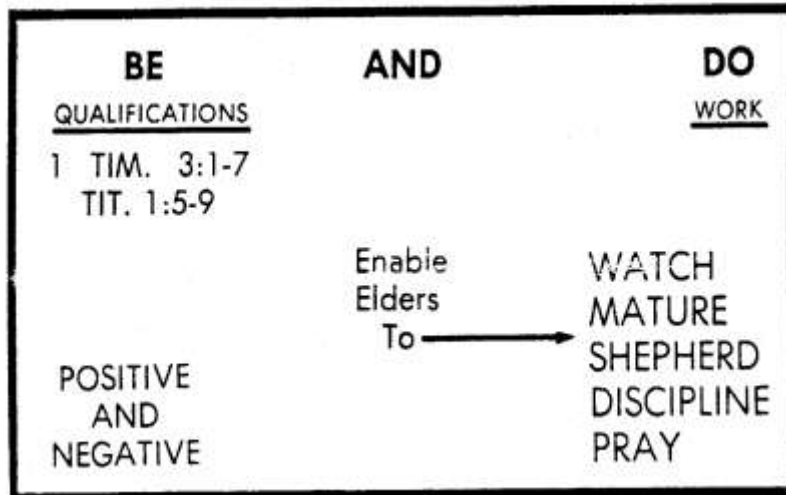
The following sets forth from the scriptures the proper relationship between the local church and her elders, which is essential to the peace, harmony, unity, and spiritual development of its members :-

A. Know them and esteem them exceedingly highly in love. (1 Thess. 5:12,13). If we are not to speak evil of any man, how much more the eldership. It is a grave thing to speak disrespectfully of an elder, or to in any way ridicule them. Let evangelists take note.

B. Be subject to them. (Heb. 13:17). Such men are worthy of respect and submission.

C. Receive not an accusation against them (except at the mouth of two or three witnesses). (1 Tim. 5:19).

D. Support them to devote full time to their work. (1 Tim. 5:17,18). Note the language: "*who labor in the word and in teaching.*" "*Labor*" means to work, as a man works or labors for a living. Those elders who would "*labor*" at their spiritual task as hard as they otherwise would to make a living are worthy of the double honor.



CONCLUSION

The work of elders is almost overwhelmingly requiring. The total picture can be summed up in two words “BE” and “DO.” That is what the elder “must BE” in order that he “may DO” his work. You cannot send a boy to do a man’s job. It may be observed that the distinctive marks of the New Testament elders are their qualifications. Would to God that all who desire the office would be so identified.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 8

**THE PASTORAL WORK AND QUALIFICATIONS OF
ELDERS**

1. Is the office of a bishop a position of power, and if so why? _____

2. What is the job of a watchman? _____

3. What is probably the most descriptive portrayal of God's watchman? _____

4. Which three classifications of office are still valid today to mature the church? _____

5. Who is responsible for the work of the church? _____

6. How are children tossed to and fro? _____

7. What should the elders teach? _____

8. In maturing the church, what should elders help the spiritual babes in Christ to do? _____

9. The elders are to discipline the disorderly. Can they do that in a church service? _____

10. What is involved in shepherding the flock? _____

11. Define the Greek word POIMAINO. _____

12. How will an elder praying for the sick help them? _____

13. List the restrictions while doing the work of an elder. _____

14. List the negative and positive qualifications of the elders. _____

15. What do you understand by the qualification “husband of one wife?” _____

16. What do you understand the requirement of having children that believe to mean? _____

17. Must each elder be fully qualified? _____

18. Can elders be supported out of the church treasury to do their work? _____

19. What is the obligation of the local church to their elders? _____

LESSON NUMBER 9

DEACONS

INTRODUCTION

That there is a special group of men in the church known as “deacons” set apart to do a particular work is indicated in the New Testament. What the duties of this group of men are must be learned from the original language, although there is no specific teaching regarding their duties as there is of elders. They are not mentioned in the list of church “officers” in Eph. 4:11, therefore not necessarily teachers.

I. DEFINITION - THE TERM AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE.

The word “deacon” is like the word baptism. It is not an actual translation from the Greek, but a transliteration, or anglicized sounding of the original.

DIAKONOS “Whence English deacon, primarily denotes a servant, whether doing servile work, or as an attendant rendering free service, without particular reference to its character.” (W.E.Vine). “One who executes the commands of another, a servant, attendant, minister. (Thayer).

Notice carefully that this word translated “*servant*” is without particular reference to its character. The word itself does not distinguish what kind of work is to be done. The bible says in Col. 4:17, “*and say to Archippus, take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfill it.*” The word is “*ministry*” (DIAKONION) but we do not know what kind of ministry or service Archippus performed. Was he a deacon, an elder, an evangelist or something else? We do not know. Only the context can determine the kind of work such DIAKONOS execute.

II. THE USE OF THE WORD IN PHIL. 1:1 AND 1 TIM. 3:8-13.

Why is the word rendered “*deacon*” in these particular passages when servant or minister would be a correct translation? The transitive words servant and minister are not distinctive. They convey no particular activity. However, in Tit. 3:8-13 there is a list of qualifications of those group of men defined as DIAKONOS. It must be concluded that these DIAKONOS are a particular group of men who are servants in the church of Jesus Christ, because of the requirements placed upon them. In Phil. 1:1, this group of men are mentioned together with bishops, whose work is particularized and with whom they are mentioned in Tit. 3. Thus in order to distinguish between these special servants or ministers, as opposed to ministers in general, they are referred to as deacons. An example can be seen in the difference of the statements by a President of the country. If a President were to say, “I want to be your servant and minister to your needs as President,” there would be nothing distinctively pointed out, but when the President appoints his Minister of Foreign Affairs the word takes on a distinct, definite meaning. And so it is with the DIAKONOS of these scriptures. It is obvious, ONLY FROM THE CONTEXT of these passages of scripture, that these DIAKONOS are to be distinguished from other general servants or ministers.

III. THE WORK OF DEACONS

This must be determined from the word DIAKONEO, which signifies to be a servant, attendant, to serve, to wait upon, minister to. (W.E.Vine) In Acts 6:2 it is rendered “*serve*.”

A. The use of the word in Acts 6:1-6. Read the passage. During a time when the church was growing rapidly, relieving the apostles of “*serving tables*,” in this case widows’ needs, was necessary in order that they might continue in preaching. Seven men who were specially qualified were appointed to take care of the business at hand. These men were to DIAKONEO (serve) the widows’ neglect. Some scholars advocate that these seven men were deacons in the Jerusalem church, and there are good reasons for believing that. However, if this premise is true, there are two problems that present themselves. Firstly, the Jerusalem church would have deacons before appointing elders. This does not seem to be the pattern in the “Gentile” churches (Acts 14:23). Secondly, these men who were appointed over this business did not have to have the qualifications of deacons, as later laid down by the Holy Spirit, through the apostle Paul (1 Tim. 3:8-10,12,13).

B. A business. In Acts 6:1-6 we have the following:-

1. A business to be accomplished. (v.3)

2. Qualifications to be met. (v.3)

(a) Men.

(b) Of honest report.

(c) Full of the Holy Spirit.

(d) Full of wisdom.

3. An appointment to be made. (3,5,6)

C. Purpose of deacons. From the Greek word DIAKONEO it would seem that deacons’ special work would be to relieve the church of any burden needing attention in order to enable her to function efficiently and effectively in evangelism and edification. If this be true, then deacons have an unlimited range of activities within the realm of service, or serving.

IV. Qualifications of deacons. (1 Tim. 3:8-10,12,13).

Despite the qualification that a deacon must be the husband of one wife, and notwithstanding the Holy Spirit’s injunction that the deacon’s wife must be grave, not slanderous, sober, faithful in all things, some denominational institutions are bent on having women deacons, citing dear sister Phebe, from the church in Cenchræa, in the first century, as their authority. Our beloved sister was indeed a servant of Jesus Christ and His church in the sense that every Christian is, and women, God bless them, did, and do, and will have a part to play in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ, albeit in a subservient manner. All members of a local church must work under the oversight of the elders. SISTER PHEBE WAS NOT A DEACON!

A. Negative.

1. Not double-tongued. Saying one thing to one person and giving a different view to another.
2. Not given to much wine. In the New Testament the word used for wine is OINOS (J.P.Green). The mention of the wineskins bursting in the gospel narratives implies fermentation (W.E.Vine). Notice that the distinction between the qualifications of elders and deacons in this area is that, while deacons are not to be given to much wine (not to become intoxicated), elders are not to be given to ANY.
3. Not greedy of filthy lucre.

B. Positive.

1. Grave. "Serious." Also "August, venerable." (W.E.Vine).
2. Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
3. The husband of one wife. Married man.
4. Ruling his children and house well.

C. They are first to be proved. Let them prove themselves as Christians for a period of time, sufficient to know them and their capabilities. The apostle Paul's admonition to Timothy, who was an evangelist, might well apply here, "*lay hands hastily on no man*" (1 Tim. 5:22).

CONCLUSION

A church with good deacons who relieve evangelists, pastors and teachers to do their particular work make a more spiritual church. Let those who serve as deacons serve well, and they shall earn to themselves a good report.

Note however, that deacons are not "junior elders." The New Testament says nothing of deacons rendering assistance to the elders in church government or decisions. Perhaps knowledgeable deacons would thereby receive their best report from the elders.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 9

DEACONS

1. What does the Greek word DIAKONOS mean? _____

2. Does the English word servant or minister distinguish the kind of work to be done? _____

3. Is there a separate group of men in the New Testament called deacons? _____

4. From Col. 4:17, can it be said of a certainty what Archippus' ministry was? _____

5. In Acts 6:1-6 there were seven men appointed to take care of a certain business. What was the business? _____

6. What qualification did these seven men have to meet? _____

7. What is the purpose in having deacons in the church? _____

8. What are the negative qualification of a deacon? _____

9. What are the positive qualifications of a deacon? _____

10. What should the elders do first before appointing deacons? _____

11. Are deacons junior elders? _____

12. Who gives deacons their tasks in the church? _____

13. Was Phoebe a deaconess? _____

LESSON NUMBER 10

EVANGELISTS

INTRODUCTION

Essential to spreading the borders of the kingdom of God, are evangelists of the church, *“for how shall they hear without a preacher?”* (Rom. 10:14) Just as essential, however, are evangelists to the economy of the local congregation. Some have entertained the idea that evangelists become unnecessary after the appointment of elders, but this is blasted from both the scripture and practical experience. In God’s spiritual economy the evangelist plays a role of major importance in both the universal and local church.

I. DEFINITION

Far too often the concept of the preacher (evangelist) and his work misses the mark by a wide margin. Tradition has taken its toll in this area as well as others, nor is the traditional concept confined to those outside of the church. So wide has the chasm of tradition made inroads into the minds of the Lord’s people that even, amazingly, the pulpit itself has often been one of the great contributors to the misconception of the evangelist and his work. Fortunately, the biblical teaching is not difficult to convey.

A. EUANGELISTES, “a bringer of good tidings, an evangelist. This name is given in the New Testament to those heralds of salvation through Christ who are not apostles.” (Acts 21:8; Eph. 4:11; 2 Tim. 4:5) Thayer.

B. KERUX, “a herald, is used of the preacher of the gospel.” (1 Tim. 2:7; 2 Tim. 1:11) W.E.Vine.

PREACH THE WORD! 2 Tim 4:2

C. KERUSSO, “to be a herald, to proclaim after the manner of a herald, to publish, proclaim openly.” (2 Tim. 4:2) Barclay.

D. THE PROPHET AND THE PREACHER. These were kindred spirits in passionate delivery of their messages, as well as the content of their message, the word of God. Strictly speaking, the prophet was a spokesman for God. Exodus 4:15,16 shows him to be a *“mouth, a spokesman.”* Deut. 18:18,19 states that the function of the prophet was to speak just that word God placed on his mouth. When God called Jeremiah to serve Him as a prophet, the young man feared he could not measure up to the task. Recognizing immediately that the prophet was a spokesman for God he replied *““h, Lord GOD! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.”* (Jer. 1:6) . God’s reply was, *“whatsoever I command you, you shall speak.....Behold I have put my words in your mouth.”* (Jer. 1:7,9). It can be no different now than it was then. God’s word is our only message whether we would speak it by inspiration or we speak it by reading out of the Bible.

The KERUX was a messenger who conveyed the official message of the king, magistrate, prince or

military commander. Thus KERUX was a very fitting word to call those proclaimers of the King's gospel message. The KERUX, the preacher, was to herald the message of the king to make THAT message known to the people, not to make up speeches of his own. The preacher of the gospel, thus, is to learn well the message of Christ and proclaim it as it is. One prophet expressed it perfectly: "*Then Haggai, the LORD'S messenger, spoke the LORD'S message to the people.*" (Hag. 1:13). That would be refreshing today!

Is it then possible to be a preacher and not know the gospel message? How can a man call himself preacher (KERUX) and never refer to a single Bible passage? The preacher's place in the pulpit as throughout the world is not that of quiet platitudes, but of proclaiming, that of heralding the heavenly message to tabernacled spirits hopelessly lost in sin without Christ. His motto expresses the philosophy of his life, "*preach the word.*"

II. THE FIVE-FOLD WORK OF THE EVANGELIST

The apostle Paul charged the evangelist Timothy to "*do the work of an evangelist.*" (2 Tim. 4:4). The very fact of this instruction is proof that the preacher's work is distinctively set forth in the New Testament. The following seeks to demonstrate the work of the evangelist in ascendancy of requirement in both knowledge and experience.

A. Evangelize - Preach. (2 Tim. 4:2,5). From **euangelistes** and **kerux** the very definition of the words tell the work. Bring glad tidings to the lost. Preach the word to the world. That is the first identifying mark of Christ's preacher, soul winning. "*He that winneth souls is wise*" (Prov. 11:30). Humble door knocking preaching brings more souls to Christ than powerful pulpitering. No man is an evangelist who confines his speaking within a wooden pulpit. The work of soul winning is the easiest of the evangelist's tasks, and one of the most rewarding.

B. Edifying the local congregation. (Eph. 4:11-16). Co-operating together with pastors and teachers, the evangelists teach and preach to raise the level of spiritual maturity. For the local preacher to feel the pulse of the local church and supply their spiritual needs from time to time requires more knowledge than first to bring someone to Christ. Only experience of the word and Bible study can provide that ability.

C. Appoint elders. (Tit. 1:5). Vine states that this is not an ecclesiastical ordination. Through preaching, teaching, and praying, the evangelists help to bring men to qualified maturity to serve as elders. The evangelist is to make sure that each elder is qualified in each of the areas discussed in the lesson outlining the qualifications of elders, thus the appointment of elders may take years of work.

D. Defend the faith. (1 Tim. 1:3; Tit. 1:10-13).

This necessary part of the work of the evangelist is not the easiest by any means. Sometimes it is the most bitterest, but it is vital and necessary in order to keep the church pure, for it is the only institution, in which God is glorified. (Eph. 3:21). Only diligent and constant study of not only God's word, but the doctrines of "false prophets" will equip the evangelist to offset the craftiness of cunning imposters and to expose those violating the "*pattern of sound words.*"

E. Preacher - teacher train. (2 Tim. 2:2).

It is not the church's function or responsibility either to support financially, students going through "preacher training school," or to structure schools, financially supported by the church, for the purpose of training preachers. This would drain the church financially, leaving little or no resources to carry out the church's function which is to preach the gospel to the lost, edify the local church, and carry out benevolent works to the needy in the church. To create an institution to carry out this vital work of the evangelist, within the work of the local church, separate and apart from the church, signifies an inability of the church to carry out its work as defined by God, and therefore becomes a slap in the face of God. It would also relieve the evangelist of his God-given responsibility to "*commit the word of God to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*" The teaching of the word of God is a perpetuating activity from preacher to preacher. The scriptural method of teaching others, honors God in that it submits to the authority of His Son. The evangelist must do this vital work "*for the harvest indeed is plenteous, but the laborers are few.*" (Matt. 9:37,38).

It might be well for evangelists both young and old, the beginners and veterans alike, to consider their present activities in the light of the foregoing, and to make a sober judgment, whether they are actually engaged in "*the work of an evangelist.*"

III. QUALIFICATIONS

A. Diligent, not lazy. (1 Tim. 4:15; 2 Tim. 2:15).

From the Greek verb MELETAO, signifies to care for, attend carefully, and SPOUDAZO, which refers to the zeal, and haste in doing a thing. (Vine) No wonder the apostle Paul tells Timothy to "*be zealous to show yourself approved unto God a WORKMAN that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*" [emphasis mine - gwh] (2 Tim. 2:15). There is no need for idle preachers, there is always a lot of work to be done, scripture to study, books to read, lessons to be prepared, lost souls to be taught, elders to be appointed, preachers to be trained, and the faith to be defended. A lazy preacher is a leech.

B. Example to them that believe. (1 Tim 4:12). The word translated example here is TUPOS which means pattern. No one will despise the young evangelist because he is young, but only if his conduct is not according to the pattern of sound words.

C. Takes heed to himself. (1 Tim. 4:16). See also Acts 20:28 and 2 Cor. 13:5. The evangelist is actually to work on himself for betterment. It can and must be done.

D. Takes heed to his teaching. (1 Tim. 4:16). To be a victim of the condemnation of which one indicts another is often due to the failure to reconfirm one's position by scripture. The evangelist is to give attention to his teaching.

E. Pure. (1 Tim. 5:22) From the Greek adjective HAGNOS, pure, means, not contaminated (Vine).

F. Steadfast in the faith, loyal to the truth, refusing false and speculative doctrines, uncompromising toward those who teach error. (1 & 2 Tim; Tit.).

IV. THEIR SUPPORT

The right to be supported by those served is one of the clearest teachings in the scriptures.

A. The principle and the commandments. (Rom. 15:27; 1 Cor. 9:1-14). Paul, upon gathering money for the Jewish brethren during the famine, said that *“if Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, they owe it to them also to minister unto them in carnal things.”* A debt is actually incurred by one who receives the gospel. Paul, actually illustrating another point, speaks of paying the preacher. He sets out nine different cases in which men partake of their labor and then adds, *“If we sowed unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we reap your carnal things?”* First the apostle laid down a principle then he applied it to the preacher’s support by stating in effect that spiritual things, are immeasurably more important than carnal, and that, since he sows the spiritual things, the evangelist has a right to receive his support, the carnal things, from the church. Finally, he declares, *“even so did the Lord ordain that they that proclaim the gospel should live of the gospel.”*

B. The obligation of congregations to support the evangelist. (Gal. 6:6-8. See also 2 Cor. 11:7,8; Phil. 4:10-20). The passage in Gal. 6 is especially needful for churches today.

1. Communicate. The Greek word is KOINONIA and is also translated *“fellowship.”* The word means to share, participate, to have in common. It is rendered *“contribution”* in Rom. 15:26; 2 Cor. 9:13, it is rendered *“communion”* in 1 Cor. 10:16,18,20; 2 Cor. 13:14, and *“communicate”* in Gal. 6:6 and Heb. 13:16. In every case, it means *“to share,” “to participate.”* This is what the New Testament commands the church to do with her preachers.

2. God is not mocked. To illustrate that you get what you pay for, Paul illustrates from nature, which none can deny, that you reap exactly what you sow. The idea seems to be that if brethren refuse to pay their preachers because they hate to turn loose of the money which they desire to spend on themselves, then they are sowing to their own fleshly desires. Even as flesh dies so will they - spiritually. Even if the preacher worked to support himself he would be robbed of valuable prayer time, study time, preparation so necessary to teaching the meat of the word. The church needs the pure wheat of the word not the chaff. This cannot be gleaned so well by the man who is not full time in the work of an evangelist. God is not mocked in either nature or religion. Spiritual law is as immutable as nature’s. To sow wheat is to reap wheat. To sow sparingly is to reap sparingly. To sow the word is to reap its spiritual bounty. To sow sparingly is to have spiritual dwarfs.

C. Support of other evangelists and workers. Read Acts 15:1-3, *“brought on their way by the churches.”* See also Tit. 3:12-14 and 3 John 5-8. When Paul was preaching in Thessalonica, the church in Philippi helped to support him in his work there. (Phil. 4:15,16).

V. CLERGY AND LAITY

There are no special titles for preachers in the testament of sound words. Jesus spoke disparagingly of those who love to have the chief positions, and to be called by religious titles. (Matt. 23:5-10). Such titles set them apart from other men. Proud flesh must always be cautious concerning this.

The word (or title) Pope is derived from the Latin *papa*, Greek *pappas*, and means father. Jesus said that we were to call no one father. Another title that proud arrogant man assumes to himself is Reverend. There is only one reference to this title in the whole of the Bible, and it is found in Psa.

111:9, and it refers only to God. How dare man think that he is reverend, when in reality only God is.

In this regard it is interesting to note two passages of scripture concerning the clergy and laity of God. Firstly, the apostle Paul says that all who are “*in Christ*” “*were made a heritage.*” (Eph. 1:11) The word “*heritage*” in the Greek is KLEROO. (Vine) In ecclesiastical writings this is the word from which was derived the word “clergy.” Yet the clergy is God’s heritage, His people (all inclusive), Christians. Secondly, the apostle Peter refers to God’s saints as “*a holy people.*” (1 Pet. 2:9). The word “*people*” in the Greek is LAOS. (Vine) This also in ecclesiastical writings came to be used for the “people.” They were called the “laity.” Who is the “laity?” God’s people. But that is what the “clergy” is. The clergy is the laity. The people of God are His heritage. No distinction is made by God, only by proud, arrogant man.

There is a title, however that the Lord has reserved for us, but it might be too great for some people to wear. Here is how it will sound for those who have lived obedient lives to the Lord. “*Well done thou good and faithful servant*”

CONCLUSION

Evangelists have been called the life-blood of the church. Well they might be, for they carry the message of saving grace far and wide, against the strictures of men and hell. They establish congregations and keep them going, they stay when all others leave, they work to develop and mature churches, and finally elderships, and their own security, such as men know, is cast into the fire that others might be eternally secured at the coming of the Lord.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 10

EVANGELISTS

1. Give three Greek words that describe the work of the evangelist, and briefly define all three.

2. What is the relationship between prophet and the preacher? _____

3. Describe what the KERUX was in ancient times. _____

4. What is a prophet? _____

5. Are there inspired prophets in the church today, and explain why? _____

6. List the five-fold work of the evangelist. _____

7. List the qualifications of the evangelist. _____

8. Should the evangelist be supported to devote full time to the job? _____

9. Is a church that does not support its preacher liable to be cheated in spiritual matters, and discuss the reason for your answer? _____

10. How well is the evangelist to be supported? _____

11. Discuss Paul's argument to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 9:1-14 regarding spiritual and carnal things.

12. What does the Greek word KOINONIA mean? _____

13. God is not mocked. Discuss the illustration that you get what you pay for. _____

14. Discuss the scripturalness, and the practicality of helping to support preachers, that other churches cannot afford to support. _____

15. Discuss the difference between clergy and laity.

16. How would you describe the evangelist in God's economy with regard to the seriousness of the position. _____

THE WORSHIP OF THE CHURCH

LESSON NUMBER 11

THE DISTINCT IDENTITY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

INTRODUCTION

As far as the archaeological spade and shovel have traced mankind to his ancient past, there have been found expressions of his search for and devotion to his God. Truly man has been created a compulsive worshipper. Even without God's revelation to man, he has sought to worship "*for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse.*" (Rom. 1:20). From the beginning of time God has provided for man's urge to worship, to be satisfied, but He has always determined the design and purpose of that worship. Nor is it arbitrary, nor does God act on a whim, worship has been designed by God to glorify Him and benefit the worshipper.

I. WORSHIP DEFINED

The word "worship" is nowhere defined in the scriptures, therefore it is necessary to go to the original language for our definition.

A. PROSKUNEO, "to make obeisance, do reverence to (from PROS, towards, and KUNEO, to kiss), thus to kiss the hand towards. It is the most frequent word rendered to worship. It is used of an act of homage or reverence." (W.E.Vine).

The margin reading of the American Standard Version defines PROSKUNEO as "an act of reverence, whether paid to a creature or to the Creator." This is the comment on such passages as John 9:38, where the man born blind whom Jesus healed said "*Lord I believe. and he worshipped Him.*" Worship then is an act, not an unconscious something or other, not accomplished unthinkingly, or accidentally, but by intent and discipline. Thomas, after seeing the Lord's hands and side, that it was truly the Lord risen from the dead, was so impressed that he paid homage with the words, "*my Lord and my God*" (John 20:28). In both of these cases the act of worship was spontaneous, from the heart, not accidental. While worship is an act, it is not that which is acted out by rote, or mechanically performed ritual. Such is neither worship accepted of God nor beneficial to the worshipper. There are no magical benefits or cleansing powers in acting.

B. LATREUO, "to serve, to render religious service or homage," (W.E.Vine). This particular word is rendered "serve" and is used in such passages as "*But God turned and gave them up to SERVE the host of heaven.*" (Acts 7:42). That is, they walked after idols as a way of life. The apostle Paul said, "*But this I confess unto thee, that after the Way which they call a sect, so SERVE I the God of our fathers.*" (Acts 24:14). That is, Paul was walking after God as a way of life. Therefore LATREUO is the worship of a life of service. It is that continual act of the Christian life which Paul expressed in

Titus 2:12 *“teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age.”*

Thus worship is not confined to praise or worship service in the assembly of the saints. Worship can be a distinct act such as commemorating the Lord's death in participation of the memorial feast of the Lord's supper, which is PROSKUNEO, or it can be the subjecting of one's will and life to Christ by consciously keeping His commandments from the heart, which is LATREUO.

II. THE DISTINCT IDENTITY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

Inasmuch as worship consists of certain acts or of a life of devotion as prescribed by the divine will, it is necessary to conclude that Christian worship has a distinct identity, it can be taught, learned and rendered to God acceptably and beneficially. Jesus said, *“But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth; for such does the Father seek to be His worshippers. God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.”* (John 4:23,24).

These words should be deliberately and carefully studied. Take special note of the following:-

A. The true worshippers. These worship the Father in :

1. Spirit. Spirit expresses the character of the worship. It is not an unfeeling, unthinking, unemotional ritual, but a sincere and grateful expression from the very heart of man.

2. Truth. Truth is the standard by which the worshipper is guided into his homage or service to God. Jesus said, *“Thy word is truth.”* (John 17:17). Truth is not relative, it is absolute. It can be identified. The word of God specifies the worship to be rendered.

B. Must worship. “MUST” is an impending divine necessity. Worship is not what we make it. It is what God has designed and revealed through His written word. Anything else would be to *“go beyond that which is written.”* (1 Cor. 4:6).

C. God seeks such. The Father is ever seeking “such” as will worship Him in spirit and in truth. The Father knows who they are. They can be identified by the pattern of sound words as contained in the New Testament.

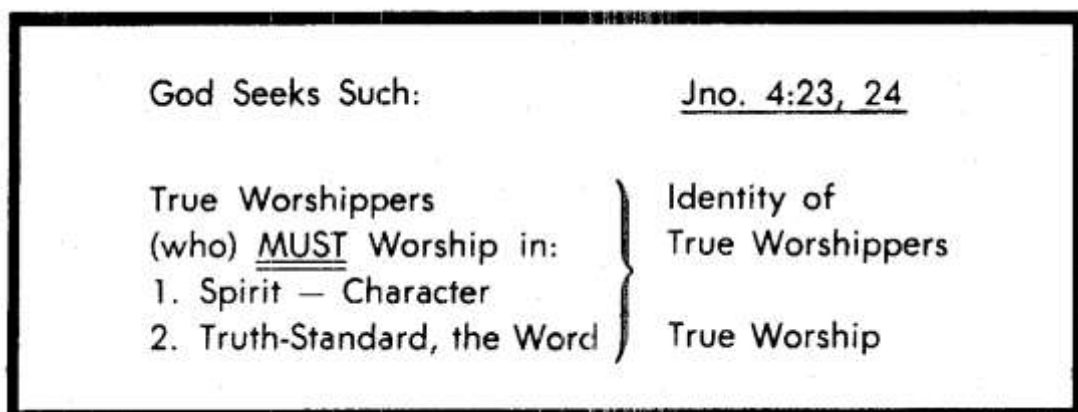
It is necessary from the forgoing to conclude that Christian worship has a distinct identity. True worship can be identified inasmuch as the true worshippers themselves have an identity, for, "*such does the Father seek.*" It is that particular worship set out in the pattern of sound words which **MUST** be rendered to God.

III. THE OBJECT OF TRUE WORSHIP : GOD (Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8,9).

The New Testament opens and closes with the same admonition to all : "worship God." God has revealed Himself to men everywhere "*that they should seek God.*" (Acts 17:24-28). When man at an earlier date rejected that revelation given in natural law, and written law, he plunged into the degradation of idolatry and reaped the consequences of his own willful perversion. "*They exchanged the truth of God for a lie.*" (Rom. 1:15).

God is a person not an "it" without feelings and personality. Performing the acts of worship as set forth in the New Testament without such being prompted by recognition of His attributes, or without a response from within the grateful and admiring heart, is not glory to God, nor is there any value whatsoever in such for the worshipper. He has but wasted his time. Such unthinking, pretence can be easily recognized in what is called "Sunday morning worship services." Witness the polite inattentiveness of the "worshipper" and the glassy-eyed stares testifying that the heart and mind are elsewhere.

This **MUST** be understood, worship is not merely an act, or ritual. It is an action, brought about by an



emotional response to the intellect. Worship is a result of the human heart in response to the revealed guidelines. The worship of great spirits such as Abraham, Job, David, Paul and others, and of course the supreme example of Jesus the Christ, whilst He was on planet earth, is thrown into marked contrast to the mere rituals which apostate Israel performed, as the prophet Isaiah vividly describes:-

“To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? Says the LORD. I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies-- I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them.” (Isa. 1:11-14)

Learn well that songs of praise, the Lord’s supper, prayers, contribution and preaching are no more acceptable than saying “hail Mary” or vainly repeating the “Lord’s prayer” when such is merely ritualistic, unemotional, unthinking worship.

IV. FALSE WORSHIP

The converse of worship “*in spirit and in truth*” is false worship. It is both false and vain. Such worship is without biblical sanction or spiritual benefit, to the contrary Jesus and the apostle Paul spoke out against it.

A. Vain worship. (Matt. 15:6-9). Jesus during His earthly ministry was plagued by the insincerity, and arrogance of the Jewish leaders. On one occasion He told them “*well did Isaiah prophesy of you saying this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me.*” He also told them “*you reject the commandment of God that you may keep your own tradition.*” (Christ’s quote is from Isa 29:13). Such worship was void of substance and sincerity.

B. Ignorant worship. (Acts 17:23). This worship may be sincere, but the intellect is lacking in that the knowledge of God’s specific requirements with regard to the pattern of worship is deficient. Neither the right object of worship nor His will are known. See also Rom 10:2,3 for a clear statement. Such worship is in ignorance.

C. Will-worship. (Col. 2:18,23). From the Greek verb THELO (W.E Vine) will-worship is defined as “voluntary adopted worship whether unbidden or forbidden, not that which is imposed by others, but which one effects.” In other words doing what you “feel” like doing, expecting that God will accept it without authorization from His word. This is the exact opposite of worship “*in truth.*”

CONCLUSION

The worship of Christ’s church has been designed by God and revealed in the pages of the New Testament. It is sufficient to satisfy man’s inner desire to express himself in worship to his God. It glorifies God in that the true worshipper subjects his will, life and service to the Father’s will which is the heart of revealed religion. It is beneficial to the worshipper who responds in spirit and in truth. Worship can be a single act, or a life of disciplined service. It is as distinct and identifiable as the word itself, and is to be distinguished from all worship which is contrary to the pattern of sound

words.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 11

THE DISTINCT IDENTITY OF CHRISTIAN WORSHIP

1. Define worship and discuss the difference between the two Greek words. _____

2. Is worship an attitude or an act? Answer from John 4:23,24. _____

3. Is worship confined to a worship service? _____

4. Can Christian worship be distinctly identified? _____

5. Is there a particular worship which God has designed for His church to render, and if so what?

6. Who is the object of true worship? _____

7. How did Jesus say that we should worship the Father? _____

8. What is the converse of worshipping God in spirit and in truth? _____

9. What is vain worship? _____

10. What is ignorant worship? _____

11. What is will-worship? _____

12. What does it mean when something is unbidden and give a scriptural illustration?

13. Would you say that God has built in us a desire to worship, and has He determined the design and purpose of that worship and if so, how? _____

LESSON NUMBER 12

THE LORD'S SUPPER

INTRODUCTION

The Lord's supper is distinctly Christian. It is distinctive in its simplicity and the profound meaning to the church.

I. ITS INSTITUTION BY CHRIST (Matt. 26:26-30; Mk. 14:22-26; Lk. 22:14-20).

A. The occasion. The Passover feast was a Jewish commemoration of Israel's deliverance from Egyptian slavery. It was during this feast with His disciples that Jesus instituted the supper.

B. Something new for the kingdom. Jesus stated, "*But I say unto you, I shall not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.*" (Matt. 26:29). What is new?

1. It was to be in a new kingdom. The death of Jesus Christ abolished the old economy of Judaism (Eph. 2:15), and mediated a new covenant for His new kingdom. (Matt. 26:28; Heb. 9:15-18; 10:9,19,20).

2. It would commemorate a new deliverance. Jesus Christ our Lord, facing the culmination of His ministry here on planet earth, was participating at the Passover feast at the time He was instituting another memorial feast, Jesus Christ Himself being our Passover. (1 Cor. 5:7). In His death the Lord procured our deliverance from sin. Remembering the price that was paid, (the ransom) in the Lord's supper (1 Cor. 11:7), is an expression of our faith that His death was a triumph for our sake. (1 Cor. 15:55-57).

3. It would be observed on a new day. Although the Passover feast was not a Sabbath day observance, nevertheless, it was a special feast day, to commemorate God delivering Israel from the bondage of slavery, once a year. The commemoration of the Lord delivering us from the slavery of sin was to be observed on the Lord's day (Rev. 1:10), or the first day of the week (Acts 20:7), whereas Jewish worship was confined to the Sabbath, or seventh day of the week.

What Jesus and the disciples were eating and drinking during the Passover feast, unleavened bread and the fruit of the grapevine, would take on and be of new significance after the resurrection and the revelation of its meaning by the Holy Spirit through the apostles.

II. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER (1 Cor. 10:15-21; 11:17-34).

A. It is a communion. (1 Cor. 10:15-21). The Greek word for communion is KOINONIA, which means "a having in common, partnership, fellowship, the share that anyone has in anything, fellowship ... of sharing in the realization of the effects of the blood of Christ and the body of Christ, as set forth by the emblems in the Lord's supper, 1 Cor, 10:16." (W.E.Vine).

Participating in the Lord's supper is an expression of the fact that we share with Christ in the benefits of His shed blood at Calvary for the forgiveness of our sins.

B. Its significance is three-fold.

1. A commemoration, a memorial. (1 Cor. 11:25-33). Jesus said, "*do this in remembrance of Me.*" We remember the death of Jesus Christ until He comes again whilst we are partakers of the memorial feast on the first day of the week.

2. A proclamation. (1 Cor. 11:26). From the Greek word KATANGELLEUS, an evangel (W.E.Vine). When participating in the Lord's supper we are literally silently preaching the death of Jesus Christ, for the sins of ruined humanity, until He comes again.

3. An examination. (1 Cor. 28-32). The Lord's supper is a time for examining one's self. The church must be discriminating in that it does not participate of the world's impure and idolatrous ways. Each Christian is to make certain that he is not, as it were, eating at the table of worldliness (1 Cor. 10:20,21), and at the same time hypocritically proclaiming a faith in Christ Jesus, which the way he lives actually denies. Such an examination is regularly needed, and in the Lord's supper is so provided by the Great Provider. The motivation for the examination lies in the fact that whosoever eats "*in an unworthy manner.....discerning not the body,*" will eat and drink damnation to himself. Cannot Christians, then, be condemned after they once receive saving grace?

The Lord's Supper:	A Commemoration
	A Proclamation
	An Examination

III. THE DAY AND FREQUENCY OF PARTAKING

Paul's instructions to the church at Corinth concerning the supper were received from the Lord (1 Cor. 11:23), and were to be practised among all the churches. (1 Cor. 4:17; 14:37; 2 Tim. 1:13). The apostles' doctrine was that the Lord's supper should be observed "often." (1 Cor. 11:25,26). The question to be asked is, how often?

A. Frequently and regularly. There was a regular coming together of the church to break bread. (1 Cor. 11:17,18). It was "often" (1 Cor. 11:25,26). Reason leads one to conclude that if God does not designate the day and frequency of observance then human wisdom must decide. If God does not say how often we are to eat the supper, then once a month would be acceptable, or even once a year. Once each five years would not be wrong as long as human wisdom is left to decide. However, the regular assembly of the church in Corinth for the purpose of eating the Lord's supper, and the very statement that they did so "often" necessarily implies that the church in the time of the apostles observed Christ's death at close intervals.

B. Upon the first day of the week. (Acts 20:7).

1. "We were gathered together." This is a passive participle in the Greek grammar indicating that

the gathering was called by another. Literally, *“having been gathered together by another”* is the correct idea. The same construction is used in Matt. 2:4 where those who came together did so because the king had ordered it. So this gathering was not what the disciples had decided for themselves to do, but their gathering together had been ordered by another, the Lord. Their coming together on the first day of the week, was certainly not incidental, nor a decision of their own making. It was a decision of the Lord, and they were keeping His commandment on the day He commanded it, that is, on the first day of the week, or Sunday. (See 1 Cor. 14:37 and 2 Tim. 3:16,17).

2. This was the practice for all the churches. (1 Cor. 4:17). What the disciples of Jesus Christ were doing in Troas *“on the first day of the week”* was also being done in all the other congregations of the Lord’s church, that were taught by Paul. The Corinthian church observed the Lord’s supper *“often”* and the church at Troas observed it *“on the first day of the week.”* Since all the churches practised the same things it was universal among the church in the times of the apostles to participate in the Lord’s supper as often as the first day of the week.

Scripture Reference	Statement	Time	Purpose
Acts 20:7	“gathered together”	“the first day of the week” (Genitive Absolute)	“to break bread”
1 Cor. 11:17	“come together”		
1 Cor. 11:18	“come together in the church”		
1 Cor. 11:20	“assemble yourselves together”		“to eat the Lord’s Supper”
1 Cor. 11:33, 34	“when ye come together” “your coming together”		“to eat”
1 Cor. 14:26	“ye come together”		“unto edifying”
Heb. 10:25	“not forsaking our own assembling together”		

C. Not any time other than the first day of the week.

There is no authority in scripture to observe the Lord’s supper on any day other than the first day of the week. We can eat the supper on the first day of the week *“by faith”* (Rom. 10:17; 2 Cor. 5:7). We cannot commemorate His death on any other day of the week *“by faith.”*

D. Where the Lord’s supper is to be observed. In the assembly of the saints. (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 11:17,18,20,33,34). God designed the assembly for the edification of the saints as well as unto His glory. (1 Cor. 14:26). The supper was an important item of worship, as was singing, praying, giving, and preaching during that assembly. Breaking of bread was one of the reasons for the disciples of the Lord coming together on the first day of the week. Its frequency of observance is quite practical,

giving the Christian regular opportunities to commemorate the Lord's death, to proclaim it as a victory over sin, and to examine himself on a weekly basis. Those who are not seriously and soberly engaged in regular first day of the week assembly become spiritually weak and sick. (1 Cor. 11:27-30).

D. Not a common meal.

1. The apostle Paul's instruction to the Lord's church at Corinth was to wait for the whole church to assemble before eating the supper (1 Cor. 11:33), and then adds, "*if any man is hungry, let him eat at home.*" (1 Cor. 11:34). So he clearly distinguishes between the Lord's supper and a common meal. Their coming together was not "*to eat,*" nor "*to drink,*" but it was to proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

2. Luke distinguishes between the Lord's supper and common meal. (Acts 2:42,46).

(a) The early church "*continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers.*" The definite article in the original text signifies "*the breaking of THE bread,*" that is, a particular bread. This breaking of the bread is in the context of the apostle's doctrine and prayers. Therefore the context is a worship situation and not a common meal.

(b) The "*breaking of bread*" in Acts 2:46 is "*at home.*" It is the food of a common meal, not the bread which was broken when they assembled to eat the Lord's supper.

3. Luke distinguishes between the Lord's supper and a common meal. (Acts 20:7; 20:11).

(a) Luke says that "*we were gathered together to break bread*" on the first day of the week, and Paul intended to depart the next day. Since Paul, taking advantage of the time he had with the brethren at Troas, preached until midnight, Eutychus, God bless him, couldn't stay awake any longer, fell asleep, and fell out of the window and died. Paul by the power of God raised him up from the dead, and afterwards being after midnight, that is to say Monday, "*when he was therefore come up again, and broken bread, and eaten, and had talked a long while, even to break of day he departed.*" Luke makes a clear distinction between the bread which "we" were gathered together to eat, and the breaking of bread which "he," Paul ate before departing at dawn. The Lord's supper was taken on the first day of the week (Sunday), and Paul ate a common meal "*on the morrow*" (Monday).

The Lord's supper is to be distinguished from an ordinary meal. It is a communion (1 Cor. 10:16), with the body and blood of Jesus Christ. It is an item of worship which God has designed for our spiritual growth and development and His own deserving honor and glory.

IV. THE ELEMENTS TO BE USED IN BREAKING BREAD

Unleavened bread and the fruit of the grapevine are those elements commanded by God to be used and authorized in the pattern of sound words.

A. The bread of the Passover used by Jesus. (Matt. 26:26-29). The law required only unleavened bread to be used in the house of those eating the Passover. (Deut. 16:1-8). Since the Lord instituted the Lord's supper at the feast of the Passover, the bread He used was unleavened.

A simple method of making unleavened bread, is to mix flour and water, without salt, into a paste and then bake.

B. The fruit of the vine used by Jesus. The cup which Jesus gave to the disciples to drink, that is, the contents, not the cup itself, He refers to as "*this fruit of the vine.*" (Matt. 26:29). That would exclude the fruit of the orange, apple, apricot or any other fruit for that matter. As the bread represents the body of Christ, the juice of the grape represents His blood. It matters not whether it is fermented or straight from the squeezing, as long as it is from the fruit of the vine.

Inasmuch as this is not a common meal, no one participating in a worthy manner could be called a wine-bibber. It might be expedient, however, to use unfermented wine for obvious reasons.

CONCLUSION

The Lord's supper is an act of worship upon the first day of the week. It is significant in that it proclaims the Lord's death until He come. Let all Christians realize their responsibility to observe it frequently, and examine themselves.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 12

THE LORD'S SUPPER

1. Who instituted the Lord's Supper? _____

2. What was the occasion that the Lord's supper was instituted? _____

3. List three new things that there would be for the new kingdom? _____

4. What is the new deliverance from? _____

5. What is the Greek word for communion, and what does it mean? _____

6. What is the three-fold significance of the Lord's supper? _____

7. What day of the week is the Lord's supper to be taken on? _____

8. How often is the Lord's supper to be taken? _____

9. Where was the Lord's supper to be observed? _____

10. Give two examples of the difference between a common meal and the Lord's supper, and explain

the difference between the two meals. _____

11. What are the elements to be used in observing the Lord's supper? _____

12. What is meant by Matthew, when he said that the Lord took the cup and gave to them? _____

13. If we are hungry where are we to eat? _____

14. In acts 20:7, what was the reason for assembling together on the first day of the week? _____

15. "*We were gathered together*" is a passive participle in the Greek grammar. What does it indicate?

16. Were the Jews commanded to keep every Sabbath day holy or were they at liberty to choose which Sabbaths they kept?

17. How does this affect the argumentation for the frequency of the Christians worship? _____

18. How serious are the consequences of eating the Lord's supper in an unworthy manner? _____

LESSON NUMBER 13

SINGING

INTRODUCTION

God's people have, from the time of their deliverance from Egyptian slavery, expressed their gratitude to and admiration for God in song. God has selected it as a means of worship for His church. There is nothing more inspiring or more expressive of the soul's adoration than the singing of psalms, hymns and spiritual songs.

I. MUSIC IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Music under the old economy was both in song and with the instrument. Instruments were authorized by God through His prophets during David's time. (2 Chron. 29:25). The 150th psalm enumerates a few of the instruments employed to praise Jehovah. However, the word "with" means "using" the instrument. It does not mean together with, or as an accompaniment to vocal singing. Such is not the Psalmist's meaning. When it is stated "*Praise Him with stringed instruments,*" (Psa. 150:4) it does not mean, as some might wish it, to praise Him together with stringed instruments and singing.

Remember this old system has been nailed to the cross together with its worship and requirements.

II. MUSIC IN THE NEW TESTAMENT IS CONFINED TO SINGING

The authorization of the scriptures, is singing. Jesus and His disciples "*sang a hymn.*" (Matt. 26:30; Mk 14:26). Paul and Silas sang in prison. (Acts 16:25). Prophecy spoke of singing the salvation of God for the Gentiles. (Rom. 15:9, which is a quote from either Psa. 18:49 or 2 Sam. 22:50). Christians are admonished to sing with the spirit and the understanding. (1 Cor. 14:15). The types of songs prescribed are psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. (Eph. 5:19). The melody is not to be made on any other instrument than the heart. (Col. 3:16,17). Thus "*the fruit of the lips*" (Heb. 13:15), could include singing. Jesus exhorts Christians to express their happiness which is due to God in song, (Jas. 5:13) "*is any cheerful? let him sing praise.*" Singing is also in the vision of John on the Isle of Patmos. (Rev. 14:1-3; 15:2-4). All use of the instruments in the book of Revelation cannot be viewed as literal, as it falls in the apocalyptic section of the book. Not only that but the music is in heavenly places not in the assembly of the saints.

All of the above can be done by faith. Here is the kind of songs, the how of singing, the object of singing, and the purpose of singing. It should be enough. Singing is the only authorized expression of music in the New Testament, anything other than that would "*go beyond that which is written.*" (1 Cor. 4:6).

III. DEFINITION.

A. ADO is used always as praise to God. In Eph. 5:19 and Col. 3:16 the word is characterized by not having or containing a direct object. (W.E.Vine) Is translated sing.

B. PSALLO primarily to twitch, twang, then to play a stringed instrument with the fingers, (W.E.Vine) translated melody, which is to be made in the heart.

C. HUMNEO denotes a song of praise addressed to God. Is always used in the New Testament as being characterized by not having or containing a direct object. (W.E.Vine) Is translated hymn.

IV. MECHANICAL INSTRUMENTS OF MUSIC NOT A PART OF NEW TESTAMENT MUSIC

A. Concerning the instrument.

1. It is not authorized in the New Testament. There is no direct command, apostolic example or necessary inference in the pattern of sound words. To use instruments is to bring the teaching over from the Old Testament, which the first century church did not do, or be added to the New Testament by human innovation.

A Bible commentator of the last century wrote, "I further believe that the use of such instruments of music, in the Christian church, is without sanction and against the will of God, that they are subversive of the spirit of true devotion, and that they are sinful...I am an old man, and an old minister, and I here declare that I never knew them productive of any good in the worship of God, and have reason to believe that they were productive of much evil. Music, as a science, I esteem and admire, but instruments of worship in the house of God I abominate and abhor. This is the abuse of music, and here I register my protest against all such corruptions in the worship of the Author of Christianity." The late John Wesley, who was a lover of music, and an elegant poet, when asked his opinion of instruments of music being introduced into the chapels of the Methodists said, in his terse and powerful manner, "I have no objections to instruments of music in our chapels, provided they are neither HEARD nor SEEN. I say the same, though I think the expense of purchase had better be spared." (Adam Clark). The use of organs in churches is ascribed to Pope Vitalian (657-672). (History of the Christian church by Philip Schaff Vol. IV. P684).

2. It is will-worship. Will-worship is defined as "voluntary adopted worship, whether unbidden or forbidden, not that which is imposed by others, but that which one effects." (W.E.Vine). The instrument cannot be found in the New Testament worship, therefore for it to be used it must be "voluntary adopted." It is not unbidden, but then it is not forbidden, but the fact that singing is bidden that automatically renders any other form of music as forbidden. Instruments are not "imposed" by New Testament writers, but they are in fact that which "one effects" if they are to be used. That is what is meant by will-worship.

3. It is strange fire. (Lev 10:1,2). Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron and high priests of the tabernacle worship "took each of them his censer, and put fire thereon, and offered strange fire before Jehovah, which He had not commanded them." Notice that the offering in worship to God was called STRANGE fire, it was not what God had commanded. The fire that they offered to God was not forbidden by God, but the fact that they had been commanded to offer another type of fire automatically rendered their offering unacceptable to God. God will not accept substitutes nor will He accept anything other than that which He has designed.

In worship there can be:-

1. Strange fire. (See above).

2. Strange memorials. Neither Christmas nor Easter (traditional memorials to the birth and resurrection of Jesus Christ) are authorized in the scriptures. They are no more part of the Christian system than Judaism. See Gal. 4:10,11. Yet many who observe these so-called holy days once each year, do not even know to observe the Lord's death in partaking of the Lord's supper once a week.

3. Strange music. There are two kind of music spoken of in scripture. Vocal and instrumental. Only vocal has been authorized in the New Testament, for the worship of the saints. NOTICE: God has NOT said, do not use the instrument of music. However, His word is all sufficient for all things pertaining to life and godliness. (2 Pet. 1:3). We have to learn not to go beyond that which is written (1 Cor. 4:6).

B. It violates the principle of acting by faith. (2 Cor. 5:7). The apostle Paul declares that Christians are to *“walk by faith.”* *“Faith comes by hearing the word of God”*(Rom. 10:17), and *“without faith it is impossible to please Him.”* (Heb. 11:6). Can the instrument be used by faith? If so, where is the word of hearing? and how does it please God?

C. It makes void the word of God. (Matt. 15:6). Musical instruments substitute human tradition for the authority of the word of God. Without the Old Testament or human innovation, instrumental music could not exist in the church.

D. It is eliminated by God's specific command.

1. The Patriarchal Dispensation. (Gen. 6:13) God commanded Noah to build an ark. If God had not specified how he was to build it, he could have built it to any dimensions and used any wood such as pine, oak, cedar, birch or any other wood. God's command would have been generic. However, God's command was not generic it was specific in that He gave the dimensions and He told Noah to build the ark out of gopher wood. That specified what type of wood was to be used. God did not say don't use pine, oak, cedar, birch or any other type of wood. The fact that God specified gopher wood automatically eliminated all other woods.

2. The Mosaic Dispensation. (Lev. 10:1,2). When God commanded these priests to prepare fire for the worship, He told them what to do. The law required that the high priests should *“take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the alter before the Lord, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small....and he shall put the incense upon the fire.....”* (Lev. 16:12,13). God specifically commanded what should be done. What Nadab and Abihu did we don't know because the bible does not say, but we do know that they did not do what God had commanded, and they suffered the consequences. They offered a strange fire. God's specific command eliminated what Nadab and Abihu offered before the Lord.

3. The Christian Dispensation. Music is generic, it includes all kinds, but *“sing”* specifies and eliminates all else. Singing is not playing and playing is not singing. Singing is worship to God making the melody on the strings of our heart. Singing eliminates playing. Since every Christian is to

worship God by singing, and if singing did include playing, then every Christian would have to play. It would cause chaos, and “*God is not the author of confusion.*” “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*”

CONCLUSION

An obvious characteristic of the church of God is her worship as set forth in the New Testament. God has specifically commanded how we are to worship Him. Singing is that kind of music that God has enjoined upon His people, to bring glory and honor to His name, and will allow His possession to express their adoration of their Creator and Savior. Let Christians make a joyful noise to the Lord, and produce melodious sounds together with the strings of the heart.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 13

SINGING

1. Were mechanical instruments of music used in Old Testament worship? _____

2. If instruments were used in OT worship where is the authority? _____

3. Assuming that there is authority for instruments to be used in OT worship, give a list of what you think may have been used? _____

4. What sort of music has been authorized by God in the New Testament? _____

5. Give some Biblical examples of NT music? _____

6. What are the three Greek words in the NT that refer to music and define them? _____

7. Is mechanical instruments of music forbidden in the NT? _____

8. What instrument in NT worship is to be used to make the melody? _____

9. Does the Old Testament give authority for us to do anything in worship and service to God? _____

10. What is meant by will worship? _____

11. What is meant by strange fire? _____

12. What are strange memorials? _____

13. What is strange music? _____

14. Discuss what type of music can be offered to God in faith. _____

15. Discuss what music is tradition and how it makes void the word of God. _____

16. The type of music to be used in NT worship is limited by God's specific authority. Give an example from the Patriarchal dispensation. _____

17. Give an example from the Mosaic dispensation. _____

18. Give an example from the Christian dispensation. _____

LESSON NUMBER 14

THE CONTRIBUTION

INTRODUCTION

Giving our money for the work of the church must not be based on the whim of the moment prompted by a few moments of passionate pleas from the pulpit. Giving is a part of Christian stewardship. It is the discharge of our stewardship in relation to money. God is the owner of all the resources and wealth of the world and we sustain a steward's relationship to it.

I. A STEWARD

A steward is one who takes care of the goods of another. Paul says, "*it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.*" (1 Cor. 4:2).

II. GOD OWNS ALL IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH

A. Heaven and earth are His. See Gen. 14:19,20; Deut. 10:14; Psa. 24:1; 89:11. All are His by virtue of creation (Gen. 1:1).

B. The land belonged to God while Israel was His steward. (Lev. 25:23).

C. Every beast is His. (Psa. 50:10-12).

D. All the silver and gold is His. (Hag. 2:8).

E. By right all souls are His. (Ezek. 18:4).

F. By purchase all Christians are His. (Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 6:19,20; Tit. 2:14).

Consequently all life is a stewardship. We are but taking care of what belongs to God. Giving is but the discharge of a stewardship in relation to the money He has committed to our management.

III. GIVING IS WORSHIP

The apostle Paul was in prison at the time he wrote to the church at Philippi. He was in need of money. These saints sent to him according to his needs. Paul comments that he had received their gift from Epaphroditus, and says that it is, "*an odor of sweet smell, a sacrifice well-pleasing to God.*" The money that Paul received was "*a sacrifice*" to God. Scripture speaks of sacrifice as an offering of the best you have to God. Sacrifice is worship. One cannot worship in spirit and in truth if giving is not according to the pattern of sound words.

IV. PRINCIPLES OF NEW TESTAMENT GIVING SUMMARIZED FROM 2 CORINTHIANS 8 AND 9

A. As a grace. (8:1-7). Note the expressions “*affliction,*” “*joy,*” “*poverty,*” “*liberality,*” “*beyond their power,*” etc. The New Testament does not teach to tithe, it deals in maximums not minimums. In the Patriarchal period, Abraham gave the tenth part of all to Melchizedek, priest of the most high God. (Heb. 7:1,2). During the Mosaic period, the Israelites gave tithes of all, for the service of the Levites, in the tabernacle of the congregation (Num. 18:21). How can we in the Christian period, who have received more than they, give any less?

B. A fellowship. (v.4). In the contribution and its use, one is having fellowship with the Lord and His work.

C. A proof of one’s love. (8:8,9).

D. A means of providing for equality. (8:13-15).

E. It can and must be purposed before time if it is to be in the best interest of the work. (9:1-5).

V. CHARACTERISTICS OF GIVING ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN

A. Regularly: “*upon the first day of the week*” (literally, “each week”) (1 Cor. 16:1,2).

B. Systematically: “*lay by him in store.*” (1 Cor. 16:2).

C. Individually: “*each one of you.*” (1 Cor. 16:2). No one can give for another.

D. Liberally: (2 Cor. 8:1-4).

E. Purposefully: (2 Cor. 8:12-15). Not haphazardly, but according to a plan.

F. Cheerfully: “*For God loves a cheerful giver.*” (2 Cor. 9:7).

G. Readily: (2 Cor. 8:12). Whatever his gift may be.

CONCLUSION

Giving is a stewardship. There will be an accounting. Whereas no man can buy his way into heaven, he can “*lay up treasures where neither moth nor rust corrupts,*” with a proper use of his means while here. (See Lk. 16:9).

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 14

THE CONTRIBUTION

1. What is the purpose of the contribution? _____

2. What is the work of the church? _____

3. What is a steward? _____

4. As a consequence of stewardship discuss how God owns everything in heaven and on earth?

5. Discuss the fact that the contribution is a part of our worship. _____

6. Discuss the principles of giving in the New Testament and in particular in reference to 2 Corinthians chapters 8 and 9.

7. Discuss from the scriptures why our contribution should be more than that of those who lived under the Patriarchal and Mosaic dispensations? _____

8. Although the New Testament does not specify exactly how much we are to give, do you think that we would be sinning if we gave less than the tenth part of our earnings, and how much as a percentage of your earnings (which are a blessing from God) would you say is acceptable to Him?

9. Based on the New Testament principles of “*seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” and “*lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth but in heaven,*” are we giving according to the New Testament pattern? _____

10. If we gave as we should do, would we be able to do more for the Kingdom of God or less?

11. What are the New Testament characteristics of giving? _____

12. Will we have to give an account of our weekly contribution on the day of judgment? _____

LESSON NUMBER 15

PRAYER

PART I

INTRODUCTION

Prayer has always been a part of the lives of God's people, in the Patriarchal, Mosaic and in our own Christian age. Yet not enough emphasis is given to prayer. It is a subject that needs to be constantly taught, as it is communication between the God of heaven and His children. The Bible holds a distinct identity and pattern of prayer, and is the greatest guideline for our prayer lives as Christians.

To many, prayer is an emergency device. God is used as a parachute to slow down the tumbles in life. When life is running smoothly God is not in our thoughts, but when life starts tumbling in, suddenly we remember that there is a God to appeal to for help.

In denominationalism, prayer has been used as a substitute for obedience. This was the idea behind the "mourner's bench" system. A great gospel preacher was once asked, what was the difference between the "mourner's bench" and baptism for the remission of sins. He answered that one came from the sawmill and the other from heaven. Denominational preachers tell people to just say "Lord, save me." Instantly, salvation is theirs and they can never lose it, regardless of the way that they live their lives. Prayer is not the key to the kingdom of God or redemption, it is reserved for those who are citizens of God's kingdom here on earth.

Prayers are to be directed to the Father, in the name of (or by the authority of) Jesus Christ. We do have examples of prayer to Jesus. Stephen was stoned to death for preaching the gospel. Just before he died he called upon God, and said, "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" The apostle John, looking forward to the overthrow of Rome, prayed "*even so, come, Lord Jesus.*" Jesus Christ is our Advocate, and it is usual for one to speak with an advocate who is acting on our behalf. However, we must not set precedents that might allow prayers to the Holy Spirit, Mary, and the invocation of departed saints. The Lord prayed to the Father, and He taught His disciples to do the same (Matt. 6:9). A helpful, scriptural formula, to keep in mind is, we pray to the Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, by the instructions supplied by the Holy Spirit within the pages of God's word.

Prayers can be and are frequently inconsistent. "Lord, bring us back at the next appointed service" is sometimes prayed by brethren who miss the next five to ten services. How sincere is a petition to God, asking that the preacher preach only the truth? In the course of time we get angry with that same preacher when a pet sin is hit by that proclaimed truth. Are we really thankful to God for freedom to assemble together, when we practice habitual absenteeism from the assembly? Is it consistent to pray for the conversion of the lost, and refuse to be a soul winner? Is it consistent to pray to God for additional laborers in the vineyard, but be a constant millstone around the necks of those already laboring for the Lord? Is it consistent to thank the Lord for the Bible and the church, for which He died, and then discredit both by being antagonistic or apathetic? Is it consistent to pray for daily bread, and yet do nothing to help bring it our way?

Prayer is talking with God. When we read the Bible, that is God talking to us. Communication is a two way thing. One talks while the other listens, then the other talks while the one listens. Balance in our lives calls for both priorities. They compliment and supplement each other.

I. THE PSALMIST AND PRAYER

“The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. He will fulfill the desire of those who fear Him; he also will hear their cry and save them.” (Psa. 145:18-19). Many of the attributes of God are set forth in this Psalm of praise, which was written by David. Yet in all of His majesty, He is near *“all them that call upon Him IN TRUTH.”* The same idea is found throughout the Bible. *“Seek Jehovah while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near”* (Isa. 55:6). *That they should seek God, if haply they might feel after Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us”* (Acts 17:27). Note that it is He upon whom we are to call. The calling upon Him is to be done IN TRUTH, i.e. in harmony with God’s word.

To avail, prayer must not be hypocritical, but sincere. God knows us thoroughly. He hears in view of what we really are, not what we profess to others as being.

Those who fear (reverence) Him seek to do His will (Eccl. 12:13; Acts 10:35). These are the favored, and they will experience answered prayers. The God who commands us to pray is a prayer-hearing and prayer-answering God. He will cease to expect our prayers when He ceases to hear our requests. This He will never do toward His submissive saints.

II. PAUL AND PRAYER

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.” (Phil. 4:6-7). *“Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.”* (Col. 4:12). *“I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.”* (1 Tim. 2:8). Prayer is God’s antidote for anxiety or worry among His children. Peter tells us where to place such cares and anxieties. Cast *“all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you”* (1 Pet. 5:7). His shoulders, as it were, are much broader than ours are.

Prayer should be permeated with gratitude. An ungrateful mind and a praying heart are incompatible. *“Father I thank you”* was the admirable attitude reflected in our Lord’s prayer life (John 11:41). *“I thank you, oh Father”* is a beginning petition of praise in Matt. 11:25. Gratitude helps to pave the way for prayerful acceptance before God.

Jehovah’s peace, one of His most treasured gifts to us, surpasses finite comprehension. As a military sentinel, it keeps or guards our hearts and minds. The medium through which this peace comes is Jesus Christ. Peace is righteous with God, tranquillity of souls, the opposite to fearful forebodings, and absence of an uncertain mind. For prayer to avail we must be steadfast. An elderly man was baptized. His Christian wife said, “I have been praying for this to occur for 40 years.” She was persistent in prayer.

Alertness and the Spirit of gratitude must permeate prayers that avail. This was the great apostolic counsel from Paul to his Colossian readers.

The apostolic will, is that men pray everywhere. Here the word “men” is not generic, but specific. The Greek term **andras** means men as opposed to women. This is God’s will, not cultural talk or prejudice from Paul. Paul says “*the things that I write to you are the commandments of the Lord*” (1 Cor. 14:37).

When there is prayer, and men are present, they, not women, are to direct the prayers. This includes assemblies for combined worship, mixed Bible classes and devotionals where both are present. Wisdom dictates that we hear and heed Paul’s prayer guidelines, rather than listening to the voices of emotion and women’s liberation movement, who desire to change or restructure God’s church in this and other areas.

The restrictions do not only apply to women, but to men also. Not every man is approved as a prayer leader. Who is to Pray? Men who have holy hands and who are without wrath and disputing are acceptable prayer leaders. The man who is mad at other men and angry toward God, is not fit to offer prayers on behalf of others. Contentious men are not fit to lead prayers in public assemblies.

III. PRAYER IN JESUS’ NAME

“*and whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*” (John 14:13). “*For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus.*” (1 Tim. 2:5). To ask in Jesus’ name is to ask in the manner He authorized. This shows a pattern for our prayers. He has not left us without a blueprint. We must be reverent in prayer, not reckless in petitions lifted up to the throne of grace.

For prayer to avail, it must be in His name, not, of course, in the mere mention of His name, as in some magic formula, but in what the name implies. No one comes to the Father but by Christ. What we pray for is by the authority of Jesus Christ. Prayer in the name of Jesus Christ glorifies the Father because the Father would answer prayer, showing His approval.

Paul’s affirmation of the “one God” is in holy harmony with the whole of biblical teaching on this fundamental thrust. Moses wrote, “*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*” (Deut. 6:4). This passage of scripture constituted the great Shema of Old Testament worship in tabernacle, temple and synagogue services.

There is one mediator between God and men, namely, Jesus Christ Himself who was man for a period of time for a specific purpose. A mediator is a go-between. He must represent each alienated side. Jesus is fully qualified in that He is God, but that He also was man and experienced everything that we experience. As the Son of God, and one of the Godhead, He knows heaven’s requirements with perfection. As one who lived among men, and who is not “*untouched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin,*” He understands our plight. He bridges the gulf between God and man. With one hand He clasps the Father’s hand, and with the other He clasps humanity’s hand.

1 Tim. 2:5 Clearly refutes the “oneness” theory. Were there just one in the Godhead, Christ could no more stand between Himself and men than you can stand between yourself and you. While He was in

the garden praying to the Father, was the Lord praying to Himself? Three are picture here God, Christ and men. There are three in the Godhead, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

IV. UNAVAILING PRAYER

“One who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.” (Prov. 28:9). To turn away one’s ear from hearing the word of God is the equivalent of rebelling against God and defying Him in His right to speak to us. To pray with this attitude is a sure way to meet closed ears on God’s part. The prayer of such antagonists really amount to an abomination to God. He hates it.

V. A CONTRAST DRAWN

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.” (1 Peter 3:12). A contrast is drawn between the righteous, those who conform to God’s will and the evil, those who conform to Satan and sin. A contrast is drawn between how the omniscient, omnipotent, and omnipresent Father, with His all seeing eye and all hearing ear, views the two diverse and widely separated groups.

He views the righteous with ardent approval, His ear is ever open to earnest entreaties. His face is in opposition to the evil. The implication is that His face of disapproval is upon those who refuse to do His bidding.

VI. ASKING AMISS

“You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your pleasures.” (Jas. 4:3). To ask amiss is to ask evilly, selfishly or with improper motives in mind. Such prayers will be wasted words, they will not receive answers because they are asked with base and selfish motives. Those praying such prayers are looking out for “number one” and are totally unconcerned for God, His cause, the interests of the brethren, or the souls of the lost. Selfish prayers are not answered prayers.

VII. AVAILING PRAYER

“Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.” (1 John 5:14). Our boldness and confidence are never misplaced when centered in deity. With assurance we know that every prayer prayed in harmony with God’s will avails. Without fail He hears such prayers and answers them. He may answer with a yes, a no, a later-not now, or with something far bigger and better than we petitioned. Each is an answer and is based upon what God considers is best for us, because of His far greater knowledge of our better interest.

CONCLUSION

God is never remote from an obedient child of His, who is engaged in devout prayer. Worry-free living begins and continues in the Christian’s closet of prayer. Prayerful petitions ascend to God’s throne of grace upon the wings of reverence, gratitude and faith. Prayers that ignore Jesus and His name will never register in the ears of God. Prayer and righteous decorum go hand-in-hand for the sincere child of God.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 15

PRAYER

PART I

1. What is prayer? _____

2. In what way can prayer be used as an emergency device? _____

3. In what way can prayer be used as a substitute for obedience? _____

4. Describe how prayers can be inconsistent. _____

5. How did the Psalmist say that we were to call upon God? _____

6. Discuss Paul's injunction of gratitude in prayer. _____

7. Give an example of persistence in prayer. _____

8. Discuss what Paul means by "that the men pray everywhere." _____

9. Are restriction in praying in public limited to women? _____

10. In whose name must we pray, and what does it mean? _____

11. Discuss the one God, and the Mediator between God and men. _____

12. What is unavailing prayer? _____

13. What is the contrast drawn between the righteous and the evil? _____

14. Discuss how we can ask amiss. _____

15. What is availing prayer? _____

LESSON NUMBER 16

PRAAYER

PART II

INTRODUCTION

Prayer is not unconditional. We must meet some well defined conditions for prayer to be acceptable to God. Prayer is to be directed to God. The Lord told His disciples to pray "*our Father*" (Matt. 6:9). For prayers to be directed to the Son or the Holy Spirit is to mix up the distinctive roles of the Godhead.

Prayer is the privilege of the child of God, not for alien sinners. How can the son of the devil say "*our Father?*" As emphasized in our last lesson, the person who turns away his ear from hearing God's word, his prayer shall be an abomination in Jehovah's sight.

The formerly blind man, now cured and able to see for the first time, expressed an accurate assessment of this matter by saying, "*Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him. Since the world began it has been unheard of that anyone opened the eyes of one who was born blind. If this Man were not from God, He could do nothing.*" (John 9:31-33).

Prayer must be prayed in faith. James makes that point in Jas. 1:5, and so did the Lord (Mk. 11:24). Prayer must also be in harmony with God's express will (Matt. 26:39,42; 1 John 5:14,15). God's will not the will of the petitioner, must ever be kept uppermost in mind. Prayer must be prayed persistently. Jesus taught this in Luke 18 when He said that we "*ought always to pray, and not to faint.*" He illustrated with the parable of the unjust judge and the persistent widow. The widow never gave up in her determination to receive justice from the calloused judge. The judge, wearied with her frequent coming, finally granted her request. Jesus made the application, "*and shall God avenge His elect, that cry to him day and night, and yet He is longsuffering over them?*" (Luke 18:7).

Prayer must be in Christ's name (John 14:13). Paul did the same when he declared Jesus to be the one mediator between God and men (1 Timothy 2:5).

Prayer must be properly composed. Praise, thanksgiving, petitions and confession of wrongs should compose our general prayers. Prayers for special occasions, such as the Lord's Table or for someone in grave need, should focus upon such and not things except that special need.

Prayer should be prayed in the deepest of reverence. Petitioners are not praying to One who is inferior or equal. Prayer is the deeply inferior one addressing the deeply superior One. In prayer the weak approaches the strong; the one in need comes to the sovereign helper, the imperfect addresses the Perfect, the worshiper approaches the worshiped. Flippancy, arrogance, forwardness and sloppy language are out of place in prayers sent to God. Many of us still strongly prefer pronoun usage Thee, Thou, Thine and Thy.

I. PERSISTENT PRAYERS

“Pray without ceasing.” (1 Thes. 5:17). *“Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.”* (Col. 4:2). *“Pray without ceasing”* does not mean we must pray 24 hours a day. That would leave no time for any other duty imposed upon us. It means to have regular hours of prayer. The psalmist (55:17) and Daniel (6: 10) prayed three times daily. The psalmist prayed at evening (beginning point of a new Hebrew day), in the morning (when the night of rest had passed), and at noon (when half the working day was over). Even a grave and life-threatening decree did not change devout Daniel’s practice of praying three times daily. Piety in prayer cannot be intimidated by governmental decrees.

Paul counseled Colossian saints to be steadfast, vigilant and grateful in their prayers. Such would guard them against lethargy, falsehood and ingratitude - three infamous enemies of acceptable prayer. Presence of the Colossian heresy, about which Paul discoursed in Colossians chapter 2, made even more necessary spiritual alertness in their prayers.

II. PRAYER INGREDIENTS AND ESSENTIALS

“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence..... I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting.” (1 Tim. 2:1,2,8). Paul had ended 1 Timothy chapter 1 with a sad disclosure of the false teachers Hymenaeus and Alexander. They thrust away faith and a good conscience. They had made shipwreck of the faith or the Gospel. Paul had administered severe apostolic discipline upon these two men. He had delivered them to Satan that they might be taught not to speak against the truth and the system of salvation found in the Gospel.

With these warnings before him Timothy would be solemnly aware of his own great need for prayer. Paul began on that very note in 1 Timothy 2, as he exhorted the young evangelist.

“First of all” supplies a measure of priority here. Prayer, to God’s child, is of first importance. It should never be considered as optional but as an imperative. This is surely the way Paul viewed his own prayers, and he desired Timothy to feel this too.

“Supplications” express a need that is deeply felt. *“Prayers”* are general and cover the whole gamut of prayerful approaches to God.

“Intercessions” are prayers in behalf of others. Abraham prayerfully interceded for Sodom (Genesis 18). Moses interceded for Israel (Exodus 32). Daniel and Ezra interceded for exiled Israel (Daniel 9; Ezra 9). Paul frequently interceded for his fellow Christians in the first century. Jesus interceded for His apostles and all future Christian believers in John 17.

“Thanksgivings” are expressions of gratitude to Him who left Himself a witness in the rain from heaven and fruitful seasons (Acts 14:17). He is the generous giver of every good and perfect gift (James 1:17).

Prayers are to be made for all men. The family-exclusive prayer, such as “Lord bless my wife and I, my son and his wife -- we four and no more” is selfishness, which has no place in the prayers of Christians.

Our prayers are to include those in governmental authority. We live under a president. Our prayers should be for our own president and all other world rulers. Daily they make and execute laws that touch all our lives one way or the other. Our prayers should be toward the desirable end -- that we may lead tranquil and quiet lives in all godliness and gravity.

Men, not women, are to lead the public prayers. Even men leaders are restricted to those who have holy hands, are not doubters and are not mad at God and the world.

III. TEACH US TO PRAY

“Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, >Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.’ So He said to them, >When you pray, say: our Father in heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. “and forgive us our sins, for we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. “and do not lead us into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”“ (Lk. 11:1-4). Jesus was prince of all preachers. Yet, there is no recorded petition of where any disciple ever said, “Lord, teach us to preach.” Likewise, He was the Master Teacher of the ages, surpassing all sages. Yet we have no recorded request, “Lord, instruct us how to teach!” Yet, an impressed disciple requested that Jesus teach them to pray even as John taught his disciples.

The request came as Jesus concluded one of His prayers. Had the Master never prayed, it is extremely doubtful this request would have been forthcoming. Prayerless people do not impress others with a felt need to pray. People once said of Jesus, *“Never man so spake”* (John 7:46). Without doubt it could have been said of the supplicating Savior, *“Never man so prayed!”*

This verse likewise is interesting because it informs us that John taught his disciples to pray. This is the only verse in the New Testament that tells about John’s teaching along this line. It says much about the piety of the unique man who came to prepare the way for the coming Christ

Jesus promptly obliged. He recognized the merits of their request. He taught that prayer was to be addressed to the Father.

God’s name should be hallowed. As noted earlier many still use Thy, Thou, Thine and Thee, feeling that they hallow God’s name in prayerful language to Him. It is of interest to observe that such pronouns are no more outdated in prayers of praise, than in hymns of praise.

“Thy kingdom come” refers to the establishment of the kingdom. He was pointing them to Pentecost. We cannot pray this petition as He taught the disciples to do. Some say that we can pray for it to come into the hearts of those who have not yet received it, or we can pray for its expansion, both of which are very valid. However, neither of these were in the mind of the Master when He gave this as a model prayer.

He does not say in the next petition, “give us our weekly or annual bread,” but our daily bread. The Lord fully expected His disciples would pray daily. Tomorrow’s bread should be prayed for tomorrow.

Pardon is next portrayed. We are to forgive even as we forgive others of their trespasses to us. A man once said to a noted preacher. “I never forgive any man who wrongs me.” The preacher replied, in

essence, “Sir, I hope you never sin, for you have just closed heaven’s door if you do.” Pardon recipients must be pardon givers, for sins committed against them.

A prayer to be delivered out of the clutches of the evil one, Satan, is needed by all of us. He is stronger in the tempting arts than we are in the resisting roles. Daily prayer and regular Bible meditation can go a long way in thwarting temptations in our path.

IV. WORD CAUTION IN PRAYER LANGUAGE

“Do not be rash with your mouth, and let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; therefore let your words be few.” (Eccl. 5:2). Words should be spoken with deliberation. Words used in prayer should not be irreverent or irresponsibly spoken without thought. Such are poles apart and do not belong to the same heart or the same voice. This should be a sharp reminder that our words should be a wise few instead of a foolish multitude. Look at how brief the recorded prayers are of Abraham, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Ezra, the Christ, the apostles in Acts 4 and Paul in his various epistles.

V. GOD WILL HEAR AND HEED

“and we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God.” (1 John 4:14-15). *“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”* (Jas. 1:5). These chosen verses are faith builders in the efficacy of prayer. Availing prayer is the bottom line of both verses.

We can be bold in the belief that what we ask, as long as our request is harmonious with His will, registers and will be answered. As has been said in a previous lesson, the answer may be yes, no, or far greater than we envisaged, but an answer will be forthcoming. When it comes it will be for our good.

James addresses those who lack wisdom. Without exception this gets all of us! God may be implored to give us desperately needed wisdom. He gives to all generously, He does not give reluctantly or with reproaches. Often we as human beings give reluctantly, grudgingly and with reproaches.

VI. PRAYER FOR OTHERS

1. Chiefs (kings) and all rulers--1 Tim. 2:2.
2. Preachers--Heb. 13:18; Col. 4:3.
3. All the saints (holy ones)--Eph. 6:18; 3:14-19; Phil. 1:4
4. All people--1 Tim. 2:1
5. People of our own race (or nation)--Rom. 10:1.
6. Those who are ill--James 5:14.
7. Those who mistreat us--Matt. 5:44.
8. Those who spitefully use us--Lk. 6:28.
9. The brother who is sinful--1 John 5:16.
10. One another--James 5:16.
11. However, we are not to pray for those who have hardened their hearts--Jeremiah 7:13-16; 14:12-14.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 16

PRAAYER

PART II

1. Who should prayer be directed to? _____

2. In whose name is prayer to be offered? _____

3. Does God hear the prayers of sinners? _____

4. What do we mean by praying in faith? _____

5. Give an example of persistent prayer? _____

6. What is the character of the one to whom we are praying? _____

7. What does "*pray without ceasing mean?*" _____

8. In 1 Tim. 2, what is implied by, "*first of all?*" _____

9. What are supplications? _____

10. What are intercessions? _____

11. What are thanksgivings? _____

12. Why should we pray for rulers? _____

13. What is meant by God's name is hallowed? _____

14. The Lord was asked by His disciples to teach them to pray. Discuss the phrase "*thy kingdom come*" in relationship to us today. _____

15. What do you think that the Lord was implying when He tells us to ask for our daily bread?

16. What is our forgiveness conditional upon? _____

17. Write Eccl. 5:2, and discuss the merits of caution in prayer. _____

18. What are the conditions for God hearing and answering our prayers? _____

19. If we lack wisdom, what should we do? _____

20. List some people that God's word tells us to pray for. _____

LESSON NUMBER 17

PREACHING, TEACHING AND READING THE WORD OF GOD

PART I

INTRODUCTION

God has spoken; the opening verse of Hebrews so attests. He has not spoken just to hear Himself speak, He has spoken in order that men might hear His will, believe His will, obey His will, preach and teach His will, and at last be saved in heaven by the wonders of His will.

Moses and other Hebrew prophets extending all the way to Malachi forcefully taught the imperative need for physical Israel to hear God's Word. Jeremiah said, "*0 earth, earth, earth, hear the word of Jehovah*" (Jeremiah 22:29). Jehovah often reminded stubborn Israel that He had sent His servants, the prophets, to the nation early and the Israelites had refused to listen to the prophetic announcements.

Jesus, His apostles and other New Testament prophets and evangelists frequently and fully directed men and women of the first century to hear and act upon the messages they proclaimed so powerfully. Jesus taught men the need to hear (John 6:44,45). He taught men to take heed what and how they heard (Mark 4:24; Luke 8:18). He fought the fatted heart, the dull-of-hearing ear and the closed eye in His personal ministry (Matthew 13:15).

The apostolic carriers of His Great Commission knew the importance of the proclaimed Word and the willingness of their hearers to listen carefully and heed it diligently. In Romans 10:13-17 Paul stated how one condition of redemption depended upon another and traced the beginning roots of redemption to preaching and hearing.

These key verses read:

"For, whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe Him whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach, except they be sent? even as it is written, how beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things. But they did not all hearken to the glad tidings. For Isaiah saith. Lord, who hath believed our report? So belief cometh of hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."

I. INSPIRED AFFIRMATIONS

"Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You." (Psa. 119:11). *"all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."* (2 Tim. 3:16-17). The psalmist does not lay personal claim to the ownership of the message. To the contrary, he affirms it as God's Word. It is "Thy Word" - not mine or another's.

The word of God is the greatest thing in our world. The greatest receptacle for it is not a bookshelf but human hearts. When thus placed on the throne of the human heart, God's Word produces the greatest possible result -- *"that I might not sin against Thee."*

To treasure God's Word in our heart, we must read it daily and meditate upon it regularly. This is what the blessed man of Psalm 1:1 does. Time spent in its memorization is necessary if we are to lay that Word up in our hearts in its purest form. Then we must be certain we know what it means. This calls for serious study and the proper usage of biblical interpretation. "Exegesis" is a word familiar to all serious students of the Bible. It means to give a proper explanation of a passage's meaning.

In the Timothy text, Paul gives a sweeping affirmation of God's inspired Word. This is plenary inspiration, i.e., full, complete or entire. It is all inspired. Inspired means God-breathed. He is the divine author of the message.

The word we study and preach is profitable. Doctrinal, reproofing, correctional and instructional profit can be gained from this objective body of inspired truth.

The Word we study and preach is all-sufficient. It makes God's man all he ought to be in character and reputation. It fully equips God's man in his work for the Lord; it fits him in character make-up. The well-versed Bible man is not deficient in the character God wants him to be or in the work God expects him to do. This is well-rounded spirituality or maturity in a twofold sense.

II. NECESSARY FOR CONVERSION

"For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, >The just shall live by faith." (Rom. 1:17). *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* (Matt. 28:19-20). In Romans 1:16 Paul portrays the Gospel as God's power to save obedient Jews and Gentiles.

In this powerful gospel God has revealed His plan for man's salvation. It is *"from faith unto faith."* This is not faith only or faith from start to finish, as some erroneously render this verse in some of the modern versions of the Bible. It is a system of faith, undergirded by an abundance of evidence, and leads to faith in those who accept it.

Paul's eye is then riveted on Habakkuk 2:4, which says *"the righteous shall live by his faith."* The righteous are those who keep God's commandments (Psalm 119:172), who do right (Acts 10:35; 1 John 2:29) and who conform to His will (Romans 12:1,2). Matthew 28:19,20 is the mission of our Lord for His people. Prefacing these two verses is Jesus' sovereign claim to all heavenly and earthly authority.

Gospel begins with go and the Great Commission begins with "Go." This implies movement, and the direction is given -- where people are, where all nations live. The charge is to make disciples of them. This involves preaching the gospel and their hearing it.

They are to be taught to observe what Jesus has commanded. After they have been sufficiently taught, they are to be immersed into the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. At this point and not before they come into a saved relationship with the Godhead.

Jesus promised that He would be with them always to the end of the world. “*“always”* means in the Greek “*all the day.*” “*Unto the end of the world*” means until “*the consummation of the age.*” He will be with His people in the discharge of this commission throughout the gospel dispensation.

III. PREACH THE WORD

“Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight.” (Acts 20:7). *“For if I preach the gospel, I have nothing to boast of, for necessity is laid upon me; yes, woe is me if I do not preach the gospel.”* (1 Cor. 9:16). *“and the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also.”* (2 Tim. 2:2). *“Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.”* (2 Tim. 4:2). On the Lord’s Day in Troas. Paul and his travelling colleagues were en route to Jerusalem during the closing stages of the third missionary tour. Troas saints came together to break bread. They probably engaged in singing, prayer, teaching, communion and contribution. A prominent part of their worship that day in Troas was the preaching of the Word and their hearing of that Word.

Paul preached to them. Because he was soon to depart, he prolonged his speech until midnight. Paul preached the Gospel. This was his standard or uniform practice in all churches (1 Corinthians 4:17). His theme was Christ and Him crucified wherever he went to preach (1 Corinthians 2:2).

The Corinthian text is an excellent picture of gospel preaching urgency. The glory was not in the messenger but in the message. Necessity had been laid upon Paul; it tugged constantly at his heartstrings. He knew that woe would be upon him if he failed to preach the Gospel. It is little wonder then why Paul became the greatest preacher the world has ever known, except the Christ, prince of all preachers.

The two texts from Timothy are basic and familiar. Second Timothy 2:2 says that preachers are not manufacturers of their message. They are to be echoes in that they convey what has been taught to them. Paul charged Timothy to commit to others what he had learned from Paul, an inspired apostle. Paul but conveyed or delivered what he had received by revelation (Galatians 1:10-12; 1 Corinthians 11:23; 15:3). He received truth, he conveyed truth. Timothy had heard Paul preach truth among many witnesses. This truth is what Timothy was to commit to others.

Two essentials are delineated here. Timothy was to deliver the truth to faithful men, he was to convey it to able or apt men. Faithful implied they would deal properly with this great deposit of truth. Able meant they would have the instructional ability to impart it to others. Some men are faithful but lack teaching proficiency; some have teaching aptness but are lacking in faithfulness. Possession of both virtues is essential.

The second Timothy text constituted Paul’s final charge to Timothy. Timothy was to preach the Word. Wrapped up in this final, solemn and clear charge are the three M’s. The message, the messenger and the method. We preach to get the message into human hearts. Men hear the proclaimed Word in order that they might believe it and obey it.

Preaching is serious business. Timothy was to be urgent in season and out of season. This meant to preach when convenient and to preach when inconvenient. Marshall Keeble said it meant to preach

when the listeners like it and when they do not.

Preaching involves negatives (reproving and rebuking) and positives (exhortations or admonitions). Preachers must be longsuffering or patient. They must continue to teach truth regardless of the consequences.

IV. THE POWERFUL WORD

“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.” (Jas. 1:21). *“So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.”* (Acts 20:32). Filthiness and overflowing wickedness must be put away. These hinder a person’s reception of the Word.

The Word is to be received with meekness or with a proper attitude. This guards against an arrogant or haughty attitude at the time of hearing.

The implanted Word is to penetrate and then profit the human heart. It is then God’s inborn power to save the soul. This idea is reminiscent of Romans 1:16, which depicts the Gospel as God’s power to save those obedient to its principles.

To the Ephesian elders at Miletus, Paul commended God and His Word of grace, the graceful Word. Paul depicted a double power -- building up power and inheriting power. This graceful Word would build them up in the most holy faith: it would enable them to gain heaven at last and be fellow heirs among all the sanctified or redeemed ones.

Acts 20:32 is fitting scripture to read or quote when Christians are parting company. Paul employed these powerful words as he and the Ephesian elders were about to separate. Paul was headed for Jerusalem: they were headed back to continue their shepherding duties over God’s flock there.

V. THAT WORD WILL JUDGE

“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him-- the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day.” (John 12:48). God and His Word and Christ and His Word cannot be separated. To reject the truth is equivalent to rejecting the author of truth, Deity. A failure to receive the sayings of Jesus means a rejection of Him. Such a rejection is lethal. The word that the rebellious sinner rejects now will judge him on that certain day of final reckoning, and that judgment will be severe. We dig our own grave of eternal perdition in a refusal to hear and heed the Word of God.

CONCLUSION

Foolish is any man who turns away his ear from hearing the word of the Lord. A refusal to hear means a closed door to subsequent acts of gospel obedience. How we treat God’s word is an accurate index as to how we feel toward the entire Godhead. There is no commandment Jesus emphasized any more than man’s imperative need to hear God’s word. Our soul’s need to be fed God’s word daily just as our bodies need food and water daily.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 17

**PREACHING, TEACHING, AND READING THE
WORD OF GOD**

PART I

1. God has revealed His will to us through the pages of His word. Who has the responsibility of making that will known to others? _____

2. Who is the origin of all scripture? _____

3. Where does the Bible need to rest? _____

4. How often does the word of God need to be read in order to have an impact on our hearts? _____

5. What are the scriptures profitable for? _____

6. What do the scriptures make God's man? _____

7. How shall the just live? _____

8. Who are the righteous? _____

9. Evangelism involves preaching. Discuss the active ingredients of the great commission. _____

10. What are people to be taught to do in the great commission? _____

11. Discuss what “always” means, and what “unto the end of the world” means. _____

12. Discuss preaching on the Lord’s day from Acts 20:7ff. _____

13. From 1 Cor. 9:16, discuss the urgency of preaching. _____

14. Are preachers the author of their message, and if not why not? _____

15. How are preachers to be taught to preach? _____

16. In the charge to preach the word, what are the three “M’s” and how does this apply to the parable of the sower? _____

17. Is preaching serious business, and if so why? _____

18. How is the word to be received? _____

19. What is the implanted word to do? _____

20. What is the word of His grace able to do? _____

21. Discuss the truth, that God’s word will judge us in the last day. _____

LESSON NUMBER 18

PREACHING, TEACHING AND READING THE WORD OF GOD

PART II

INTRODUCTION

To be asked to read God's Word publicly is a great responsibility. Reading it should not be taken lightly but quite seriously. Some helpful suggestions are in order for public readers of the Bible.

- (1) One should approach this task reverently, recognizing that he is not reading the words of men but the Word of God (1 Thessalonians 3:13).
- (2) The passage to be read publicly should be read several times privately so that the reader might be thoroughly familiar with it.
- (3) The selected passages should be read aloud and before a mirror in privacy.
- (4) Words that are unfamiliar to the reader should be looked up to determine the definition and correct pronunciation. A good dictionary will usually include pronunciations. If possible one should read from a Bible where names have diacritical markings over the vowels.
- (5) The readers should clearly announce to the audience the book, chapter and verses that are to be read. The audience should be given sufficient time to find the selected text in their Bibles.
- (6) It adds to the reading if a little background or the context of the passage is given. For example, if a person is reading a passage from the Gospel records he has an opportunity to tell where Jesus was, what He was facing, who His audience was and what He was setting forth. Such comments should be brief and to the point.
- (7) The reader should read loudly enough to be heard in all parts of the auditorium. He should read deliberately, clearly and accurately putting feeling into the reading and seek to convey the meaning of each sentence. (See Nehemiah 8:8.)
- (8) A good reader will let the audience know that he places a high premium upon what is being read. An appropriate closing is "May the Lord bless this reading of His Word."
- (9) As the reader shares a passage, the hearers also have a responsibility when God's Word is read. People generally are more reverent in prayer, our speaking to God, than they are in Bible reading. God's speaking to us. This bad habit needs correction when it is felt and practised. Reverence should accompany both our reading of God's Word and our prayers to His throne of grace and help.

I. MESSIANIC DELIGHT IN GOD'S WILL

"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart." (Psa 40:8). Hebrews 10:5 makes clear that the words in Psalm 40:6-8 are messianic in prophetic intent. It constitutes the Messiah's intent of doing God's will during His incarnation. Deep was His delight in doing the will of God. Note that the first person is called "my God." Such passages as John 4:34; 6:38; 8:29; 17:4; 19:30 and Romans 15:2 all reflect the dedication Christ felt toward honoring the Father's will. He taught others to honor that will (Matthew 7:21). He exhibited perfect obedience toward it Himself.

Jehovah's law was within Christ's heart. Jesus read it publicly in Luke 4:16 at the Nazareth synagogue. With amazing frequency and accuracy He quoted it. In the heat of temptation He knew exactly where to go in Deuteronomy to answer and defeat the Devil. He was never at a loss when an appropriate Scripture was needed whether He was among friends or foes. God's Word was in His heart, not just inscribed upon a roll of parchment.

II. THE INDWELLING OF THE WORD

"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." (Col. 3:16). This verse is one of the hallmark passages of the New Testament concerning singing in Christian worship, and it parallels Ephesians 5:19. It teaches the type of songs we should sing in Christian worship, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs as well as the purpose of our singing, which is to teach and admonish one another. Colossians 3:16 directs the how to sing, *"with grace"* and furnishes the instrument to be employed, the heart, not a mechanical device such as piano, organ, harp or brass instrument.

This crucial verse also tells us that the Word of Christ indwells us with all wisdom. This parallels Ephesians 5:18 and Paul's command to *"be filled with the Spirit."* By only one way can we have the Word of Christ richly indwelling us with all wisdom. That is by the constant study of that Word. We study that Word when we hear another proclaim it; we study that Word when we read, mediate and learn its true meaning and make its proper application to our lives. This is the way to lay up God's Word in our hearts (Psalm 119:11). Incidentally, this is the way the Spirit indwells the child of God. As the will of the Spirit or the Word of God moves and moulds us more and more into the lovely likeness of our Savior, then to that extent God indwells us, Christ indwells us and the Spirit indwells us. This is the only sensible, rational explanation of how one person may indwell another person.

III. PUBLIC READING OF GOD'S WORD

“Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea.” (Col. 4:16). *“Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”* (1 Tim. 4:13). The Colossian epistle was to be of far wider circulation than just among Colossian Christians. The verse under consideration proves this to be the case. Paul intended it to be read to all the Colossian brethren in one of their regular assemblies, no divided assembly in this congregation. In turn he wanted it read to the Laodicean congregation in a neighboring city, just a few miles away.

The Colossians were also instructed to read the Laodicean epistle. Some think this has reference to Ephesians, which they call a “circular letter” that circulated freely in western Asia. It is much safer to conclude that Laodicea had received a letter from Paul that has not been preserved. Examples of such are the letter Paul alluded to in 1 Corinthians 5:9 and John’s communique to the church where the daring Diotrephes held membership in 3 John 9.

Both of these letters were to be publicly read before the assemblies in each city. This reading would have been an important part of their worship, God’s Word through an apostle read in their presence. Bible reading should be and must be an important part of our worship periods today.

Public reading, exhortations and teaching occupy the thrust of 1 Timothy 4:13. Doubtless, Timothy spent much time in its private reading. No one will ever read well the Bible publicly who does not read it frequently, and understandingly in private.

Timothy’s exhortations and teaching grew out of his private and public reading of God’s Word. His audience needed biblical exhortations and scriptural teaching. People in countless pews are dying of spiritual malnutrition. Far too many pulpits and Bible class lecterns in liberal churches are giving out husks, not the meat of the Word. Elders, preachers and teachers responsible for such will give strict account for it in the final judgment

IV. DAILY STUDY IS A MUST

“These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.” (Acts 17:11). Paul and Silas were on the second missionary journey. They were on European soil and in Berea of Macedonia. They were preaching and teaching in the Jewish synagogue there.

Luke gives lofty tribute to the Jews of Berea. They were of nobler mind and higher disposition than Thessalonian Jews had been. Their reception of the proclaimed Word was commendable. They received it with readiness of mind. Paul usually did not find this bent of mind among Jews in their various synagogues. These people were different and the difference must have been a refreshing oasis to Luke and Paul.

Daily, not infrequently or even weekly, the Bereans examined the Hebrew scriptures of the Old Testament, the New Testament had not yet been penned, to see if these things were so.

They were listening to an apostle, Paul, and a prophet, Silas. Yet they made double sure that what they heard coincided with what the Scriptures taught. Every auditor today should put his preacher-teacher to the same acid test. Falsehood triumphs in many places because little or none of this verification is currently done.

V. HEARING AND DOING ARE LINKED

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” (Jas. 1:22-25). James writes that his readers be doers of the Word, not hearers only. The hearer only is a self-deluder. Somehow he feels that his ardency as a hearer, and this is the picture set forth in the Greek text meets all demands God makes upon his soul. Hearing only, no more avails than faith only. James refutes the former here, he refutes the latter in James 2:14-26.

The man who does not combine his hearing with doing is compared to a man who sees his face in a mirror. But he turns away, goes his way and soon the projected image fades from his mind. He forgets the reflected image he witnessed.

The hearer only is very attentive, but this is the full extent of his journey toward truth. He does not hear with a view of heeding. Hearing is an end in and of itself to him. He is a hearer only, just as the ones depicted in James 2:14 are faith-only proponents and practitioners.

In marked contrast it is the devoted hearer who searches the perfect law of liberty, the Gospel, and continues therein as a doer that is blessed. Hearing and doing have been linked by the Lord. Man severs them at his own peril.

Note how James refers to the Gospel. First, it is perfect (full, entire, complete with nothing deficient). Second, it is law. Law is a rule of action, it is restraint. Unless we are under law there is no rule of action, no restraint and no sin. Third, it is linked with liberty. Embracing it obediently and reverently leads to liberty in the Lord, to freedom in the faith, to redemption in the Redeemer. We are not under Mosaic laws (Colossians 2:14-17; Ephesians 2:14-16; Hebrews 10:9). But we are amenable or under law to Christ (Romans 8:2; Galatians 6:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21; James 2:12).

VI. RESPONSIBILITY AS A TEACHER

“My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment.” (Jas. 3:1). The literal meaning in this verse is “stop becoming many teachers.” James was not prohibiting dedicated teachers who taught truth only and backed it up with Christian living. He was discouraging those hastening to be teachers who, in Paul’s words, understood “neither what they say, nor whereof they confidently affirm” (1 Timothy 3:7). Paul spoke of those who were “ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” This is why James gave such a strong warning.

Teachers who teach error do so at their peril. They shall give strict account thereof in the final

judgment and will be responsible for every soul they delude into accepting their wrong teaching.

VII. PREACH THE WORD

“I charge you therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.” (2 Tim. 4:1-2). This courageous charge was given in the sight of Jehovah and Jesus and in full view of certain universal judgment to come. Timothy was to preach the Word and nothing but the Word. This assured that all who heard him would hear nothing but truth. He was to be ready to preach at any time; he was to reprove, rebuke and exhort: he was to be longsuffering in his declarations.

CONCLUSION

Jesus delighted to hear and do the Father’s will, we must be of like disposition. Dull study and sluggish hearing never make one to be a ready student of God’s Word. More public reading of the Bible would spiritually enhance our service. Daily study, such as the Bereans practised needs to become contagious among churches of Christ. People in pews will hear truth and truth only when pulpits dispense truth and truth only.

6. What can we conclude from this verse? _____

7. From 1 Tim. 4:13, what other type of reading of God's word is inferred? _____

8. What is public reading naturally an outgrowth of? _____

9. What was it about the Bereans that made them more noble than the Thessalonians? _____

10. How often did the Bereans examine the scriptures? _____

11. What were the scriptures that the Bereans studied? _____

12. Who were teaching the Bereans? _____

13. What does that tell us about preaching today? _____

14. Upon hearing the word of God, what should we do? _____

15. How does James describe the man who hears without doing? _____

16. In contrast how does James describe the man who hears and practices what he hears? _____

17. What does James mean when he says "*let not many of you become teachers?*" _____

18. What will happen to false teachers? _____

19. What are preachers charged to do? _____

20. What lessons have been learned from this study? _____

LESSON NUMBER 19

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PART I

I. THE BIBLE TEACHING ON DISCIPLINE

A. Discipline demanded.

In our efforts to restore primitive Christianity, churches of Christ have made their greatest failure in the matter of discipline. We have restored the plan of salvation from alien sins so that we can tell people what to do to be saved and can give them the verses of scripture which authorise each step.

We have restored the primitive items of worship and can give a “Thus saith the Lord” for everything we do. But very little effort has been made to administer discipline for sin and unfaithfulness in spite of the fact that the Lord demands such of his people.

(a) Baptism and the Lord’s supper are not more plainly taught than is our duty to put wicked people away from the church. In 1 Cor 5:13, Paul says, “*put away from yourselves the evil person.*” A man had taken his father’s wife and thought it was a smart thing to do. Paul commanded the church to discipline him. In verse 11, other sins are named as being in the same category with this sin. Surely Paul did not pick out this one sin for discipline and suggest that other sins do not demand discipline.

(b) To the church in Thessalonica Paul wrote that they were to withdraw themselves from every brother who walks disorderly. (2 Thess 3: 6.) And disorderly conduct is described as that which is contrary to the teaching of the apostles.

(c) Paul demands that we mark and turn away from all who cause divisions over doctrine contrary to that of the apostles. So we see that ungodly conduct is not the only cause for discipline. Unscriptural teaching may be as destructive in the church as ungodly conduct.

B. Examples of discipline.

Old Testament examples, which are written for our admonition (1 Cor 10: 6,11), show us how the Lord demanded discipline among his people of old.

(a) Jehovah commanded His people to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. (Ex. 20: 8.) Some time afterward a man gathered sticks on the Sabbath. He was brought to Moses for punishment. Jehovah told Moses to have the people to stone him to death. (Num. 15:32-36.) If we think this was drastic, we should remember that we sinners cannot appreciate the holiness of the law and seriousness of violating that law except as we see God’s attitude toward such.

(b) Another man disregarded the Lord’s instruction with reference to the spoil of Jericho. (Josh. 6, 7.) On account of this sin Jehovah could not be with the people, and they lost the battle of Ai.

Achan was found guilty and was stoned to death.

(c) But some one may be ready to say that these things happened in a former dispensation and that the Lord does not now so punish sin. However, soon after the establishment of the church we find Ananias and Sapphira telling a lie about the amount of money they received for property which they sold. (Acts 5: 1-11.) They fell dead as a consequence of this sin. This shows that God's attitude toward sin is the same and His demand for discipline is as great under the gospel as under the law.

C. Purpose of discipline.

(a) To save the sinner. Eternal death is the penalty for sin. (Rom 6: 23; Rev 21: 8.) If one is allowed to continue in his sin, he can never have any part in the everlasting kingdom. (Gal. 5: 23; 1 Cor. 6: 9, 10; 2 Pet. 1: 5-11.) Discipline is for the purpose of showing the sinner that he is unfit for heaven until he turns from his sin.

(b) To save the church from infection. Sin may be viewed as an infection which will spread from one member of the body to all others if the sinner is allowed to continue fellowship in the body. When one member of the body becomes infected, it is sometimes necessary to lose that member to save the body.

(c) To maintain the respect of the world. Often we hear church leaders say they do not exercise discipline because the church will be hurt in the eyes of the world, if the world learns that there is trouble in the church. The world will have a lot more respect for the church if it is trying to keep itself clean than it will have for a church which tries to hide its sin. People magnified the church and believers were added to the Lord because of the discipline of Ananias and Sapphira. (Acts. 5: 13,14.) When a man of the world can truthfully say that he lives a better, cleaner life than the average church member, or when he can truthfully say there are too many hypocrites in the church, we may know that the church is not exercising discipline as it should.

II. DISCIPLINE IN THE CHURCH AT CORINTH

It should be remembered that the church at Corinth was predominantly a Gentile group and that they had but recently been converted from heathenism. It should also be remembered that the goddess Venus had a temple in Corinth and that fornication was a part of the ritual in that worship. So common was immorality in Corinth that a person guilty of the practice was said to be Corinthianised, or playing the part of a Corinthian. Getting people to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Saviour from sin is one thing and getting them to break clean with all heathen habits and appreciate the high moral standards of the gospel is quite another thing. The first does not require a lot of time or self-denial; the latter takes much more time and requires a complete surrender of one's will to the Lord in spite of old habits and the desires of the flesh which are continually demanding satisfaction. So a person in the social environment of Corinth had a much more difficult task of living in harmony with the moral standards of the gospel than those of some other communities. The Jews of Jerusalem had their peculiar trials, but they were not beset with the moral problems of the Corinthians.

Discipline is sometimes neglected because people have the idea that they must be perfect before they can administer discipline. But it should be remembered that Paul told the church at Corinth to put

away the man who had sinned and yet those who were to do the putting away were not perfect either in life or doctrine. His criticisms of the church and his instructions make it very plain that the rest of the church members were far from perfection. But they were not guilty of that sin and were commanded to put away the one who was guilty. Certainly we must not be guilty of sins as bad as the one we are going to discipline, but that does not mean that one must be perfect before he can take part in the discipline.

A. Paul Teaches Discipline (1 Cor 5: 1-5).

“It is actually reported.” People are all alike in that they try to hide their sins. The church at Corinth wrote Paul about marriage problems (1 Cor 7: 1), yet they did not mention this case of incest. He had to learn that from some other source than their letter to him.

“Such fornication as is not even among the Gentiles.” Those who climb the highest can seemingly fall to the lowest depths. The Lord’s people who should be manifesting the life of Jesus in their mortal bodies (2 Cor 4: 10, 11), so far from being a worthy example for the heathen to follow, had actually become guilty of a sin which the heathen deplored. Moses forbade such an incestuous connection as this in Corinth. (Lev 17: 8; Deut 27: 20.) Greek and Roman writers are cited as deploring such a connection in marriage. It is bad enough for the church to imitate the world in its sins, but worse when the church leads the way and teaches the world a lesson in wickedness.

“One of you hath his father’s wife.” Since the woman is not condemned, it is most probable that she was not a Christian, did not claim to be a member of the church. In this situation we have a man married the second time and he married a woman too near the age of his son. It is probable that this was a second marriage, for certainly the son did not marry his mother. And the son either had never married or was not then living with his wife. The father’s wife and son being near the same age, and the son being more attractive to the woman than the older man, led to the separation of the older man and his wife and her marriage to the son. Some argue that the woman and the son had married and some that they were not married, but lived in such criminal intimacy that it was known to all the community. This is putting the matter in its worst possible light and it is difficult to conceive of the church, as bad as it was, condoning such a condition. The most charitable view to take of the matter is that the boy simply took the woman away from his father and married her. Some have suggested that the old man died and the boy married his young widow, but from Paul’s second letter we learn that the father was still alive. (2 Cor. 7: 12.) However, if the father had died the woman would have been available to remarry, and she would have been able to marry the son if he had not married. What ever the situation was, the son was committing fornication with his father’s wife.

“and you are puffed up.” It is difficult to determine why the church was puffed up. To be puffed up means to be proud, to have vain conceit. Were they proud of the young man for being able to take his father’s wife away from him? Or were they proud of their spiritual condition in spite of the fact they knew of this incest among them? The latter seems more probable, yet the former certainly is not impossible. “They should have mourned; and should have given their first attention to the removal of the evil. But instead of this, they had given indulgence to proud feeling, and had become elated with a vain confidence in their spiritual purity. Men are always elated and proud when they have the least occasion for it.” (Barnes.)

“absent in body but present in spirit”. Some have imagined that Paul intended some miraculous spiritual presence. But the statement means no more than that on account of his bodily presence being impossible he would be present in spirit with his judgment to encourage and lead the way for the church to do its duty expressing his judgment in the letter, the people would know his mind; he had conveyed his mind by means of this letter.

“Have already ...judged him.” In contrast with their negligence to do what God and decency demanded in this case, Paul rendered swift judgment on the offender. His swiftness would have a tendency to cause them to realise the enormity of the sin and would encourage them to do their duty without further delay.

“In the name of our Lord Jesus.” This expression means by the authority of Jesus. So according to Paul, we have the authority of Jesus to withdraw from the ungodly. Do we dare to refuse to do that which Jesus authorises?

“Ye being gathered together.” Since this is addressed to the church, we conclude that the assembled church took part in the discipline of this ungodly man. Undoubtedly the elders of the church presided, took the lead, in the action; but the whole church concurred in the action taken. Since children become members of the church at such an early age, it would not be wise to conclude those under the age of maturity in such cases as this one, but all mature people are entitled to know the facts because they will be expected to concur in the action of the church in making the one disciplined feel his lost condition.

“To deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh.” To deliver to Satan was simply to exclude from the fellowship of the church. Since there are but two spiritual kingdoms, it follows that when one is excluded from the kingdom of God, that one is back in the kingdom of Satan. In that sense he is delivered to Satan. If he remains there, never returns to the kingdom of God by repentance, he will be lost forever. The destruction of the flesh in this verse has given rise to much speculation. Some think Paul was recommending some miraculous punishment like that of Ananias and Sapphira, or Elymas (Acts 13:6-11), but such could not be an example for the church this side of the age of miracles. The statement does not imply that Satan will destroy the man’s flesh. So the statement simply means that the ungodly man was to be excluded from the fellowship of the church, thrown back under the reign of Satan, so that he might be brought to his senses and might be influenced to destroy the lusts of his flesh so that he might be saved in the day the Lord comes to judge the world.

B. Church at Corinth Corrected (1 Cor. 5: 6-8)

“Your glorying is not good.” It is never good for poor sinful man to glory, even when, like Paul (1 Cor 4: 4), he knows nothing against himself. But the glorying of this church was especially out of place when the people knew of this case of incest among them.

““ little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.” Jesus used leaven to teach the power of the influence of the kingdom of God in the world. (Matt. 13:33.) Both good and evil will spread and change that with which it comes in contact. The kingdom of God planted in an evil environment has the power to change that environment into its own likeness, if that power is aggressive. So evil has a tendency to change all about it into its nature. So Paul warns the church not to allow this evil to continue

undisturbed among them lest the whole church be contaminated. Elders of churches today should take warning and begin to lead the church to take discipline against ungodliness lest this leaven of evil among us leaven the whole lump, and contaminate the whole church.

“Purge out the old leaven.” Just before the Passover all Jews were to gather all the leaven they could find in their houses and throw it away, and then the feast could be celebrated with unleavened bread. So Paul speaks of evil as leaven and urges them to put it all away so that they may be a new lump. The new lump is that meal or flour into which the new leaven is put. But until the leaven is placed in it, the lump is looked upon as pure. So Paul urges them to be as pure as a new lump into which no leaven of evil has been allowed to come.

“For our Passover also hath been sacrificed, even Christ.” Our Passover has been sacrificed, but must not be partaken of in the presence of evil. So as the Jews were to put away all old leaven that they might partake of their Passover, so we are to put away all evil that we may partake of our Passover. But our Passover is sacrificed only once and that for all time to come; it is a continual sacrifice. Hence we are obligated continually to keep the leaven of evil from working among us.

“Let us keep the feast.” This does not mean that we are to keep a feast like that of the Passover; nor does it refer to the Lord’s supper. It simply means that we are to partake of Christ, who is our Passover, in the sense of partaking of His spiritual life, His divine nature, and His holy character. This we cannot do as long as there is evil in us; nor can a church so partake of Christ and manifest Him to the world as long as ungodly people are allowed or encouraged to be in the membership.

“Not with old leaven.” This old leaven refers to the former manner of life when we were the servants of sin. We cannot keep this holy feast with this old manner of life as our pattern of conduct. As long as the church at Corinth allowed this man guilty of incest to remain in its fellowship, they were trying to keep the feast with old leaven.

“Neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness.” The term “old leaven” is general, but Paul gets down to specific terms and says we are not to partake of Christ our Passover with the leaven of malice in our hearts. We are guilty of malice when our words and actions are determined by hatred or spite. There are many who would not think of stooping to the sin of incest as did this man at Corinth, but yet they will do things for spite. This lesson suggests that one who does such spiteful things has no more right to partake of our passover than has the man guilty of incest. Lusts of the flesh seem a lot worse to us than lusts of the mind, but Jesus taught us that one puts us as much in need of the love and mercy of God as the other. He pictured the elder brother as much in need of the love of his father as was the prodigal son. (Luke 15.) The elder brother was guilty of lusts of the mind and the prodigal was guilty of satisfying the lusts of his flesh. So we need to keep the leaven of malice out of our hearts as well as the lust of the flesh.

“Unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.” We are to partake of our Passover, Christ, sincerely and according to truth. There can be no hypocrisy in our feasting on Christ; it must be from the heart.

C. Separation from the ungodly (1 Cor. 5: 9-13).

“I wrote unto, you in my epistle.” This refers to an epistle Paul wrote some time before he wrote the one we refer to as 1 Corinthians, and which has not been preserved. The notion that everything an

inspired man wrote must of necessity be preserved in order to have a complete revelation is as foolish as to think that every word and deed of Jesus should have been preserved and recorded that we might have a full revelation of Him, or of God through Him. But John plainly tells us that we do not have such a complete record. (John 21:25.) We might as well contend that every word spoken by the apostles has to be preserved as to argue that every word they wrote must be preserved.

“Have no company with fornicators.” This first letter must have been written shortly before he wrote this one, or the church did not obey the instructions given in it, for they did not cease to have company with this young man who took his father’s wife.

“Not at all meaning with the fornicators of this world”. This statement suggests that the church did not get the idea Paul intended. It is clearly indicated here that they thought he meant for them to have no company with any fornicators whether in the church or in the world. Missing the point as they did may explain why they had done nothing about it. Paul’s informers, of the household of Chloe, must have told Paul that the church made no distinction between fornicators of the world and those in the church. So Paul takes pains to make the matter so clear no one can misunderstand.

“For then must ye needs go out of the world.” If we are to refrain from all social intercourse with people who are guilty of such sins, we will have to leave this world. Some association with such characters is essential (1) for transaction of necessary business; (2) for civic improvements; (3) to secure an education; and (4) to teach them the truth and lead them to Christ. But we should not make them our bosom companions and trusted friends lest we be corrupted by their sins. (1 Cor. 15:33.) Jesus associated with them enough to teach and influence them to turn from their sins, but when he wanted companionship he found it with such people as his disciples and in such homes as that of Lazarus and his sisters of Bethany.

“If any man that is named a brother.” Paul intended for the church to get the idea that his rule of separation from the ungodly should be applied to those only who are members of the church, those we call brethren. If they are guilty of fornication, we are to have no company with them, except to admonish them as erring brothers. (2 Thess. 3:15.) And going to them to admonish them to turn from their sins can hardly be classed as having company with them.

“Covetous . . . idolater . . . reviler . . . drunkard . . . extortioner.” The student should consult a dictionary if he/she is not sure of the exact meaning of these terms. This list is not meant to be complete. The list of the works of the flesh (Gal. 5: 19-21) contains these and many others and yet it ends with *“and such like.”* Any sin which will keep one out of heaven might well be put on this catalogue. These sins are unbecoming in a child of God; they make one unfit for heaven and so render him unfit for fellowship and communion with those who are preparing themselves to go to heaven.

“With such a one not to eat.” This serves to explain what is meant by having no company with the ungodly. There has been some differences of opinion whether Paul means to eat the Lord’s supper or the common meal. He demands that the church withdraw from, put away, such a person and this would include the eating of the Lord’s supper. The eating here in mind is such that one could well do with a sinner of the world, but which we must not do with sinners in the church. Certainly we do not eat the Lord’s supper with sinners of the world, so Paul could not have had the eating of the Lord’s supper in mind. You may have company with, even eat with, fornicators and revilers of this world, but you may not have company with, no not even eat with, a brother who is a fornicator, etc. The

eating under consideration here is that which we may practice with sinners of the world, therefore the common meal. If Christians would practice this with reference to all who have divorced for trivial reasons and married again in violation of the Lord's law (Matt 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:10,11), we might save a lot of people from being lost on account of unlawful marriages.

“Do, not ye judge them that are within?” The word without refers to people who are not members of the church, and the word within refers to those who are members of the church. Paul leaves the judgment of those without to the Lord, but says we have the duty of judging those within. Certainly this does not refer to final judgment, but to the discipline of the church which it must exercise on those who are guilty of such sins as are named here. When they put away the wicked man from among them and refused to eat with him, they had exercised all the judgment which Paul demanded of them.

CONCLUSION

1. Pride goes before a fall. The church at Corinth was headed for a fall because of their pride which ignored their sin. None of us has enough good in himself to be proud; all of us have sufficient frailty and sinfulness in us to humble us if we will but recognize and confess it.
2. If the church does not exercise more discipline in the future than in the past fifty years, the area of separation between the church and the world will be so narrow that it will be difficult to see. We have been careful to maintain doctrinal purity and the correct pattern of organization, but we have shamefully neglected to maintain the moral standards of the New Testament church.
3. When the church puts away a wicked man, each member of the church is to agree and cooperate with the church by refusing all social intercourse with that person, even to the point of refusing to eat with him, so that he may be brought to a realisation of his lost condition and may repent of his sins and return to the Lord.

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 19

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PART I

1. Can we say that we have completely restored the New Testament church, and why?

2. Give some scriptures which authorise church discipline. _____

3. Can you name a cause for discipline other than fornication? _____

4. Give some Old Testament examples of discipline, not mentioned in the study notes.

5. Do we have a New Testament example of discipline? _____

6. State and discuss three reasons for discipline. _____

7. What social condition in Corinth contributed to the low standard of morals of the church?

8. Must one be perfect before disciplining another? _____

9. How did Paul learn of this case of incest in the church in Corinth? _____

10. Was this sin common among the heathen? _____

11. Was the sinners father still alive? _____

12. Why was the woman not mentioned as being in sin? _____

13. Of what does Paul accuse the church of being proud? _____

14. Can you show that discipline in such cases is authorised by the Lord? _____

15. Is it ever safe to neglect or refuse to do that which is authorised by the Lord? _____

16. Can you prove that the whole church was to take part in the discipline? _____

17. What is meant by delivering one to Satan? _____

18. What does Paul teach by the use of leaven? _____

19. What idea did the church get from Paul's first letter about associating with fornicators?

20. Name some reasons for necessary association with sinners of the world. _____

21. How did Jesus set us an example in this matter? _____

22. Discuss other sins that should be disciplined by the church? _____

23. Prove from the scriptures that we are not to eat a common meal with an ungodly brother?

24. Did the church in Corinth do what Paul instructed, and if so how did this have an effect on the brother, the church and the community? _____

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PART II

I. TERMS USED TO DESCRIBE DISCIPLINE

The scripture uses different terms to describe discipline. We should be careful to use only biblical terms. Often we hear of someone being “churched” or “turned out of the church.” This is not biblical language.

The scriptures speak of “*withdrawing yourselves*” (2 Thess 3:6). In the same context we are told to “*have no fellowship*” with the works of darkness (Eph 5:11). In writing to the church in Rome, Paul instructed the saints there to “*mark and avoid*” some (Rom 16:17). To the Corinthians, Paul commanded to “*deliver to Satan*” the fornicator (1 Cor 5:4,5). Later in the same chapter he instructs the brethren there not to “*company with*” nor “*eat with*” certain sinful brethren. (1 Cor 5:9-11).

II. WHO IS TO BE DISCIPLINED?

From the passages of scripture above, it is easy to see that those who are to be dealt with so severely are children of God who have sinned. They are bringing reproach upon the name of Jesus Christ and the church which is purchased with His blood. The list of sins varies with each passage cited, but all have sinned. There should be no partiality in the discharge of this sacred duty. It should include every brother or sister who walks disorderly (2 Thess 3:6). It should be limited to those “*among you*” (2 Thess 3:11). We are not obligated to take action toward all who are in the world (1 Cor 5:9-13), nor are we obliged to withdraw from a brother or sister in another congregation, although we should encourage those in other congregations to do that which is scriptural.

III. IN WHAT SPIRIT SHOULD THE DISCIPLINING BE EXECUTED?

“Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.” (Gal 6:1).

“If a man be overtaken in any trespass” Trespass used of breach of the law of God, whether that given to Adam (Rom. 5:15), or that given through Moses (Rom. 5:20), and of laws that regulate human intercourse (Matt. 6:14,15). The same things are here in view as are described as “*the works of the flesh*” (5:17-21); the net is purposely cast very widely. God has so ordered it, that to sin against others or ourselves is to sin against Him.

“You who are spiritual” When the fleshly passions and lusts have overcome a man and led him into wrongdoing, those in whom the Spirit rules should restore him. [The spiritual man is one who walks by the Spirit (5:16,25), and who himself manifests the fruit of the Spirit in his own life. The spiritual state of the soul is normal for the believer, but to this state all believers do not attain, nor when it is attained is it always maintained. (1 Cor. 3:1-3.) The spiritual state is reached by a diligent study of the word of God and prayer, and it is maintained by obedience. Spirituality is not a fixed or absolute condition, for the evidence of true spirituality is “*grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and*

Saviour Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet 3:18)]

“*Restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness*” To restore is to win from evil, or induce him to turn from the wrong, repent of the sin, confess it, and pray to God to forgive it. Such work is not to be lightly undertaken, nor is it even to be undertaken by anyone lacking the qualification of spirituality, for it must be done in gentleness, and there is danger of falling into a sense of superiority-- “I am better than you” spirit. But it is to be done in an humble and unpretentious and gentle spirit.

“*Looking to yourself, lest you also be tempted.*” Christians are frequently admonished to be meek and gentle in teaching, correcting, and dealing with others, especially with the erring. Paul says: ““*and the Lord’s servant must not strive, but be gentle towards all, apt to teach, forbearing, in meekness correcting them that oppose themselves; if peradventure God may give them repentance unto the knowledge of the truth and they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, having been taken captive by him unto his will.*” (2 Tim 2:24-26.) There is danger, in the very act of correcting a wrong in another, that the spirit of the Pharisee, thanking God that he is not as other men, may be excited, which is a great sin. Then we are frequently warned against overconfidence in ourselves: “*Wherefore let him that thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.*” (1 Cor. 10:12.) The meek, gentle, sympathising spirit which recognizes the weakness of all will most likely reach the heart of the sinner and bring him to repentance.

VI. THE PROCEDURE FOR DISCIPLINE

[15] “*Moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. [16] But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*” [17] “*and if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector. [18] assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. [19] gain I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. [20] For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.*” (Matt 18:15-20).

Having been discussing the matter of giving offense, sinning against another, Jesus now discusses what and how we are to do when we have been offended.

(1) Jesus teaches us that the first step toward settling personal differences, toward peace and unity among brethren, is a personal visit. “*Moreover if your brother shall trespass against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone: if he shall hear you, you have gained your brother*” (Matt. 18:15). (a) Notice the word “*alone.*” Personal differences should be kept that way, rather than made public, unless such becomes necessary, as the text will further teach. (b) Also, notice the word “*gained*” This expresses the motive of the visit. Gaining him back, saving his soul: yes, these are to be the intents. Such will go a long way in cultivating and demonstrating the attitude of the one going. (c) Too, notice the words “*shall trespass.*” The matter is to be actual and not imaginary. Also, observe that according to Matthew 5:23-26 both the offended and the offender should take the initiative toward reconciliation.

On this verse Albert Barnes comments,

And yet, how different from this is the course commonly pursued! How few go honestly to an offending brother, and tell, him his fault! Instead of this, every breeze bears the report, it is magnified, mole-hills swell to mountains, and a quarrel of years often succeeds what might have been settled at once. No robber is so cruel as he who steals away the character of another. Nothing can compensate for the loss of this. Wealth, health, mansions, and equipage, all are trifles compared with this. Especially is this true of a Christian. His reputation gone, he has lost his power of doing good; he has brought dishonour on the cause he most loved; he has lost his peace; and worlds cannot repay him.

Who steals my purse, steals trash: >tis something, nothing:
Twas mine.=tis his, and has been slave to thousands.
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed.

(2) Jesus teaches us that the second step toward settling personal differences, toward peace and unity among brethren, is to make another visit with one or two more in attendance. *“But if he will not hear you, then take with you one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established”* (Matt. 18:18). The attendance (the one or two) of others (a) will prevent any misunderstanding or future misrepresentation. (b) will more quickly lead the offender to repentance, as he observes the warmth and interest manifested in/by their coming. (c) may help arbitrate the matter at hand, making valuable suggestions in working matters out, (d) could establish the innocence of the other party, and (e) would be in preparation of the next step if such becomes necessary.

(3) Jesus teaches us that the third step toward settling personal differences, toward peace and unity among brethren, is to tell it to the church. *“and if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church let him be unto you as an heathen man and a publican”* (Matt. 18:17). Incidentally, this passage is given in recognition of, and in anticipation of, the establishment the church (Mark 9:1; Acts 1:8; Acts 2:1-4, 47). And, when Matthew wrote his book, the church had already been established.

(4) Jesus teaches us that the fourth step toward settling personal differences, toward peace and unity among brethren, is to “Let him be unto you as an heathen man and a publican” (Matt 18:17). A man can so order his steps as to forfeit all right for fellowship with his brethren. Such is also taught elsewhere. *“Now we commend you, brethren in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us”* (2 Thess 3:6). Also, we read, *“and if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him that he may be ashamed”* (2 Thess 3:14).

(5) Jesus then teaches, with relationship to forgiveness and withdrawal, concerning binding and loosing. *“Verily I say unto you, whatsoever you shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatsoever things you shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.”* (Matt 18:18). The binding and loosing in this text was to be done by the apostles and implemented by the church. Said binding and loosing is to be studied and applied in keeping with the context, or the matter at hand. “Binding represents exclusion from membership. Loosing, the restoration to fellowship in cases of repentance” (J. W. McGarvey). Incidentally, this passage shows that all the apostles had equal authority with Peter, to whom a similar statement had been made in Matthew 16:13-19.

(6) Jesus now teaches, with relationship to forgiveness and withdrawal, that when such is done correctly heaven approves and the Lord is present in such matters. *“gain I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them”* (Matt. 18:19-20).

QUESTION SHEET NUMBER 20

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

PART II

1. What are some terms that scripturally describe discipline? _____

2. Who is to be disciplined? _____

3. If we sin against a brother, who else do we sin against? _____

4. Can you think of an example to support the above? _____

5. Who should restore someone overtaken in a trespass? _____

6. How should they restore the erring one? _____

7. Who should they consider? _____

8. Who should we look to? _____

9. If someone sins against us what should we do? _____

10. If we do not follow the above procedure and start telling others of the sinning one, what is likely to happen? _____

11. If the brother will not hear, what should be the cause of action, and how will this benefit the one in sin? _____

12. If the one caught up in a sin should still not hear, what should the procedure be? _____

13. What is meant by the phrase “*let him be to you as a heathen and a publican?*”

14. What does binding and loosing mean? _____

15. When such is done correctly, discuss how heaven approves and the Lord is present in such matters. _____
